

# GURPS®

Fourth Edition

# MONSTER HUNTERS™

## APPLIED XENOLOGY™



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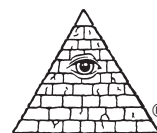
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Stock #37-0328

Version 1.0 – May 2015



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*Ash: This is the first time that we've encountered a species like this. It has to go back, all sorts of tests have to be made.*

*Ripley: Ash, are you kidding? This thing bled acid, and who knows what it's gonna do when it's dead?*

*Ash: I think it's safe to assume it isn't a zombie.*

**– Alien**

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# INTRODUCTION

"Are you sure we're still following them?" Danielle whispered. Everett nodded, despite the fact that his infrared-enhancing eyes were barely picking up anything at this point. But the two hunters couldn't drop this trail. They hadn't had a lead on these disappearances in days and the scene back by the abandoned subway had definitely been a sign of the last victim struggling.

Then he spotted the break in the wall. "Look! That shouldn't be there."

Danielle nodded to Everett and the two of them headed in. It was some sort of connecting tunnel, bored out of the solid rock, that led steadily downward. Eventually, the two saw light up ahead, where the tunnel opened into a natural cavern. In the middle was a huge ground vehicle of some strange sort, surrounded by a dozen beds, four of which had women handcuffed to them. And their kidnappers . . . scaly brown skin, dark eyes, exchanging guttural tones. Looked like they'd been right: demons.

Everett nodded to Danielle, who stepped into the light, her sacred fetish in one hand, pointing at the demons with the other. "In the name of Papa Legba, I banish you from this world! Return to Hell, monsters!" The five demons all turned to face the hunters, and then calmly pulled out . . . wait, were those **guns**? Suddenly, fire was raining down around Danielle and Everett, who retreated back into the tunnel.

"What kind of weapons were those demons using?" Everett gasped.

"I don't know what those are, but I promise, they're **not** demons."

As written, the **GURPS Monster Hunters** series leans heavily toward the supernatural. Witches and holy crusaders battle ghosts and demons, fighting for the futures and souls of humanity. It's an iconic conflict . . . but it's not the only one. After all, "monsters" exist in a *wide* range of genres, including those in which science is truth and technology is king. And some settings defy this split completely, happily blending the supernatural with the scientific for a world in which reality hackers use computer-assisted spellcasting to defeat aliens, vampires, demons, and plagues from outer space!

**GURPS Monster Hunters 5: Applied Xenology** exists to add *options* to your **Monster Hunters** stories. It focuses on ways to give a "scientific spin" to the campaign, examining every aspect of the game – the templates, powers, magic, enemies, and rules – to offer suggestions, advice, and guidelines about things that the GM may wish to include or change. Some things work great in *any* type of setting, like the commando and most of the gear. Other things call for a few new options, such as rethinking the experiment as "the alien-experimentation subject" and adding new plagues. And a few topics could be overhauled completely if desired, including revamping Ritual Path magic into "technomagic" and redefining the sage to fit a campaign without spellcasters.

Every **Monster Hunters** game can benefit from *more*, and that's what **Applied Xenology** offers: more heroes, more

monsters, and more *options*. Use them to tailor your campaign into *exactly* what you want it to be.

## DECISIONS, DECISIONS

There are several ways to use the rules herein, depending on how much you wish to change the default **Monster Hunters** flavor. It's time to ask some important questions – below, but also under *Inhuman* (p. 8).

### Supernatural vs. Science

The most important question is also the broadest: Do science and the occult coexist in your game or does one flavor predominate?

*Coexistence*: This is the default assumption of **Monster Hunters**. While the supplements do focus heavily on the supernatural, they do so only because there's already plenty of science and technology powering our world. The existence of champions like the commando and techie proves the value of modern gear. To emphasize both, consider letting casters use *both* normal magic and technomagic; see *Magic vs. Technomagic*, below.

*Supernatural Dominance*: To be honest, you probably don't need anything in this book! That said, the simplest way to achieve this is to make most monsters *immune* to bullets; cut the commando, geek, gunman, techie, and whitecoat as options; and ignore all of the TL<sup>+</sup> gear in **GURPS Monster Hunters 1: Champions**.

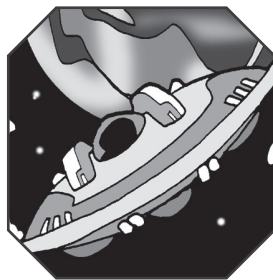
*Scientific Dominance*: Use the advice and rules in Chapter 1 to decide which templates to alter and which to cut. In *Magic vs. Technomagic*, below, either cut magic altogether or replace it with technomagic. Finally, allow players access to gear from **GURPS Ultra-Tech**, **GURPS Bio-Tech**, and **GURPS Psi-Tech** on a case-by-case basis.

*Science vs. the Occult*: Both "forces" exist, but one is considered relatively safe to embrace, while the other is wicked and corrupting! This leads to a setting in which the heroes rely on one bag of tricks to take down foes "on the other side." For example, a game focused on humanity saving itself might pit human PCs who rely on technology (no powers, no inhumans, and only technomagic) against foes wielding dark magic, mystic hoodoo, and inherent inhuman abilities.

Adding complexity to *any* of the options above is the GM's right to say that certain types of supernatural beings or powers exist while others do not. For example, a campaign might adopt the Christian view that angels, demons, and *Abrahamic* Mysticism are all real – and that magic works but is only used by the bad guys – but that no other supernatural things exist.

### Magic vs. Technomagic

Chapter 2 introduces a "technomagic" variant of Ritual Path magic (RPM), which suits scientifically minded spellcasters. This allows for a few different options when it comes to magic.



*No Magic:* A reasonable choice in a non-supernatural game. The witch and magician become invalid options, but the sage is far more adaptable (see *Sage*, pp. 9-11).

*Standard RPM Only:* No changes from the rest of the **Monster Hunters** series; everything and everyone works as-is.

*Technomagic Only:* This is a good way to justify magic in a tech-based game. It isn't the supernatural; it's just highly advanced programming!

*Both Types:* Technomagic becomes just another option. It may even be possible for casters to switch effortlessly between the two. Alternatively, both may exist but only one is available to champions – presumably because the other has some *significant* drawbacks. For example, if the power of technomagic corrupts the soul while “pure” RPM is safe but weaker, this sets up a natural distinction between PC and evil NPC casters. For much more on this, see *Where Strange Forces Intersect* (pp. 22-23).

## The Monster Mash

What foes the champions face may set the tone of the game more than any other decision. Unlike the issues above,

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*Errata.* Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata pages for all **GURPS** releases, including this book, are available on our website – see above.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition**. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

however, this isn't an “A and/or B” question; the range of options is much wider. Think of this more as a checklist; you can use any combination of these possibilities.

*Rogue Humans:* Humans with terrifying abilities may be the most dangerous foes possible. Rogues are covered at length in Chapter 4 of **GURPS Monster Hunters 3: The Enemy**. Deciding whether to use a certain type of rogue in a game is very similar to deciding whether you'd allow that sort of character as a PC; see Chapter 1 for advice.

*Supernatural Foes:* These are enemies out of our myths and legends, whose existence flies in the face of physics, logic, and what most people consider possible. This includes all undead, all spirit beings, and all lycanthropes. As written, these only fit a game that embraces the supernatural; however, see *A Thin Veneer of Plausibility* (pp. 47-48) for ways to justify bringing them into a scientific game.

*“Plausible” Threats:* While few people believe that cryptids like albino alligators and chupacabras (**The Enemy**, pp. 22-24) actually exist, the fact is that *they could* without grossly violating the laws of physics and biology. And diseases, microbes/parasites, and drugs are all real – and capable of causing strange behavior, including short-lived “zombification.” These challenges can all be dropped into *any* game without shattering its assumptions.

*Extraterrestrials:* Chapter 3 introduces new threats from beyond our world – aliens and microscopic parasites or plagues – because these are common foes in science-minded “monster hunting” stories. While aliens may seem unsuitable if you're running a purely supernatural game, simply changing their names and labeling them “a new type of demon” will go a long way toward fitting them into one. And it's trivial to turn an alien plague into a terrestrial one (see *Microbes and Plagues*, pp. 44-46).

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

This supplement expands on the templates from **GURPS Monster Hunters 1: Champions** and **GURPS Monster Hunters 4: Sidekicks**, the deduction and plague rules from **GURPS Monster Hunters 2: The Mission**, and the foes from **GURPS Monster Hunters 3: The Enemy**. Each of those books is required to get the full use out of these additions – with the exception of the aliens in Chapter 3, which *can* be used with just the **GURPS Basic Set**.

As well, Chapter 2 introduces technomagic, a variant of the Ritual Path magic system which was introduced in **Champions** and expanded in **GURPS Thaumatology: Ritual Path Magic**. Making use of these new rules requires one of these supplements.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Reverend PK Levine is the Assistant **GURPS** Line Editor and creator of the **GURPS Monster Hunters** series, among other things. He has wanted to write this expansion ever since releasing the first four supplements, and would have if his life were not constantly threatened by the Grey-Reptoid-Nordic war triangle from which he can't seem to escape. He lives just outside of Chattanooga with his beautiful wife and Phasite-possessed cats.

# CHAPTER ONE

# THE SCIENTIFIC ELITE

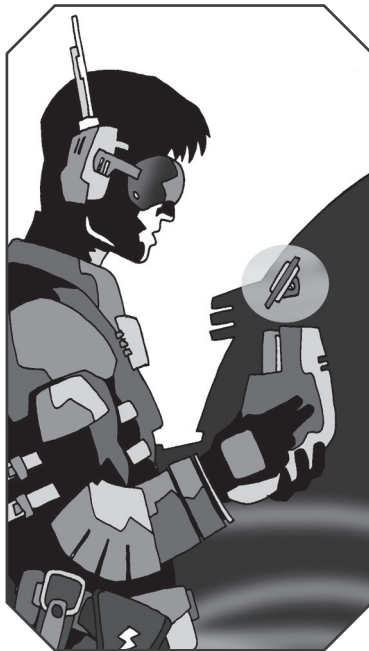
Scott snorted. “Reptoids? Aliens? You’ve got to be kidding me.”

Anna shot Scott a pointed look. “Hey, can you show some respect? I practically begged this girl to come here, and I don’t need you chasing her off.”

Their visitor, Samantha, just shrugged. “It’s a natural reaction to having one’s world view expanded. I’ve seen it before. People like to live in denial.”

Before Scott could retort, Everett stood up. “I think it’s important to remember that not too long ago none of us knew that demons and vampires existed. The world is a strange place, and there’s always a new threat. And these things were definitely something we haven’t seen before.”

“Unsurprising,” Samantha responded, bringing up a diagram on her tablet. “The Reptoids are smart enough to avoid detection, and when they travel up here to the



surface, they use special devices to appear perfectly human.”

“Yeah,” Brad said. “A cloaking spell, basically.”

“No, **not** a spell. A morphology inducer. It’s technology, pure and simple, and it’s important to realize the difference.”

As discussed in *Decisions, Decisions* (pp. 3-4), supernatural PCs don’t fit every campaign. Fortunately, there are often ways around this issue, ranging from a simple roleplaying decision to a complete revamp of the character template. The following rules and guidelines will help you strip the mystical and magical aspects away from champion and sidekick templates, leaving them more scientifically (well, *pseudo-scientifically*) plausible. And after making any necessary changes, you can decide whether the heroes fit best into an existing campaign type or one of the new ones from pp. 12-13.

## CHARACTERS

The templates discussed below are from *GURPS Monster Hunters 1: Champions* and *GURPS Monster Hunters 4: Sidekicks*. Any template not discussed works fine as-is in a scientific game; e.g., the commando (*Champions*, p. 9) is perfectly suited to a tech-based game and will work great with no changes.

### Universal Changes and Issues

Some traits are found on *many* character templates (or may need to be added to them) and thus deserve special discussion.

*Esoteric Medicine, Occultism, and Theology:* In a science-focused game, these may seem out of place. But rather than cutting them, see *Changes to Existing Skills* (p. 7) for suggested fixes.

*Cinematic Traits:* Extra Life, Luck, Prophetic Dreams, and Serendipity are cinematic, not supernatural. They work on the “meta-level,” and thus should suit any game. The GM has

the right to rule otherwise, of course, and must inform the players if this is the case so they can avoid taking those traits. If Luck is outlawed, anyone with mandatory Luck should spend those 15 points on other template advantages.

*High TL:* If the GM begins introducing TL9+ devices into the game, he must decide how many levels of High TL champions may take (using optional advantage points). This *can* be “none,” even if the game features ultra-tech, if he wants such gear to remain mysterious and rare. Because this is the GM’s decision, none of the inhuman racial templates in Chapter 3 include High TL.

*Magical Traits:* The spellcasting templates (magician, sage, witch) address magical traits in detail, but even templates with no magical connection whatsoever have the option of taking Magic Resistance, Magic Susceptibility, and/or Thaumatology. In all cases, these are *options*. The GM should inform the players whether magic exists in the campaign; if not, they should simply avoid those traits.

*Powers and Races*: Specific abilities are discussed under their most relevant template: Bioenhancement under *Experiment* (p. 7), Mysticism under *Crusader* (below), psionics under *Psi* (p. 9), and racial templates under *Inhuman* (p. 8).

## BROTHER

see *Sidekicks*, p. 5

The brother is a questionable choice in a non-supernatural game, simply because his skills focus on the supernatural while his advantages offer various “blessings.” In most cases,

it’s better to choose a different template, such as the occultist (p. 9), with the clergy motivational lens to reflect your religious background.

For those who wish to use the brother template in a scientific game anyway, apply the following changes:

**Advantages:** In the third section, omit Blessed and True Faith as options, replacing them with Luck [15]. In the fourth section, remove the supernatural Contact Group and Contact.

**Primary Skills:** If spirits with Possession don’t exist, drop Exorcism and take *four* skills from the second list instead of three.

## LENSES

While the focus of this chapter is on templates, the *lenses* that modify them are just as important to character creation. *Monster Hunters* uses two kinds of lenses:

**Motivational Lenses** (*Champions*, pp. 6-9): These are unchanged. Heroes who are willing to risk their lives against scientific threats do so for the same reasons as those facing supernatural ones. (Even the clergy lens remains valid, as that reflects social ties, not holy power.) The GM may want to prohibit Divine Curse (Monster Magnet) due to its supernatural overtones – or he can just “rebrand” it as a potent, aspected version of Unluckiness. Note the *intentional* lack of a “conspiracy theorist” motivational lens; “my PC knows The Truth” is a broad enough brush to cover every champion in the game! For those truly obsessed with conspiracies, use one of the existing lenses, but substitute the new Obsession below as the -15-point disadvantage.

**Champion Upgrade Lenses** (*Sidekicks*, pp. 20-22): A junior hunter upgraded with one of these lenses should follow the advice given for the nearest comparable champion template. Specifically, for caster, see *Witch* (p. 12); for monstrous, see *Inhuman* (p. 8); for mystic, see *Crusader* (below); for overman, see *Experiment* (p. 7); and for psychic, see *Psi* (p. 9). The enhanced lens requires no special commentary.

### Unraveling Your Obsession

A common trope is the alien hunter who cares more about the conspiracy (p. 39) covering things up than about the invaders themselves. For this type of champion, add Obsession (Unravel the conspiracy) (9) [-15] to the list in *Why We Fight* (*Champions*, p. 7). This disadvantage can be swapped into any motivational lens.

This Obsession means you are always looking for the next layer of the onion. When you find the hand pulling the strings, you immediately begin looking for the strings attached to *that* hand. Make a self-control roll whenever there seems to be a simple, straightforward reason why something is happening; on a failure, you are convinced that there is more to this case and will continue to probe. You can deal with the threat in front of you first; e.g., if there are Greys abducting children, you’ll shut that down, but will then focus on finding the officials who were covering it up, even if there is no evidence that a cover-up was in place. A new threat can pull you away, but you’ll keep trying to find ways to tie that old case into these new ones.

Because this is a *disadvantage*, it will never be *helpful* in building the bigger picture! In fact, when you make a deduction roll involving an overarching conspiracy, the GM should secretly make a self-control roll for you; if this fails, he can insert a few red herrings into your deduction that feed into your Obsession.

## CRUSADER

see *Champions*, p. 10

The viability of the crusader as a PC depends on whether the GM allows Mysticism. If not, there’s no point in building a crusader; either design a brother (above) with a champion upgrade lens or take a different template with the clergy motivational lens. If so, follow the guidelines under *Mysticism* (below) when choosing abilities and consider making the following change to the template:

**Primary Skills:** If spirits with Possession don’t exist, drop Exorcism and take *five* skills from the second list instead of four.

### Mysticism

Even in a nominally “non-supernatural” game, it’s worth contemplating whether Mysticism should be an exception. Many people in the real world scoff at the thought of vampires and fae, but believe that religious conviction *can* summon miracles (under the right circumstances).

If allowed, Mysticism is useful even in games without supernatural foes, though a few abilities require minor changes or become less appropriate:

**Armor of Faith:** Change the second limitation to “Half-strength unless you are holding a holy item and praying aloud” (-10%). Cost becomes 6 points/level.

**Ghost Weapon:** If insubstantial threats still exist and are common, this remains useful; the GM should assume it works against those threats (even alien ones). Otherwise, skip it.

**Resistant to Evil Supernatural Powers:** Useless if evil supernatural rogues or monsters don’t exist.

**Smite:** Replace the Accessibility with “Accessibility, Only against those currently attacking me with deadly intent” (-10%) and “Limited Use, 1/day” (-40%). Now Smite can be used against *anyone* who’s actively attempting to kill you (not for preemptive strikes!), but only once.

*Spirit Channeling, Spirit Communication, Spirit Empathy, Supernatural Sense, and Turn Evil:* Useful only if the appropriate types of creatures exist.

## EXPERIMENT

see *Champions*, p. 11

The experiment is the only “gifted” champion who is 100% powered by pseudoscience. This template is thus an appropriate option even in games without a hint of the occult.

In a game with extraterrestrials (see Chapter 3), this hunter is likely to have been experimented upon by *aliens*. After being abducted and probed, he was cut open (perhaps while conscious the entire time) and strange . . . *things* were done to his body. At the GM’s option, this can be represented with the new Bioenhancement variant below.

### Alien Bioenhancement

Your incredible physical and mental capabilities are the result of alien tinkering. Maybe they resequenced your DNA, implanted strange bionics, injected you with bizarre concoctions, or all of the above! The upside is that you’ve become more than human. The downside is that they either let you go for later study or are hunting you after you escaped.

This power benefits from standard Bioenhancement Talent (*Champions*, p. 42) and gives you access to the usual Bioenhancement abilities and skills (*Champions*, pp. 41-42). However, it has a completely different power modifier.

#### Power Modifier: Alien Bioenhancement

-10%

Extraterrestrial visitors gave you your abilities and now they’re monitoring or tracking you. Instead of taking Unusual Biochemistry, you must take Enemy (Alien Scientists; Watcher; 9 or less) [-5]. Your former captors will rarely take

*And that is why the “Men from Planet X” are so important. They are the fulcrum WOTAN will use to evolve us at high speed no matter the damage to our souls.*

– *The Book of the SubGenius*

## KNOW THY ALIEN

As with any *Monster Hunters* game, the GM will tell the players which of the categories in *Know Thy Enemy* (*Champions*, p. 16) are worth investing in. Even in a relatively hard-science game, cryptids and microbes (pp. 44-46) are likely to exist, and Psychology will always help you outthink rogue humans. The following additions are recommended for games featuring the new enemies from Chapter 3:

- *Aliens*: Hidden Lore (Extraterrestrials) (A) IQ [2].
- *Dark Conspiracies*: Administration (A) IQ [2]; Expert Skill (Conspiracy Theory) (H) IQ-1 [2]; Intelligence Analysis (H) IQ-1 [2].

### Changes to Existing Skills

Most ineffective skills can be simply avoided; e.g., if demons don’t exist, then don’t choose Hidden Lore (Demons) as a *Know Thy Enemy* skill. However, a few skills require special consideration:

*Esoteric Medicine*: This skill is always at least as effective as First Aid. In addition, the user is trained in “whole body” treatment, which includes using alternative-medicine remedies to relieve physical afflictions such as being paralyzed by an alien blaster. The time required and skill penalty are up to the GM, but will usually range from five minutes and no penalty (for simple maladies) to 2d days and -10 (for bizarre issues).

*Occultism*: As this skill already covers threats from our world and several other planes of existence, it’s not much of a stretch to assume that it covers extraterrestrial threats as well – especially given its limited utility. In a game where aliens are the *only* threat, consider renaming it “Ufology” while keeping the same rules (*The Mission*, p. 8).

*Theology*: In *Monster Hunters*, this skill primarily acts as a more general version of Hidden Lore. As such, in a game without demons, spirits, or undead, it loses its utility. To compensate, treat Theology as a potent but tightly focused social skill. When interacting with a member of that faith (only), you may first roll against Theology to frame things in a scriptural context. Critical success gives +3 to reactions and further social skill rolls involving that person; success gives +1; failure has no effect; and critical failure gives -3. (In a game *with* supernatural monsters, Theology does not work this way – but the faithful can add this benefit via a new perk: *Social Scripture*.)

action directly against you, but any time you do something that would interfere with one of their plots (whether you’re aware of that or not), the GM will roll to see if they intervene before you have a chance to derail their designs.

Even worse, they *know* what you can do – because they created you! They will have appropriate countermeasures; e.g., energy fields that interfere with your Cerebral-Motor Multitasking and gas that blocks your Adrenal-Muscular Trigger.

The relative benefit is that no *Earth* technology will interfere with your abilities. Unlike a standard experiment, you can take all the drugs you can handle without them affecting your power. (You may *choose* to take Unusual Biochemistry, but even if you do, a bad drug result will not take your Alien Bioenhancement power offline.) And no human laboratory has a file on you. You aren’t beholden to any shadow corporation or mad scientist – just to a group of mysterious aliens. That’s better in some ways . . . right?

## GEEK

see *Sidekicks*, p. 7

The geek works well in most games, but must pay careful attention to what technology is available in the setting and choose skills accordingly. For example, if psi and psi-tech don't exist, there's no point in taking Electronics Operation (Psychotronics).

## GIFTED

see *Sidekicks*, p. 8

A seventh son of a seventh son is always an appropriate choice; after all, a hero with luck and charm on his side fits any cinematic game! And being empowered with Bioenhancement makes sense whether it represents the work of a secretive organization or alien experimentation (see *Alien Bioenhancement*, p. 7).

The other options depend on whether the GM is allowing those abilities in the game. For advice and guidelines on whether to include Mysticism, see *Crusader* (pp. 6-7); for psionics, see *Psi* (p. 9); and for inhuman-blooded, see *Inhuman* (below).

## MAGICAL SPECIALISTS

Spellcasters should not treat the Path skill loadouts as fixed and fundamental. The suggested Path values were chosen to create a well-rounded, generalist caster – but some players prefer characters with more focus! Thus, for the three “caster” templates, feel free to treat the section on Path skills as:

*Magician*: Spend 22 points on Path skills.

*Sage*: Spend 21 points on Path skills.

*Witch*: Spend 33 points on Path skills.

The usual limits apply: Paths cannot exceed the lower of 12+Magery or Thaumatology (or Computer Programming, for technomagic).

For even more specialization, the magic Talents from “Ritual Path Specialists” (in *Pyramid* #3/66: *The Laws of Magic*) are valid options in a *Monster Hunters* game. You may spend the points above or advantage points (from any list) on *one* of these Talents. You cannot have more than one without GM permission, and it is limited to the usual four levels. You may also learn the Easy Refill perk, which allows you to use your core skill to refill your mana reserve.

## INHUMAN

see *Champions*, p. 13

In addition to the questions under *Decisions, Decisions* (pp. 3-4), it's important for the group to decide whether to allow reformed monsters as PCs. The existence of the inhuman template does *not* make this a foregone conclusion! There are several reasons why inhuman PCs may be a poor fit for a campaign:

- If “humanity vs. inhumanity” is an important theme of the game, including inhuman heroes can undermine that theme.

- Adding monstrous champions can push the feel of the game in the direction of urban fantasy, rather than pulp horror. (This may be a *desirable* goal, of course.)

- Some players look at this as a chance to be more “special” – under the assumption that reformed monsters are way cooler than mere humans (even though *Monster Hunters* humans are 400 points of pure awesome). Taken to an extreme, this can lead to a group where everyone is a different type of creature, all competing to be the most “special.” And this can be a problem because . . .

- Inhumans spend 200 points on a racial template, which means 200 fewer points to spend on everything else! Granted, their racial abilities are all potent – but most are useful in a fairly specific way, which can make them extremely specialized compared to the better-trained humans.

As a compromise, a group can declare certain racial templates available while keeping others as NPC-only; e.g., “evil is evil, so only half-humans or angels can be PCs.” And obviously, racial templates for creatures that *don't exist in the setting* are off-limits; if there are no demons, you cannot be a demon or demospawn.

In a game with aliens, extraterrestrial champions become a possibility. See the boxes throughout Chapter 3 for new inhuman racial templates. (However, note that the inhuman Grey, p. 30, will not work with this template or the monstrous lens; instead, a Grey's player may choose from all of the *other* template options.)

## MAGICIAN

see *Sidekicks*, p. 11

If magic doesn't exist in any form (*Decisions, Decisions*, pp. 3-4), then this is not a viable option. However, if technomagic is available, make the following changes to create a technomagician:

**Advantages:** In the third list (“Another 20 points chosen from among DX . . .”), add the options of Born to Be Wired (p. 11) [5/level], Eidetic Memory [5] or Photographic Memory [10], Equipment Bond (any computer) [1/item], Lightning Calculator [2] or Intuitive Mathematician [5], Mathematical Ability [10/level], Overclocked (p. 20) [1], or Quick-Sheathe (Device) (*Limits on Scripts*, pp. 17-18) [1].

**Primary Skills:** Replace Thaumatology with Computer Operation (E) IQ [1]-14; and Computer Programming and Mathematics (Applied)\*, both (H) IQ [4]-14. Delete the last list (“Archaeology or Hidden Lore”).

**Secondary Skills:** Change the second list (“One of Breath Control . . .”) to: Two of Fast-Draw (Device) (*Limits on Scripts*, pp. 17-18) or Innate Attack (any), both (E) DX [1]-10; Stealth (A) DX-1 [1]-9; Electronics Repair (Computers) or Hidden Lore (Sacred Places), both (A) IQ-1 [1]-13; Archaeology or Engineer (Electronics), both (H) IQ-2 [1]-12; Alchemy, Computer Hacking, Physics, or Thaumatology, all (VH) IQ-3 [1]-11; or Breath Control (H) HT-2 [1]-12.

## MORE PSYCHOTRONICS

By default, these new devices (all from *GURPS Psi-Tech*) are not available to starting PCs, but instead represent alien technology, inventions of a dark conspiracy, or both. The heroes may be able to obtain them by defeating said foes and looting their stuff, but see *Technology* (pp. 25-26).

*Fear Extractor*: A heavy weapon, often mounted on a vehicle or tripod, that releases subconscious fears. When fired, everyone within five yards of the impact point must make a Fright Check at -4; in addition to the usual modifiers, Mind Shield and Resistant to Psionics both provide bonuses. Repeated attacks within a 24-hour period give a cumulative +3 to resist. Victims who fail the Fright Check must make an *additional* check every time they go to sleep, for the next 1d nights.

*Jump Beacon*: Weakens space-time in a 500-yard radius, giving teleporters (including psychoportation

users; see p. 30-31) +4 on all rolls to teleport into the area. As a minor side effect, teleporters within *five* yards of the device are at -2 to teleport *away*. Runs on batteries (12 hours) or external power. \$40,000, 30 lbs.

*Null-Field Generator*: Disrupts all psi within a 10-yard radius of the device, as though affected by Psi Static (p. B78). Affects both psis within the field *and* psis attempting to affect anyone or anything within it. Runs on batteries (one week) or external power. \$50,000, 10 lbs.

*Psi-Impeder Helmet*: Makes it impossible for the wearer to use psi. Also protects the skull with DR 8. Runs on batteries (one week). \$1,250, 3 lbs.

*Trance*: This psi drug lowers a person's natural psi resistance. Each dose (up to three) gives -2 to any Will (not HT) roll he makes to resist psionics, for the next six hours. However, the subject must roll HT+3, at -1 per dose past the first, or suffer injury equal to his margin of failure and lapse into a coma! \$15/dose, neg.

### GUNNER (BEAMS) (DX-4, or other Gunner-4)

Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	RoF	Shots	ST	Bulk	Rcl	Cost
Fear Extractor	spec. (5-yd.)	18	500	60	1	12(5)	15M†	-8	1	\$80,000

**Background Skills:** Remove Computer Operation. Add Chemistry or Pharmacy (Synthetic), both (H) IQ-2 [1]-12, to the options.

\* If Mathematical Ability is taken as an advantage, the magician can shift points out of this skill to spend on other template skills, as long as its relative level remains at IQ or better.

## OCCULTIST

see *Sidekicks*, p. 13

In a scientific game, consider renaming this template "theorist" or "xenologist." In addition, the supernatural flavor of the available Contact Group and Contacts needs to change:

**Advantages:** In the second section, delete the existing Contact Group and Contacts and replace them with Contact Group (Research team, tinfoil hat club, etc.; Skill-12, 15, or 18; 9 or less; Somewhat Reliable) [5, 10, or 15] and Contacts (Mole, scientist, etc.; Skill-12, 15, or 18; 9 or less; Usually Reliable) [2, 4, or 6].

## PSI

see *Champions*, p. 14

Even more so than the crusader (pp. 6-7), the psi is dependent upon his powers. This is thus a valid champion type only if the GM allows psionics in the game (*Decisions*, *Decisions*, pp. 3-4). Of course, psi has long been a science-fiction staple – a way for authors to give their characters magical powers without breaking genre – which means it can fit even a non-supernatural setting without requiring

too much suspension of disbelief. If spirits do not exist, note that both Spirit Channeling and Spirit Communication (both *Champions*, p. 46) become inappropriate abilities.

Including aliens (see Chapter 3) into the mix adds some interesting options. Specifically, what if the psi received his powers via alien augmentation? In effect, he'd be an experiment (p. 7), but with psionics rather than Bioenhancement. This variant power (*Alien Psionics*) uses the four standard psionic Talents (*Champions*, p. 48) and psionic abilities and skills (*Champions*, pp. 45-48), but has a new power modifier (Alien Psionics, -10%) that works identically to *New Power Modifier: Alien Bioenhancement* (p. 7). In brief, the psi completely ignores *human* Anti-Psi and psychotronics, but must take the aliens as a -5-point Enemy (Watcher) who may show up to interfere any time he causes them even indirect problems.

## SAGE

see *Champions*, p. 15

The sage is an important role in *any* monster-hunting setting, whether the foes are magical mummies or angry aliens. But as written, the template is a mix of knowledge, combat, and magic – and the latter can cause problems in a game where magic doesn't exist (*Decisions*, *Decisions*, pp. 3-4). Even if magic exists, but has been switched to technomagic (see Chapter 2), the sage needs a few minor tweaks to use it.

Fortunately, with just a bit of work – and one of the following 0-point lenses – it's possible to change the sage template, either by altering the type of magic he uses or by eliminating the focus on magic and replacing it with a different emphasis altogether.

## Handy Sage

You are a skilled engineer, technician, and/or mechanic. If there's a dedicated techie on the team, you back him up with assistance; if not, you fill that support role for the team as well.

**Advantages\*:** Remove Magery 3 from the first list. Replace the third list ("Another 20 points chosen from among ST . . .") with: Another 30 points chosen from ST +1 or +2 [10/level], Artificer [10/level], Born to Be Wired (p. 11) [5/level], Contact Group (Online community, etc.; Skill-12, 15, or 18; 9 or less; Somewhat Reliable) [5, 10, or 15], Contacts (Engineer, hacker, etc.; Skill-12, 15, or 18; 9 or less; Usually Reliable) [2, 4, or 6], High Manual Dexterity [5/level], Languages [2-6/language], Signature Gear [Varies], or Versatile [5]. In the fourth list ("A further 25 points chosen from among DX . . ."), spend 50 points instead of 25.

**Primary Skills:** Replace this entire section with: Computer Operation (E) IQ [1]-16; Mathematics (Applied) (H) IQ-2 [1]-14; and Scrounging (E) Per [1]-16. • One of Esoteric Medicine (H) Per-1 [2]-15; First-Aid (E) IQ+1 [2]-17; or Physician (H) IQ-1 [2]-15. • Seven of Stealth (A) DX+1 [4]-14; Armoury (Body Armor, Melee Weapons, Missile Weapons, or Small Arms), Electronics Operation (Comm, Psychotronics, Scientific, or Security), Electronics Repair (Comm, Computers, Psychotronics, Scientific, or Security), Hazardous Materials (any), Mechanic (Automobile, Clockwork, Gasoline Engine, Motorcycle, or Wheeled), or Photography, all (A) IQ+1 [4]-17; Diagnosis, Engineer (Automobiles, Electrical, Electronics, Psychotronics, or Small Arms), or Naturalist, all (H) IQ [4]-16; Physics, Surgery, or Weird Science, all (VH) IQ-1 [4]-15; or spend 4 points for +1 to an existing skill.

**Background Skills:** Remove Computer Operation and Scrounging from the list of options. Take *eight* skills instead of seven.

\* At the GM's option, you can instead remove Magery 3, take Quick Gadgeteer [50] and Versatile [5], and then spend a total of 25 points on advantages from this lens and the fourth list of the sage template. This is only recommended if there is no techie in the group, however, to preserve niche protection.



## Holy Sage

You are empowered not by magical skill, but by your connection to a higher power. Unlike the crusader (pp. 6-7), who wields miraculous force directly, you rely upon more subtle blessings, like the brother (p. 6).

**Attributes:** Raise ST to 13 [30] and HT to 13 [30].

**Secondary Characteristics:** HP becomes 17 [8], but Basic Speed remains 7.00 [10].

**Advantages:** Remove Magery 3 from the first list. Replace the third list ("Another 20 points chosen from among ST . . .") with: Another 20 points chosen from ST +1 or +2 [10/level], Blessed [Varies], Clerical Investment [5], Contact Group (Clergy, etc.; Skill-12, 15, or 18; 9 or less; Somewhat Reliable) [5, 10, or 15]; Contacts (Engineer, hacker, etc.; Skill-12, 15, or 18; 9 or less; Usually Reliable) [2, 4, or 6], Languages [2-6/language], Higher Purpose (Defend the Faith) [5], Serendipity [15/level], True Faith [15], or improve Luck [15] to Extraordinary Luck [30] for 15 points. In the fourth list ("A further 25 points chosen from among DX . . ."), spend 50 points instead of 25.

**Disadvantages:** You may choose from the crusader's list as well.

**Primary Skills:** Replace this entire section with: Esoteric Medicine (H) Per-1 [2]-15 and Theology (Abrahamic, Shamanic, or Voodoo) (H) IQ-1 [2]-15. • Seven of Stealth (A) DX [2]-13; Armoury (Melee Weapons or Small Arms), Electronics Operation (Psychotronics), Hazardous Materials (any), Photography, or Public Speaking, all (A) IQ [2]-16; Diagnosis, Naturalist, Pharmacy (Herbal)\*, or Religious Ritual (same as Theology), all (H) IQ-1 [2]-15; Surgery (VH) IQ-2 [2]-14; Exorcism or Meditation, both (H) Will-1 [2]-15; or spend 2 points for +1 to an existing skill.

**Background Skills:** Take *eight* skills instead of seven.

\* Requires Naturalist prerequisite.

## Slayer Sage

Unlike your more academic brethren, you have honed your martial prowess nearly as much as you've focused your brilliant mind. Your greatest value is still in providing details and insight regarding The Enemy, but you are on the front line when it comes time to dispatch them.

## NBC Suit

This full-body suit prevents contact agents—like Insectoid venom (see pp. 32-33)—from reaching the user's skin. It can be worn discreetly under clothing, but the gas mask must be snapped into place (three consecutive Ready maneuvers; one to remove) to protect against area effects. The suit and mask are *disposable*, becoming unreliable after 72 hours. Because the NBC Suit skill is not used in *Monster Hunters*, assume that the suit gives a flat -1 to DX and DX-based skills, doubled to -2 if layered with other protective clothing (*Champions*, p. 55). The mask gives Filter Lungs, Immunity to Eye/Nose Irritants, No Peripheral Vision, and No Sense of Smell/Taste (which makes Discriminatory Smell useless!) when in place. DR 1\*, \$200, 4.5 lbs.

**Attributes:** Raise ST to 13 [30], DX to 14 [80], and HT to 13 [30].

**Secondary Characteristics:** HP becomes 17 [8], but Basic Speed remains 7.00 [5].

**Advantages:** In the first list, replace Magery 3 with High Pain Threshold [10]. Delete the third list (“Another 20 points chosen from among ST . . .”) completely. In the fourth list (“A further 25 points chosen from among DX . . .”), spend 45 points instead of 25 – and add the options ST +1 or +2 [10/level] and Contacts (Other hunters, etc.; Skill-12, 15, or 18; 9 or less; Usually Reliable) [2, 4, or 6].

**Primary Skills:** Replace this entire section with: *One* of Esoteric Medicine (H) Per-1 [2]-15; First-Aid (E) IQ+1 [2]-17; or Physician (H) IQ-1 [2]-15. • *Five* of Forced Entry (E) DX+1 [2]-15; Climbing or Stealth, both (A) DX [2]-14; Armoury (Melee Weapons or Small Arms), Electronics Operation (Psychotronics), Hazardous Materials (any), Photography, or Soldier, all (A) IQ [2]-16; Diagnosis, Naturalist, or Tactics, all (H) IQ-1 [2]-15; Surgery (VH) IQ-2 [2]-14; Tracking (A) Per [2]-16; or spend 2 points for +1 to an existing skill.

**Secondary Skills:** Spend another 2 points on your striking skill in the first list (for +1 to skill). Spend another 4 points on your grappling skill in the second list (for +1 to skill).

**Background Skills:** Take *eight* skills instead of seven.

## Technosage

Rather than being trained in abstract Hermetic ritualism, you use technomagic to hack your way into reality. Your Signature Gear is just as likely to be powerful computers (p. 20) as anything else, and your mundane skills include almost as much modern electronics knowledge as occult lore.

**Advantages:** In the third list (“Another 20 points chosen from among ST . . .”), add the options of Born to Be Wired (below) [5/level], Lightning Calculator [2] or Intuitive Mathematician [5], Mathematical Ability [10/level], Overclocked (p. 20) [1], or Quick-Sheathe (Device) (*Limits on Scripts*, pp. 17-18) [1].

**Primary Skills:** Replace this entire section with: Computer Operation (E) IQ [1]-16; Computer Programming (H) IQ-1 [2]-15; and Mathematics (Applied)\* (H) IQ [4]-16. • Choose four Path skills, each (VH) IQ-1 [4]-15; take the five *other* Paths at (VH) IQ-3 [1]-13. • *Six* of Fast-Draw (Device) (*Limits on Scripts*, pp. 17-18) (E) DX [1]-13; Stealth (A) DX-1 [1]-12; First Aid (E) IQ [1]-16; Armoury (Melee Weapons or Small Arms), Electronics Operation (Psychotronics), Electronics Repair (Computers), Hazardous Materials (any), Hidden Lore (Sacred Places), or Photography, all (A) IQ-1 [1]-15; Archaeology, Engineer (Electronics), Diagnosis, Naturalist, or Physician, all (H) IQ-2 [1]-14; Alchemy, Computer Hacking, Physics, Surgery, or Thaumatology, all (VH) IQ-3 [1]-13; Breath Control (H) HT-2 [1]-10; or Esoteric Medicine (H) Per-2 [1]-14.

**Background Skills:** Remove Computer Operation. Add Pharmacy (Synthetic) (H) IQ-2 [1]-14 to the options. Add the option to spend 1 point to raise any existing primary skill choice by one level.

\* If Mathematical Ability is taken as an advantage, the sage can shift points out of this skill to spend on other template skills, as long as its level remains at IQ or better.

## TECHIE

see *Champions*, p. 18

The techie is a natural fit for a scientific game – so much so, that the GM may even *require* one in the group! However, he cannot build or acquire any esoteric gear that does not exist in the campaign. For example, if psi doesn’t exist, then a techie cannot make psychotronics (and should not take psychotronic skills), regardless of how talented he is.

In a game with technomagic (see Chapter 2), the techie and witch are an *amazing* pair, as the former can turn many simple electronics (e.g., a smart TV or game console) into computers with a high enough Complexity for the latter to compile programs on. The GM may need to make frequent rulings on, say, the effective Complexity of an upgraded digital thermostat; when in doubt, err on the side of awesome.

### Born to Be Wired

This Talent (from *Sidekicks*, p. 8) benefits Computer Hacking, Computer Operation, Computer Programming, Electronics Repair (Computers) and – in games that use them – Cryptography and Expert Skill (Computer Security). *Reaction bonus:* hackers, people buying stock in your dot-com. 5 points/level.

## WARRIOR

see *Champions*, p. 19

Although the warrior has some arguably “supernatural” abilities in the form of cinematic martial skills such as Immovable Stance and Power Blow, their effects are understated enough to escape notice unless under intense scrutiny.

If there is a concern regarding this template, it’s that an influx of ultra-tech weapons may render the damage done by the warrior obsolete. Futuristic melee weapons (e.g., monowire swords) can help close this gap, but another option is to add the lens below, which trades breadth of skill for depth. Removing the wildcard Blade! and narrowing Weapon Master takes away *much* of the warrior’s versatility, but this is made up for with higher DX and much higher specific skills, allowing for precision hits and dazzling Deceptive Attacks.

### Focused Warrior

Rather than being skilled with every weapon, you have a single type that you focus on. Though you lack hyper-competency (*Champions*, p. 28), you have excellent Luck, which you save to offset the occasional bad roll in a fight.

**Attributes:** Raise DX to 16 [120].

**Secondary Characteristics:** Basic Speed becomes 7.50 [0].

Consider raising this to a round 8.00 with advantage points or lowering it to 7.00 as a disadvantage, as there’s little benefit from fractional Speed.

**Advantages:** Replace Luck with Extraordinary Luck (Aspected, Combat, -20%) [24]. Change Weapon Master to (One Weapon) [20]. In the third list (“Another 35 points chosen from among ST . . .”), add: improved Basic Speed [Varies] and Weapon Master (additional weapons) [Varies].

**Disadvantages:** Add reduced Basic Speed [Varies] to the options.

**Wildcard Skills:** Delete this section.

**Primary Skills:** Spend twice as much on each skill in your ranged-attack package (for +1 to each skill). Add: *One* of Axe/Mace, Broadsword, Rapier, Saber, Shortsword, Spear, Two-Handed Axe/Mace, or Two-Handed Sword, all (A) DX+4 [16]-20. • *Either* Knife (E) DX+2 [4]-18 or an unchosen skill from the previous list at (A) DX+1 [4]-17.

**Secondary Skills:** In the second list (“*Two* of Axe/Mace . . .”), do not select weapon skills with *both* choices; at least one should be a cinematic skill. In the third list (“*Five* of Forced Entry . . .”), choose *four* skills instead of five.

## WITCH

see *Champions*, p. 20

Unlike the sage (pp. 9-11), the witch is inextricably tied to the art of magic; if spellcasting does not suit the setting, the witch is not a viable champion. However, if technomagic (see Chapter 2) is on the table, it is easy to convert the standard witch into a potent technomancer:

**Advantages:** In the third list (“Another 20 points chosen from among FP . . .”), add the options of Born to Be Wired (p. 11) [5/level], Eidetic Memory [5] or Photographic Memory [10], Equipment Bond (any computer) [1/item], Lightning

Calculator [2] or Intuitive Mathematician [5], Mathematical Ability [10/level], Overclocked (p. 12) [1], or Quick-Sheathe (Device) (*Limits on Scripts*, pp. 17-18) [1].

**Primary Skills:** Replace this entire section with: Computer Operation (E) IQ [1]-16; Computer Programming (H) IQ+1 [8]-17; Mathematics (Applied)\* (H) IQ [4]-16; and Occultism (A) IQ-1 [1]-15. • Choose one Path skill at (VH) IQ+1 [12]-17; another Path at (VH) IQ [8]-16; *two* more Paths at (VH) IQ-1 [4]-15; and the remaining *five* Paths at (VH) IQ-3 [1]-13. • 6 points spent on any non-witch-related skills from *Know Thy Enemy* (*Champions*, p. 16). • *Two* of Fast-Draw (Device) (*Limits on Scripts*, pp. 17-18) or Innate Attack (any), both (E) DX [1]-12; Electronics Repair (Computers), Hidden Lore (Sacred Places), or Research, all (A) IQ-1 [1]-15; Archaeology or Engineer (Electronics), both (H) IQ-2 [1]-14; Alchemy, Computer Hacking, Physics, or Thaumatology, all (VH) IQ-3 [1]-13; or Breath Control (H) HT-2 [1]-10.

**Secondary Skills:** Delete Research.

**Background Skills:** Delete Computer Operation. Add Pharmacy (Synthetic) (H) IQ-2 [1]-14 to the options. You may also take any unchosen primary skill, or spend 1 point to raise any existing 1-point primary skill choice by one level.

\* If Mathematical Ability is taken as an advantage, the witch can shift points out of this skill to spend on other template skills, as long as its level remains at IQ or better.

*1,500 years ago, everybody knew the Earth was the center of the universe. 500 years ago, everybody knew the Earth was flat. And 15 minutes ago, you knew that people were alone on this planet. Imagine what you'll know tomorrow.*

– Agent K, in *Men in Black*

# CAMPAIGN TYPES

In addition to the six campaign types presented on pp. 5-6 of *GURPS Monster Hunters 1: Champions* (and fleshed out in *GURPS Monsters Hunters 2: The Mission*, pp. 35-37), a few concepts are particularly suited to games featuring aliens and conspiracies that go all the way to the top rung (of the government, military, corporations, or what have you). Slightly reworked, these can fit even a purely supernatural game; e.g., instead of secretly relocating alien immigrants, perhaps the government knows about *vampires* and sets up “bloodsucker ghettos” in half-abandoned cities.

## DEFENDERS OF EARTH

One or more alien races aren’t content to simply explore and exploit our planet; they plan to *take it over!* The campaign may begin with the PCs just beginning to realize that

something’s wrong, having full knowledge of the upcoming siege (including who’s invading and why), or anywhere in between. The less they know initially, the more early adventures should focus on learning the truth about what’s about to happen.

Any combination of lens and template can work here, though the gaming group should decide early on whether the PCs work for an organization. If so, will the agency believe them and back them in this fight, will they have to go to lengths to *convince* their bosses first, or do they have to act “off the books” while avoiding being caught? (In the last case, instead of taking a Patron, it makes more sense to take an Enemy with the Watcher option.) While alien PCs may seem problematic – particularly those from one of the races invading Earth! – remember that inhumans are seen as *traitors* to their race and thus will not have any inside information.

Assume that the invaders' plan is subtle and long-term; they won't just be showing up in saucers and blasting humanity. This isn't just for dramatic purposes; realistically, even the most well-equipped invasion force would suffer significant losses in an open conflict. Thus, they are sending advance soldiers to scout Earth and to hide weapon and equipment caches for the inevitable day of reckoning. The PCs may stumble across this prepositioned tech . . . but so may others, which can justify the government, a shadowy corporation, or even normal two-bit criminals wielding alien gear!

## INTERSTELLAR IMMIGRANTS

At least one government is fully aware of the existence of aliens but has chosen to keep the secret by literally *containing* the issue. A large, isolated, urban area – probably a small city, but possibly the ghetto of a much larger city if “sensible people” know to stay out of it – has been turned into living space for one or more alien races (masked by morphology inducers, pp. 25-26). By definition, these races must be at least nominally peaceful, which may necessitate toning down a few of the racial disadvantages. These shouldn't be removed, however, only lessened (e.g., the Reptoids don't *insist* on eating sapient beings, they just prefer it); this will reduce *open* conflict but produce an undercurrent of resentment, likely leading to black markets and criminal behavior.

This campaign assumes that the PCs are all inhuman aliens, of whatever race(s) are living in this new community, trying to keep a lid on problems within the community. They understand that if word gets out to the government that something's wrong, the Men in Black are likely to step in and eliminate not only whoever was causing the problem but also anyone even remotely related to the situation (even the victims), just to be safe. Any template fits; for motivational lenses, both law enforcement and operative assume that the champion works for a local, alien organization, not a terrestrial one.

Alternatively, this campaign can be flipped around so that the heroes are (mostly) human agents working to keep peace within this alien community. Individuals go rogue, fleeing into the general populace to cause problems. Criminal groups form, engaging in anything from drug smuggling to human trafficking. *Humans* who know The Truth infiltrate the ghetto to assault innocent aliens. The champions – who are probably law enforcement, operatives, or soldiers – are the only ones with the clearance and skills to stop these atrocities and keep things from spiraling out of control.

## SPACE COPS

When aliens start causing trouble on other planets, someone has to reign them in. Our heroes hunt dangerous and/or criminal aliens, working for either an interstellar peacekeeping force or a human-run terrestrial organization that knows The Truth. Either group may employ a mix of humans and aliens, though the percentage of humans will be *much* higher in the latter than in the former.

The operative lens may be ubiquitous – or the GM can allow *any* motivational lens but insist that a certain level of Patron must be purchased using advantage points from each character's lens and/or template. Any type of champion fits; teams will need a mix of brains, brawn, and social skill to figure out what's actually going on and then resolve the situation. Not every adventure will necessarily end in a bloodbath, as most intelligent aliens don't want to die needlessly; all of the options from *Confrontation (The Mission)*, pp. 14-17) should come up regularly.

## THE SECRECY PARADOX

*Monster Hunters* takes for granted that the existence of monsters is a secret . . . and must remain so, lest would-be heroes decide to take matters into their own hands (and die trying). However, the series *also* recommends setting up dark conspiracies (see p. 39 and *The Mission*, pp. 34-35), which requires that at least *some* people be aware of The Truth!

This is not the paradox that it seems. *Monster Hunters* assumes that the *general public* (which includes most local authorities and law enforcement) is in the dark, while many people in the shadowy underworld (where the paranormal is taken seriously) know The Truth. As for the *ruling class* – the people at the top rung of our governments, corporate conglomerates, and so on – there's wiggle room in deciding what they know:

- *Nothing*. The champions are the only ones who know what's going on! They must defend the world from threats that nobody believes in. The GM should specify how easily the secret can be exposed, from “just take minimal precautions and you're fine” to “every slip-up may destroy the charade completely.”

- *Very little*. The people in power know just enough to be dangerous. They may send their own (underinformed) teams into dangerous situations, track down the hunters to demand answers, and so on; this will invariably make the situation worse.

- *A lot*. Those in charge aren't as experienced as the heroes but they have their own protocols and hunter teams (all off-the-books). The PCs may work for a government or corporation; if not, these sponsored teams will likely be rivals and annoyances. At this level, even a few local authorities (e.g., state sheriffs and Bureau of Investigation directors) will know The Truth.

- *Almost everything*. Only the man on the street is ignorant; the people running things know what's going on. Whether officially or not, the champions are working with the 1% to protect the remaining 99%. A cover-up this massive is already a conspiracy, but further “dark conspiracies” continue to exist, representing alliances between individuals and special-interest groups.

The GM should inform the players of his decision. No matter the choice, there *will* be outliers, of course! Even if the ruling class is deemed completely unaware, a handful of politicians and CEOs will know The Truth. And in a world with an informed government, there will be some deniers who insist that it's a hoax.

## CHAPTER TWO

# TECHNOMAGIC

Just as they had feared, the cavern was completely deserted. Danielle cursed and kicked a rock. Samantha hung back a bit, obviously feeling awkward.

Everett looked around carefully. "They left recently," he pointed out. "At the locations where their lights were, there's still residual heat within the rock."

Scott returned from his hasty recon. "Well, that's a problem. There are eight other tunnels leading out of here, and if they're anywhere near as long as the one we came down, it'll take us at least an hour to check each one. And I don't think splitting up is a good idea."

Brad started drawing a circle in the dirt. "Give me a few minutes and I'll see what kind of spell I can come up with."

"Uh . . . Brad?" Samantha quietly interrupted. "A spell to find the nearest Reptoids?" When Brad nodded, she continued, "You don't have to do all that. I have one here."

As Brad paused, confused, Samantha pulled out her tablet and scrolled through her apps before touching the one she was looking for. The screen lit up brightly, as ancient symbols traced themselves on the display and the tiny speakers looped a chant. A moment later, the screen went blank . . . and then displayed an arrow pointing due east.

After a moment, Anna broke the silence. "Wait, you're a magician? Why didn't you say so?"

Samantha looked genuinely confused. "Because I'm not. My friend Pamela is. She always makes sure I have useful programs on this thing."

At heart, magic is about the imposition of willpower upon the universe, temporarily overriding the natural laws of causality and physics to accomplish something specific. Most casters take this literally and learn to focus and channel their

mental "force," essentially turning each spell into a psychic wrestling match between themselves and reality. But some have learned to harness the power of technology – specifically, of digital computing.

With the right programming, a TL8+ computer puts meat-brains to shame when it comes to precise calculations and sheer processing power. If a spell requires a particular mantra, a thaumatologically enhanced processor can repeat that mantra a millionfold in the time it takes a human caster to intone it once. Where ritual symbols must be drawn with care, a high-definition screen can use vector graphics to display them without error. Of course, a computer is only as good as its programmer, which is where the *technomage* comes in. Less "sorcerer" and more "coder who thinks outside the box," these versatile mages in the vein of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer's* Jenny Calendar or *The Laundry Files'* "Bob" Howard don't technically cast spells, but instead enable their machines to do it for them.

In some ways, technomages are more limited than standard sages and witches, as they depend greatly upon their computing devices; without at least a smartphone or similar device, technomagic is laborious, slow, and weak. However, technomages can rack up impressive bonuses from gear; their spell-scripts are easily shared with others; and, unlike normal conditional spells, many of their ritual programs can be run (cast) more than once before expiring.

This chapter focuses on the *differences* between technomagic and standard Ritual Path magic, as described in *GURPS Monster Hunters 1: Champions* (and later expanded upon in *GURPS Thaumatology: Ritual Path Magic*). Assume that anything not covered herein is unchanged from the existing system.

## THE TECHNOMAGE

A practitioner of technomagic uses the same Path skills (*Champions*, pp. 32-33) as his more traditional peers, but approaches magic from a fundamentally different perspective. In particular, he does not need to learn Thaumatology, but must replace it with *two* rather different skills:

*Mathematics (Applied)*: Understanding how specific thaumatological subroutines can affect the real world requires a precise understanding of applied mathematics. This is not considered a core skill – it has no direct effect on Path skills or spellcasting except when hand-coding (p. 19) – but it *must* be known at IQ level or better to work any technomagic.

*Computer Programming*: This is the *core skill* of technomagic; no Path skill can ever exceed Computer Programming. (Path skills are also limited to no greater than 12+Magery, as usual.)

While all spellcasting rolls are technically "computer programming" rolls, they're made against one of the Path skills, reflecting the caster's knowledge of *how to code* that particular magical effect. In contrast to Mathematics (Applied), there is no minimum Computer Programming skill required to work technomagic; as long as at least a single point has been spent on it, it is possible to begin casting spells. (Whether they're *successful* or not is another matter, of course.)

The above skills are the only ones required to work technomagic. Not even Path skills are strictly necessary, as all Paths default to Computer Programming at -6. Any Paths so defaulted cannot exceed a skill of 12, however, which is why any serious technomage will also learn several Paths.

Whether these are the same Paths that standard Ritual Path magicians use is a campaign decision; see *Dual-Casting* (p. 23).

In addition to the mandatory skills above, the following *optional* skills are commonly found among technomages. Those marked with a \* are not normally useful in a **Monster Hunters** game, but are listed here for the benefit of those using this system in a different campaign.

*Computer Hacking or Expert Skill (Computer Security)\*:* In many ways, technomagic is just “hacking reality”; thus, the ability to hack into other computers is very common among technomages.

*Computer Operation:* This is nearly ubiquitous among technomages. It is also a very useful skill for those who will benefit from their interactive scripts (p. 17).

*Cryptography\* and Mathematics (Cryptology)\*:* A natural expansion of applied computer skills, especially for those focused on eking out as many processing cycles as possible.

*Electronics Repair (Computers) and Engineer (Electronics):* The ability to design new systems and repair those that break allows a technomage to be more self-reliant. For some specific uses, see *Mods and Hacks* (p. 22).

*Mathematics (Computer Science)\*:* Most technomages have a high enough Computer Programming skill to rely on the default, but a few learn this specifically.

*Physics:* Purists insist that this skill is as mandatory as Mathematics (Applied). While this is not game-mechanically true, it is the intersection of mathematics and physics that underpins a technomage’s programs. Thus, as an *optional* rule, the GM may pull the minimum Mathematics (Applied) back to IQ-1, while adding Physics at IQ-2 or better as a co-requirement. This is always general Physics; none of the specialties (not even Paraphysics) are broad enough to cover the complexities of technomagic.

*Thaumatology:* Though it does not factor into their spellcasting at all, this skill is still useful to technomages for its theoretical knowledge. A successful roll against

Thaumatology can answer most questions about magic, regardless of the method used to cast it. As the same cannot be said about Computer Programming or Mathematics (Applied), this remains the skill of choice for mage-hunters, and is very common among even the most progressive technomages.

## BEYOND SKILLS

All magical advantages – including Magery, Magic Resistance, Ritual Adept, and the Ritual Mastery perk – give the same benefits to technomages as they do to traditional Ritual Path casters. For obvious reasons, the Talents of Born to Be Wired (p. 11) and Mathematical Ability (p. B90) are very common.

Lightning Calculator and Intuitive Mathematician are invaluable for the caster who has to hand-code (p. 19). These fit the system so well, in fact, that as an *optional* rule, the GM may declare that Intuitive Mathematician gives the same benefit as Magery 0 (avoiding the usual -5) for technomagic only, while Lightning Calculator reduces that penalty to just -3. If so, there is no special magical benefit to possessing Magery *and* one of these advantages; this rule exists mainly to justify potent NPC dabblers who lack Magery.

## JARGON

This chapter throws around a lot of computer and programming terminology, primarily to add flavor and verisimilitude. Of course, not everyone is familiar with this field of technology, so it’s important to separate the terms that *do* need to be understood (e.g., tablet, flash drive, and program) from those that are simply flavor.

Any word or phrase in the following list can be ignored if you are unfamiliar with it. All *other* jargon actually matters; if you don’t know what it is, you’ll want to look it up!

API, app, array, bloated code, compiling, constant, debugging, function, interpreter, library, runtime environment, subroutine, vector graphics.

# HACKING REALITY

Magic makes frequent use of the Law of Sympathy; a caster does something ritualistically so that the universe will echo the action elsewhere. A traditional caster might “slash” his hand with a dull knife, inflicting real, grievous wounds on a victim. Or he will focus on “scorching thoughts,” igniting a mental fire within himself until the book he’s staring at bursts into actual flames.

Technomagic relies even more heavily upon this law, by first creating a virtual description of reality within a program and then hacking that reality to produce a desired effect. This is typically repeated millions of times, until the program has built up enough of a “mana charge” to produce an actual change in the world. A certain amount of this can be preprogrammed – in particular, the initial simulation of the world is always done using a combination of established “libraries” (prewritten code packages) – but there’s no way to create a

set of libraries large enough to cover a wide range of magical effects without *also* bloating the code so much as to make it worthless. Thus, half the skill of a technomage is knowing which libraries to import, how to relate them, and which functions and subroutines to use . . . while the other half is the ability to adapt these things and create custom functions to suit the specific needs of each ritual.

There are three primary methods of programming a spell. From most commonly used to least, they are:

- Creating a *programmed script* (pp. 16-18) in advance, for later use in the field.
- Whipping up an *on-the-fly ritual* (pp. 18-19) when nothing already prepared will work.
- Manually *hand-coding* (p. 19) when deprived of useful gear.

The first two options require a Complexity 3+ computer running a thaumatological coding suite (TCS); see *Hardware and Software* (pp. 20-22) for details. The third requires nothing more than time – though standard mathematical tools (paper and pencil, a slide rule, a scientific calculator, etc.) help tremendously.

In all cases, use the standard Ritual Path magic rules to determine the energy cost of the spell and which Path to use as the casting (“coding”) skill. Note that non-adepts are limited as usual (*Champions*, p. 36) by connection, consecrated space, time, and Magery.

As much as possible, spells should be explained in terms of how the magical effect interacts with the computer on which it’s running (like the on-screen tracking beacon in the vignette on p. 14). This is *flavor*, however, and can be ignored if it truly doesn’t fit a spell. If the GM wants to make this an important part of technomagic, he can give a modest energy discount (-5% to -10% at the most) for spells described in ways that make sense as computer-assisted rituals.

## FAIRER BONUSES

Bestows a Bonus or Penalty (*Champions*, p. 34) is one of the most versatile spell modifiers in Ritual Path magic. It can represent weather magic (e.g., sleet as “Bestows a Penalty, -3 to Vision rolls, HT rolls for cold, and DX rolls for movement”), make a weapon hit harder (e.g., “Bestows a Bonus, +5 to sword damage”), and more. It is because of this potential versatility that its energy costs start modest but quickly grow.

However, many bonuses and penalties are inherently self-limiting. For example, no matter how high a skill is raised, it is subject to automatic failure on a 17 or 18. And the energy cost for added damage should arguably flatten out at a certain point, since all other damage effects do the same. Because of this, the GM may allow the following *optional* change to the Bestows a (Bonus or Penalty) table. Even with this change, he retains the right to declare that a given modifier does *not* provide diminishing returns and thus must use the cost from the original table.

In all cases, this should be a campaign-wide decision, affecting all casters equally. Letting, say, technomages use these costs while Ritual Path mages must use the originals will produce an unfair disparity in power.

Modifier	Broad	Moderate	Single
±1	5	2	1
±2	10	4	2
±3	20	8	4
±4	40	16	8
±5	60	24	12
±6	80	32	16
etc.	+20	+8	+4

## PROGRAMMED SCRIPTS

A carefully crafted program is a technomage’s best friend. Programmed scripts can be written well ahead of time, which makes them incredibly reliable, but also means that the caster has to make his best guess about what his future magical needs will be. A hard drive full of anti-undead scripts may seem like

a good idea when facing vampires . . . until you discover too late that they’re actually “goth” cultists summoning demons!

All programmed scripts must include an extra Lesser Control Magic effect, as they are the technomage’s version of charms. Once the energy cost and Path skill are determined for a given spell, coding it as a script is done in a series of steps:

1. The caster launches the thaumatological coding suite (*Software*, pp. 21-22) and sets up the APIs, libraries, user interface, etc. – optimizing these things for the spell in question. This takes a flat 60 minutes if he gives the script the option of being run interactively (p. 17), 15 minutes if not.

2. The caster begins writing custom subroutines while testing and debugging the program. Treat this exactly as *Gathering Ambient Energy* (*Champions*, p. 36), with each roll against Path skill counting as five seconds (or five minutes for non-adepts) of effort. This gathered energy represents *potential* energy, to be released when the script is actually run. A critical failure at this point reflects a misprogrammed version of the spell being accidentally triggered while debugging! If the caster has enough energy from other sources (see the next step), he may skip this step completely; the program is simple enough that it doesn’t require customization.

3. Once he’s happy with the debugging – that is, once he’s gathered enough (or almost enough) energy – the caster may make up any difference with energy from other sources (his mana reserve, sacrificing FP and HP, etc.), so that the spell has enough energy to succeed. If, in the previous step, he gathered enough energy to power the spell, he may skip this step.

4. The caster makes a final “compiling” roll as per *Casting the Spell* (*Champions*, pp. 36-37).

All rolls above are modified by *Hardware and Software* (pp. 20-22).

Once the program is complete, the technomage can leave it on his system or transfer it to another Complexity 1+ computer using any standard data-transfer method. Moving it over a local network is usually safe, but sending it over the Internet can be dangerous; rival technomages may have snooping programs running to detect such “emailed spells.” Transferring the file to a new computer automatically erases it from the old one, because the potential magical energy stored within a script cannot be duplicated via copying.

Running the spell is normally a Ready maneuver for the computer’s user as long as the computer itself is ready and the user is operating it properly; e.g., has a smartphone in his hand and turned on or is sitting down at a desktop with one hand on the mouse. The user does not have to make a skill roll (unless running the script interactively; see p. 17) and requires no magical aptitude or training.

If the spell is designed to work as soon as the program runs, it does so. For example, an undead-immolation spell might cause the nearest undead to burst into flames. Other spells can be designed to activate when a certain trigger happens, effectively casting a conditional ritual (p. 19); once the spell’s script is run, it “locks onto” the current subject or area and awaits the triggering event.

(A script “wrapped around” a conditional spell in this way needs only the one Lesser Control Magic added, not two.)

Technomagic scripts are designed to run on magically resonant machinery (*Hardware*, p. 20). If run on a computer without this feature, the spell *will* work, but the GM must roll against the device’s (HT + Complexity) afterward as the spell burns away; failure means that the machine glitches, becoming unusable for seconds equal to the margin of failure (or until given a minor repair, on a critical failure).

*You think the realm of the mystical is limited to ancient texts and relics? That bad old science made the magic go away? The divine exists in cyberspace, same as out here.*

– Jenny Calendar,  
*in Buffy the Vampire Slayer #1.8*

## Interactive Scripts

Many scripts are designed for maximum ease of use: click the icon, let it run, and watch it disappear as all of its energy “grounds out.” However, a programmer *can* code options and behind-the-scenes controls into a script, trusting its user to optimize for the current runtime environment. If done right, this can reduce the strain on the hardware and software, allowing the script to survive its activation.

An interactive script never *has* to be run interactively; an uninformed user can simply click the icon and stand back. However, if run interactively, the user must make a Computer Operation roll to configure the script as it is being run. (This is possible in such a brief time only because it happens at the speed of thought.) This roll is at -4 if the user has no magical training – but as little as 1 point in Occultism will suffice *as long as* the caster has given the user careful instructions. It also takes interface modifiers (*Computer Table*, p. 20); e.g., it is at -1 if the script is being run on a laptop or tablet and -2 on a smartphone.

If the Computer Operation roll fails, reduce the spell’s margin of success by the user’s margin of failure, to a minimum of 0. That is, the spell *will* still work, but probably not as well as it otherwise would have. On a *critical* failure, the spell fails as well, though the GM may invoke any of its quirks if that sounds like fun!

If the user succeeds, however, there’s a chance that the environment may be stable enough for the script to stick around. The base target number for this is the Computer Operation roll’s margin of success. If the computer running the script is magically resonant (*Hardware*, p. 20), add its Complexity. If the GM rolls this number or less on 3d, the script avoids burning out and is available to run again (which also keeps non-magically resonant computers safe). With enough skill and a bit of luck, a technomage can make use of this to cast the same spell several times with no additional energy needed!

*Example:* Pamela creates a protection spell as an interactive script for her friend Samantha (who puts it on her Complexity

3 tablet) and then makes a second one for herself (on her own magically resonant Complexity 3 smartphone). When Pamela runs the script interactively, her Computer Operation roll (at -2 for using a smartphone) succeeds by 5; the GM rolls 3d against a target number of 5 (margin) + 3 (Complexity) = 8. On an 8 or less, Pamela may run the same script again later. When Samantha configures and runs hers, her Computer Operation roll (at -1 for using a tablet) succeeds by 6 – but her computer is not magically resonant, so the GM must roll a 6 or less for her script to stick around. (If that rolls fails, her computer must roll against HT+3 or glitch briefly from the spell burning out of its memory!)

## Limits on Scripts

A technomage does not have a *personal* limit on active scripts. In theory, he could craft hundreds, all of which would retain their potency indefinitely. However, there is a strict limit on how many scripts each *device* can store, equal to the Complexity of that device, doubled if magically resonant. Thus,

a Complexity 1 smartphone can store one script, while a magically resonant Complexity 4 desktop could store eight.

Though they can pass transiently through mail servers while being emailed, scripts cannot be *stored* on a server or otherwise “in the cloud” – something about being on a server designed for remote access causes the magic to fizzle. They can also be transferred via flash cards or USB flash drives (a well-made one can hold one script), in which case they count as being loaded onto whichever computer they’re plugged into at the moment. Most technomages buy color-coded flash drives by the dozen, to avoid overloading their main computer. Treat an external hard drive (even a *huge* one or an array) as a flash drive: it has no Complexity and can hold only one script. Scripts cannot be stored on static, disposable media, such as CDs and DVDs.

The capacity of portable (flash) storage is fixed, but a computer’s limits *can* be pushed a bit. If a system’s limit is exceeded, the GM will roll 1d every time the number of scripts changes (e.g., because a new one was added or because one was run and then vanished normally). If the number rolled is equal to or less than the excess, one randomly chosen script on the device disappears. If the device is *still* over its limit, the GM will immediately roll again, and so on, until either he rolls above the excess or the limit is met. You *can* use Luck on this roll.

*Example:* Pamela’s home desktop (Complexity 4, magically resonant) has 10 scripts on it; she’s already two over her limit. She programs a new one (now three over), and when the GM rolls 1d, he gets a 1. One of the 11 scripts immediately disappears, leaving 10; since the desktop is still two over the limit, the GM rolls again, getting a 2. So another script disappears, leaving nine, and the GM rolls *again*. The roll is another 2, which is greater than the excess, so he stops rolling.

Technomages in the field will usually carry a high-end laptop with a bandoleer of flash drives, a few expensive smartphones, and/or a bandoleer of cheap smartphones (“burners”). Or they can save money with PDAs instead of smartphones, but those are getting harder to find every year!

In all cases, it's useful to know how long it takes to swap all of these devices in and out:

*Plugging in a USB Flash Drive:* If the tablet, laptop, or desk-top is ready, this requires one Ready maneuver to retrieve the flash drive, another to plug it into the computer, and then a third to run the script.

*Plugging in a Flash Card:* If the PDA, smartphone, or tablet is ready, this requires one Ready maneuver to retrieve the flash card, *two more* to plug it into the computer (it's tiny!), and then a third to run the script. A DX or DX-based Computer Operation roll (modified by High Manual Dexterity or Ham-Fisted) can cut the middle step to a single Ready maneuver, but failure wastes that turn and *critical* failure means you dropped the card!

*Using a Stowed Smartphone or PDA:* It takes one Ready maneuver to retrieve the device and then a second one to run the script. See above if you have to *also* insert a flash card into it.

If the device is kept in a pouch or pocket instead of a bandoleer, retrieving it takes 1d Ready maneuvers instead of one.

The times above assume that you don't already have a flash drive plugged in, a smartphone in hand, etc. To swap *between* two devices, you must first stow the old one (which requires *two* consecutive Ready maneuvers) *or* drop it onto the ground (a free action). Unplugging a flash card (but not a USB drive) adds one Ready maneuver to either decision, due to its small size.

To mitigate these times somewhat, champions can learn Fast-Draw (Device) and the accompanying perk Quick-Sheath (Device). The former turns retrieval into a free action while the latter does the same with stowing (saving *two* turns!), each contingent on a successful Fast-Draw roll.

## THE POWER OF PLACE

Technomagic is affected by all of the factors listed under *Gathering Ambient Energy* (**Champions**, p. 36). This includes places of power, which provide a bonus on "coding and debugging rolls" (the equivalent of energy-gathering rolls), simply because the local area is more friendly and open to magical manipulation of *any* sort. And ritually desecrated grounds hamper a technomage just as surely as they do a Ritual Path mage, for similar reasons.

At the GM's option, some strange places, such as where dark matter has crashed into the Earth, may count as places of power *only* for technomagic, while others empower only Ritual Path magic. To take this even further, assume that "standard" places of power only help Ritual Path casters, while technomages benefit from places which resonate with *computing* or *technological* energy. A small business' server room might give +1 while the NSA's would give +5. Or the bonus may be based on how long a technological marvel has been in use; e.g., a dam used for power since TL6 gives +3 at TL8, while an old TL7 missile silo gives +1.

### Realistic Timing

The above rules for plugging in flash drives and cards assume that the computer is able to see and load programs the *moment* the storage device is plugged in. This is incredibly generous, befitting a cinematic game like **Monster Hunters**.

As an *optional* rule, the GM can secretly roll 1d+2 and subtract the Complexity of the computer. This is the number of seconds (minimum 0) that it takes the machine to mount (load and read) the flash drive or card. No action is required on the user's part other than waiting; he doesn't even have to watch the screen, as the device can be set up to beep or flash when ready. Once the storage device is mounted, he can take the final Ready maneuver to run the program.

*Example:* Samantha has a bandoleer of USB flash drives from her friend Pamela, including a ward that she needs *right now*. On her first turn, she succeeds at a Fast-Draw (Device) roll to grab it as a free action and then takes a Ready maneuver to plug it into her Complexity 3 tablet. The GM secretly rolls 1d+2 and subtracts 3, for a delay of two seconds. On Samantha's second turn, the GM tells her it isn't mounted; she keeps the tablet ready in her off hand and draws a silenced pistol. On her third turn, it still isn't loaded, so she fires a few shots. On her fourth turn, the GM tells her it's ready; she drops her gun to the ground and takes a Ready maneuver to run the ward script.

This rule can add suspense and tension . . . or frustrate players. Use it with caution!

## ON-THE-FLY RITUALS

If a technomage lacks a ready-made script, he can launch a real-time interpreter and whip something up on the spot. While this may sound rash, it has the advantage of being tailor-made to this specific situation, so the caster can (safely) leave out most of the redundancies that would normally be called for.

Creating a ritual requires a ready Complexity 3+ computer running a thaumatological coding suite (TCS). The technomage begins putting subroutines together, accumulating potential energy, much as he would when creating a programmed script. For game mechanics, treat this exactly as *Gathering Ambient Energy* (**Champions**, p. 36); each programming roll is made against the appropriate Path skill and takes five seconds (five minutes for non-adepts). This can be reduced by the usual second (or minute) per -1 to the gathering roll. It is modified by *Hardware and Software* (pp. 20-22).

Once the caster is close to generating enough potential energy, he may tap into other sources such as his mana reserve and sacrificed FP or HP to make up the difference. There is normally no roll required for this.

When the full energy required is reached, the caster must make one final roll to compile and run the ritual. Treat this exactly as *Casting the Spell* (**Champions**, pp. 36-37), except that it's modified by *Hardware and Software* (pp. 20-22).

After the spell is cast, there is no program left behind; if the technomage wants to cast this spell again, he'll need to create it again on the fly. A magically resonant computer is unaffected by the ritual "burning away" like this, but if it was compiled and cast on one without this feature, roll its (HT + Complexity) exactly as for the wake of a programmed script (pp. 16-18).

## TECHNO-ALCHEMY

If the GM allows Ritual Path magicians to create alchemical elixirs (*Thaumatology: Ritual Path Magic*, pp. 28-30), it's only fair to let technomages do the same. After all, technomagic is just as capable of making drastic physical changes in the world, including transmuting a bottle of mixed strangeness into a powerful concoction. Note that it will fit their "feel" more if their elixirs have expiration dates rather than other limits.

Use the rules as written except for the following changes:

- A technomage's elixirs take more modern forms. They can create pills (must be swallowed; treat as powder for that purpose), injectables (an invasive version of ointment, but safe to handle without gloves), atomizers (like a grenade, but cannot be thrown), and drinks (which often resemble energy drinks).
- While their adherence to modern biochemistry limits what techno-chemists can concoct, it also makes their

alchemy potentially more reliable. Before creating an elixir, a technomage may roll against Chemistry or Pharmacy, at +1 if he knows both skills. This roll is not modified by alchemy lab quality. Critical success gives +2 to *all* rolls to create the elixir, success gives +1, failure gives -1, and critical failure gives -2.

- A technomage's alchemy kit costs and weighs the same as a "standard" one, but its trappings are almost entirely modern, with nary a pentagram or pestle to be found. Because of this, a techno-alchemy workspace (regardless of quality) counts as improvised equipment for a standard Ritual Path alchemist, and vice versa. On the positive side, a fully stocked chemistry or pharmacy lab is almost as good as an alchemy kit for a technomage, providing just -1 worse than its usual modifier. For example, an average chemistry lab (no modifier to Chemistry rolls) would inflict only -1 to Alchemy rolls for a technomage - better than the usual -2 for improvised equipment!

## CONDITIONAL RITUALS

By adding an additional Lesser Control Magic effect, a technomage may create a conditional ritual (*Champions*, p. 38). This follows the standard rules: he must set a trigger for it, can no longer cancel it, and so on.

Technomages prefer to use programmed scripts, and are uncomfortable (at least, compared to their Ritual Path counterparts) juggling multiple "hung" spells. A technomage suffers no penalties for having conditional spells hanging . . . until the number exceeds twice his Magery. Past that, every additional hung spell inflicts -1 to *all* of his technomagic skill rolls.

Dormant scripts do not count against this limit; a technomage may have *dozens* of scripts (on many different devices) all waiting to be run. However, if one of these scripts is run, that then casts a conditional spell (e.g., a script that, when run, casts the conditional ritual "turn me invisible if I'm attacked" upon the user), that conditional spell is now hanging and counts against this limit. A smart technomage limits how many conditional spell-scripts he hands out!



## HAND-CODING

Take away a technomage's toys and you're left with one very unhappy magician. Give him plenty of time to plot revenge afterward and you're likely to regret doing it. Because a technomage *can* do all of the necessary calculations of an on-the-fly ritual (p. 18) the hard way . . . it's just incredibly tedious and difficult.

The first rules change is that rolls are made against the *lower* of the appropriate Path skill and Mathematics (Applied).

This is when theory matters above all else! If there is a penalty for using three or more Paths, apply that penalty *after* determining which skill is being used.

The other major alteration is that the modifier for the hardware and software being used changes dramatically. Determine what tools the technomage has access to and use the *single* most favorable option of the following:

*None (it must all be done in your head):* -15

*None (but with Eidetic Memory):* -12

*None (but with Photographic Memory):* -10

*Pencil and paper:* -10

*Simple calculator\*:* -9

*Slide rule\*:* -8

*Lightning Calculator advantage:* -8

*Scientific calculator:* -7

*Complexity 1 computer without TCS:* -7

*Complexity 2 computer without TCS:* -6

*Complexity 3+ computer without TCS:* -5

*Intuitive Mathematician advantage:* -5

\* Assumes you *also* have either some way to write things down or Photographic Memory. Add another -2 if you have only Eidetic Memory or -5 if you have no way to record your work.

Fortunately, this is one of the *rare* situations where *Time Spent* (p. B346) may be combined with magic, but strictly to offset this penalty; it will never give a net bonus and cannot be combined with taking a skill penalty to speed rolls up. Thus, an adept could use hand-coding to create a technomagic spell on a mundane desktop computer at no penalty by offsetting the -5 for the computer with +5 for taking 30x as long . . . which means every energy-gathering attempt would take 150 seconds (2.5 minutes), tapping into energy sources would take 30 seconds each, and if the initial spellcasting roll failed, he'd have to wait (margin of failure)x30 seconds before trying again! At which point, whomever took his toys had better be far, far away . . .

# HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE

For anything other than hand-coding (p. 19), technomagic requires at *least* a Complexity 3 computer (p. B472) running a thaumatological coding suite (TCS). In practice, however, most technomages want a high-end system with heavy customization. After all, more computing power means more *magical* power. (And as always, you cannot use a ritual to become better at magic – which means that magical enhancements to a device’s Complexity do *not* apply for the purpose of technomagic!)

## HARDWARE

The *Computer Table* (below) greatly expands upon *Computers (Champions)*, p. 54, adding a much wider range of devices for champions to use. In it, “C” is used as an abbreviation for Complexity; e.g. “C2” means Complexity 2. The cost to make such a device magically resonant is +19 CF based on the *standard* model, and is thus a flat cost regardless of

quality. Bleeding-edge devices are not available to the general public; they represent experimental prototypes, secret intelligence-agency gear, and so on. The GM may choose to restrict them to those with an appropriate Patron, make them a reward for an adventure, etc.

Wearables, printed computers, smartphones, PDAs, tablets, and laptops run for five hours before needing recharging, or indefinitely if plugged into external power. For some devices, an extended battery pack is available that extends this to 20 hours; see below. These time limits are for *active* use; the user can put a device into standby to save battery life, though it takes a Ready maneuver to wake it up. All other computers use external power. Every system can network via Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, etc.

All computers have HT 10 and DR 1 (if 1 lb. or less) or DR 2 (if more than 1 lb.). Their accessories have HT 10 and DR 0. Use the “Unliving/Machine” column of the *Object Hit Points Table* (p. B558) to determine HP based on weight.

### New Perk: Overclocked

You have a designated computer which just . . . *resonates* with you. For the purpose of *you* storing *your* scripts in it (*Limits on Scripts*, pp. 17-18), double its effective Complexity. For example, in a magically resonant C4 laptop, you could store 16 rituals. This perk synergizes well with Equipment Bond and Signature Gear.

### Computer Accessories

*Battery Pack, PDA or Smartphone*: \$50, 0.2 lb.

*Battery Pack, Laptop or Tablet*: \$150, 1 lb.

*Flash Card*: Useful for transferring files; made well enough to hold one script. \$50, neg.

*USB Flash Drive*: Like the flash card, but easier to grab and use. \$50, 0.03 lb.

## Computer Table

Computer Type	Standard	Advanced	Bleeding-Edge	Magically Resonant	Notes
Smartglasses (0.03 lb.)	C1/\$300	C2/\$1,250	–	+\$5,700	[1]
Wearable Computer (0.05 lb.)	C1/\$100	C2/\$1,050	–	+\$1,900	[2]
Printed Computer (0.05 lb.)	–	C1/\$1,200	C2/\$25,200	+\$4,750	[3, 4]
PDA, Basic (0.1 lb.)	C1/\$60	–	–	+\$1,140	[4]
Smartphone, Basic (0.4 lb.)	C1/\$55	–	–	+\$1,045	[4, 5]
PDA, Full (0.3 lb.)	C2/\$210	C3/\$2,110	C4/\$50,110	+\$3,990	[4]
Smartphone, Full (0.4 lb.)	C2/\$260	C3/\$2,160	C4/\$50,160	+\$4,940	[4]
Tablet (0.9 lb.)	C2/\$150	C3/\$2,050	C4/\$50,050	+\$2,850	[6]
Laptop (2.5 lbs.)	C3/\$2,050	C4/\$21,050	C5/\$501,050	+\$38,950	[6]
Desktop (17 lbs.)	C3/\$1,500	C4/\$20,500	C5/\$500,500	+\$28,500	[7]
Microframe (52 lbs.)	C4/\$10,500	C5/\$200,500	C6/\$5,000,500	+\$199,500	[7]
Mainframe (412 lbs.)	C5/\$100,500	C6/\$2,000,500	C7/\$50,000,500	+\$1,909,500	[7]

### Notes

[1] All rolls to code or configure are at -2. In addition, coding, configuring, and even *running* a script requires the user to state each command (somewhat loudly). As of the mid-2010s, smartglasses are only available as *advanced* wearables.

[2] Represents a smartwatch, pendant, or similar tiny computer. All rolls to code or configure are at -5, and launching a script takes *two* Ready maneuvers unless the user succeeds at a DX or DX-based Computer Operation roll (modified by High Manual Dexterity or Ham-Fisted).

[3] A flexible computer, about 4”x7”, printed on fabric – typically inside of a jacket as an emergency backup computer.

The cost of the magically resonant modifier is based on a *theoretical* standard model which, at TL8, would be \$250 but only C0 (and thus useless). At higher TLs (p. 21), this standard model becomes a viable option.

[4] All rolls to code or configure are at -2.

[5] Anyone with Status 0+ may start with one basic smartphone for free (assume cost of living covers it). This entry covers a replacement or an additional, prepaid (“burner”) phone.

[6] All rolls to code or configure are at -1.

[7] Includes monitor, keyboard, mouse, etc.

## SOFTWARE

Coding anything – including programmed scripts (pp. 16-18) and on-the-fly rituals (p. 18) – requires a computer running at least a basic thaumatological coding suite (TCS). Higher-quality suites will produce better results (add the bonus to *all* rolls to perform technomagic, from gathering energy to casting the spell) but require high-Complexity computers to run. The computer running the TCS does not have to be magically resonant.

*Stolen TCS*: -1 to the final casting roll only; otherwise, no modifier. Installs in about 10 minutes. Complexity 3 – unless you want to steal a Complexity 5 or 7 version, despite gaining no benefits from doing so! Free.

*Basic TCS*: No modifier to technomagic rolls. Installs in about an hour. Complexity 3, \$1,000.

*Good TCS*: +1 to all technomagic rolls. Installs in about two hours. Complexity 5, \$10,000.

*Fine TCS*: +2 to all technomagic rolls. Installs in about three hours. Complexity 7, \$100,000.

The penalty for compiling with stolen (“pirated”) coding software *replaces* the other modifiers; it does not stack with them. This drawback is neither a moral lesson nor a magical curse. The license that comes with purchased software includes access to updates specifically designed for *that* computer’s hardware and operating system. By definition, stolen software was optimized for someone *else’s* computer and thus does not work as well.

### Digital Grimoires

A grimoire in digital form is essentially a database – a custom digital library of subroutines, constants, and functions specifically designed to be used with a single ritual. It doubles the time required to code the ritual (grimoires are memory hogs), but there is no other drawback. Digital grimoires cost the same as standard, physical ones (*Champions*, pp. 56-57) and must be installed into the TCS on the computer being used to create the program, which takes about an hour. (Uninstalling one takes about 10 minutes.) The technomage *can* install the grimoire on multiple computers, as long as he never uses the suite on more than one at a time. Bad metaphysical things happen when multiple copies of a grimoire are open at once!

Once a copy of the grimoire has been loaded into a given coding suite, the grimoire is considered “in use” every time that TCS is up and running, whether it’s being used to compile that ritual or a completely different one. Thus, while technomages can share digital grimoires with trusted friends, they have to coordinate *very carefully* to avoid using their grimoire-enhanced suites at the same time. If that ever happens, see result 4 on the *Shared Grimoire Table* (p. 22).

Some cash-strapped casters find an online circle of technomages who agree to share copies of a single grimoire, setting up an alert to show when any of them are using it. This “shareware” arrangement is not perfectly reliable, but offers great savings as they will split the cost of the grimoire among themselves (typically -0.8

CF). However, every time the caster uses a TCS with that grimoire installed, he must roll 3d on the *Shared Grimoire Table*. He can use Luck on this roll.

Alternatively, the caster can simply *steal* the grimoire via various methods, paying nothing! However, any grimoire available “in the wild” like that is being made available to *many* mages . . . Treat it as a shareware grimoire (above) except roll 2d (not 3d) on the *Shared Grimoire Table*.

## HIGHER TLS

*Monster Hunters* is set in TL8, the first age in which technomagic becomes truly possible. But what of the future? If you’re using these rules in a different setting, all of the Complexity values listed under *Hardware* (p. 20) change:

TL	Complexity	TL	Complexity
9	+2	11	+5
10	+4	12	+6

As devices increase in Complexity, they become able to hold far more programmed scripts without risking stability. Just as important, it’s easier for them to run high-end thaumatological coding suites; at TL10, even a basic tablet is C7, easily able to run a fine TCS. (And if the *Software Cost Table* on p. 25 of *GURPS Ultra-Tech* is used, that suite costs a mere \$1,000!)

In most campaigns, this upgrade will actually help *maintain* the balance between magic and technology. When common devices can turn people invisible, allow wall-walking, and cure all diseases, magic *needs* a boost to remain a viable option! The only balance issues come if other magic systems exist as well; if so, the easiest fix may be to find a way to power them up similarly . . . or to declare a particular type of miracle off-limits to tech *and* technomagic, leaving it the exclusive domain of a more archaic system. Alternatively, any effect which could be accomplished via technology may have its energy cost halved or even quartered, as the “power of consensual reality” allows the Ritual Path mage to more easily coax the effect out of the universe.

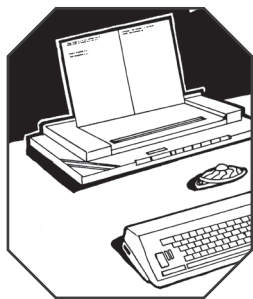
### Lower Tls

Technomagic only really comes into its own with TL8’s digital computers and networking. Before that, most technomages would have to hand-code (p. 19), at which point standard RPM is a better fit for most games.

However, with computers created using pp. 19-22 of *GURPS High-Tech* – and a GM willing to allow the fast (+1C, +19 CF) and genius (+2C, +49 CF) options at lower Tls – it is theoretically possible to create programmed scripts and on-the-fly spells in an earlier setting. A TL6 fast, mechanical megacomputer could just barely run a basic TCS, taking up a whole building to do so. And a late-TL7 genius, transistor microframe could do the same in a “portable” 65-lb. package.

In all cases, neither networking nor portable external storage exists, so scripts must be stored within the computer’s “memory” (whatever that means for the system in question). “Copying” a script usually means physically packing that memory into boxes, carrying it to the new computer, and manually loading it.

In general, digital grimoires are available only for fairly common spells. However, it's possible to find someone willing to *create* one for an unusual spell. If the creator retains the right to recreate and license the grimoire to others, the cost is unchanged; if not, +2 CF. A custom-made grimoire is, by definition, not available stolen or as shareware.



## MODS AND HACKS

Not every upgrade requires paying retail. The tech-savvy can improve their own hardware *and* software . . . to an extent. Grimoires are an exception to this; a more potent grimoire must be *created*, an option not normally available to *Monster Hunters* PCs (though one explored on p. 32 of *Thaumatology: Ritual Path Magic*).

Hardware can be upgraded one step at most, either from standard to advanced *or* from advanced to bleeding-edge.

This requires parts costing half the difference between the two; e.g., upgrading a standard laptop to an advanced one costs half of (\$21,050 - \$2,050), or \$9,500 in parts. The redesign and upgrade require 10 hours of work and a roll against the *lower* of Engineer (Electronics) or Electronics Repair (Computers) at -6 for a standard device; this becomes 25 hours of work and -8 for an advanced one. Critical failure destroys the new parts; normal failure lets you try again, but at a cumulative -2.

A thaumatological coding suite can be further "tuned up" to work with one specific system, allowing a stolen suite to act as a basic one, a basic one to act as good, *or* a good one to act as fine; it can only be upgraded one step. Its actual Complexity does not change. This requires 25 hours of work and a roll against the *lower* of Engineer (Electronics) and Computer Programming at -8 for a stolen or basic TCS; this becomes 50 hours of work and -10 for a good one. Critical failure means you don't "get" the synergy and cannot retry; normal failure lets you try again, but at a cumulative -2.

In all cases above, *Time Spent* (p. B346) can be used for a bonus (or to rush things). During a long stretch of downtime, it's easiest to assume that the maximum time is being taken, for +5.

### Shared Grimoire Table

- 3 or less** – Several instances of the grimoire happened to open up simultaneously, causing a systemic conflict! All copies of this grimoire, and the coding suites in which they're installed, become corrupted beyond repair and must be reinstalled from scratch. Every device on which the grimoire was installed must roll HT-5; failure means it is unusable until given a minor repair, while critical failure requires a major repair.
- 4** – Another instance of the grimoire is in use. The copy on this device (or on each such device, if you and your friends are the reason this is happening!) becomes corrupted beyond repair, as does the TCS in which it's installed. You must reinstall them to use technomagic on this computer again.
- 5** – If you are using a stolen grimoire, treat this as result 4. If you are using a shareware grimoire, another instance is in use *but* the alerts actually did their job and warned you in time. You cannot code on any device with this grimoire installed, but your software will alert you when it frees up again (typically in 1d×1d minutes).
- 6 or more** – No issues.

# WHERE STRANGE FORCES INTERSECT

As first discussed in *Decisions, Decisions* (pp. 3-4), the GM must decide whether to use technomagic and, if so, whether it replaces or coexists with standard Ritual Path magic (RPM). Of these choices, it's the last that raises the most questions. What happens when Ritual Path casters and technomages share the same setting?

## MAGIC VS. TECHNOMAGIC

When it comes to Meta-Magic, the default assumption is that magic is magic. A Ritual Path spell can overwrite, dispel, or alter a technomagic spell as easily as it could another RPM ritual, and vice versa.

Changing this can add flavor to the game, though it should work both ways to maintain balance. For example, what if *Stacking Spells* (*Champions*, p. 37) were tracked per spell system? A person under an RPM Lesser Strengthen Body could *also* have a technomagic Lesser Strengthen Body spell active at the same time! And if one gave +2 to ST while the other gave +3, he'd get the full +5. A team with both types of casters would be fearsome.

In addition to the above *or* as an alternative to it, the GM could rule that each magic system takes a flat -5 when countering, affecting, overwriting, or otherwise interacting with the other. That would mean that if a person were under a ST +2 boost from technomagic, an RPM spell to overwrite that with ST +3 would take -5 to the final casting roll due to the clash of magical energies.

## UBIQUITY VS. RARITY

Simply declaring that one type of magic is the standard, while the other is rare and unusual, will go a long way toward differentiating the two. The obvious choice is to make technomagic the rare one, since it joined the *Monster Hunters* series late in the game.

Be aware, though, that this will invariably have the effect of skewing the numbers the wrong way. Players want their characters to be unique and special, which means that most if not *all* of the casters on a team will likely use whichever system is designated "rare."



If the GM wants the team to be a microcosm of the setting, he may wish to charge a modest Unusual Background cost for access to the rare system, to make it a less appealing option.

## GOOD VS. EVIL

One of the simplest ways to take advantage of having two magic systems without confusing the issue is to declare that one is the “good” system used by the heroes and one is the “evil” one reserved for The Enemy. It doesn’t have to be phrased in such an ultra-simplified manner, of course. Generally, if one system appeals only to dark forces, there’s a *reason*. The GM’s challenge is to come up with that reason. Here are a few suggestions:

*Energy Source:* Both types of casters can gather ambient energy and tap mana reserves (it changes the system *far* too much to leave those out). But their options *past* that are severely limited. The “good” system allows for drawing energy only from voluntary sacrifice, while the “evil” system accepts only involuntary sacrifice and natural life-force; see *Shortcuts to Power (GURPS Monster Hunters 3: The Enemy, pp. 35-36)*.

*Divine Favor:* The Powers That Be (that is, the gods and loas behind Mysticism) have passed judgment upon the two systems and given one their approval. Anyone who uses the “evil” system cannot benefit from standard Mysticism: crusaders cannot heal him, their prayers will not help him, and so on. Even for a moral relativist, it’s just *smarter* to use the magic that TPTB prefer! (Of course, the GM could be mean and decide that different religions favor different systems . . .)

*Dark Pacts:* The “evil” system relies heavily on *Assisting Spirits* (see *GURPS Thaumatology, p. 90*), *Corruption* (see *GURPS Horror, p. 146*), or both. While it is theoretically possible to use this type of magic without becoming a twisted monster, the odds of doing so are unlikely. For detailed advice on merging these concepts, see “Alternative Ritual Path Magic” in *Pyramid #3/66: The Laws of Magic*.

## DUAL-CASTING

If champions have access to RPM and technomagic (*Decisions, Decisions, pp. 3-4*), it will likely be a matter of seconds before a player asks, “Can I use *both* systems?”

The simplest decision is no, the two systems are completely different ways of manipulating mana. This means that an RPM caster can *never* learn technomagic and vice versa. This is a bold option that throws the two styles into stark contrast.

For more of a compromise, casters *can* learn both systems of magic, but must buy Magery, Ritual Adept, Ritual Mastery, and all Path skills separately – once for each flavor. Note Magery as “Magery (Ritual Path)” or “Magery (Technomagic),” buy Path skills as “Path of Body (Ritual Path)” or “Path of Chance (Technomagic),” and so on. In effect, there is no overlap or connection between the two styles; dual-casters have two completely separate sets of magical traits that they may switch between at will.

## A CHARMING DILEMMA

Technomages and Ritual Path casters balance their conditional spells in very different ways, but on the average, the differences are a wash. The former depend heavily on available equipment to store their scripts (and can’t hold nearly as many hung spells), while the latter keep things more personal by tracking everything as part of a single pool.

When it comes to handing out spells for the team to use, though, a technomage with a high budget (to buy his friends lots of flash drives and “burner” phones) arguably has an edge. Because of that, the GM may wish to give Ritual Path casters access to the following *optional* rule.

### Transferring Charms

A caster may transfer “mystical ownership” of any physical conditional object (a charm, potion, etc.) to another person, thereby freeing one of his conditional spell “slots.” A non-mage will have slots available equal to his Thaumatology skill, calculated as his IQ-7 default if necessary. Yes, this means the average person uses their default of 3! Still, those are three personal slots that the caster doesn’t have to dedicate to charms for this person.

The transference itself is an hour-long process per “gift,” or it can be built into the casting ritual (requiring no extra time) if the subject is present throughout the entire creation ceremony. The transfer must be voluntary for both parties. The charm cannot be transferred back (or to a new person) later.

There is one restriction that makes the charm slightly less useful: afterward, it will work only if activated by, or on behalf of, its new owner. Thus, once the charm has been transferred, it is no longer something that can be freely passed around to protect or work for whomever holds it. (This prevents casters from turning their parties into “charm banks” with no repercussions or limits.)

If using the rules for buying charms (*Thaumatology: Ritual Path Magic, p. 27*), it may be convenient to assume that sellers have some sort of unique trait allowing them to facilitate this transfer at some distance from the original caster. This way, purchasers don’t have to worry about their bought charms suddenly expiring.

The most permissive option is for the GM to allow casters to wield both systems using the *same* magical traits: one Magery advantage, one Ritual Adept advantage, and one set of Path skills. However, there needs to be a cost for this (and “you have to learn one or two new core skills” isn’t enough). Being able to transition effortlessly between Hermetic power and processing power requires the new Unusual Background (Dual-Caster). Its cost is 1/5 the total cost of the caster’s Magery and Ritual Adept. (This is equivalent to the cost of buying those advantages as their own alternative abilities, though this is not what is actually happening.)

*Example:* The GM allows Pamela, a technomage adept, to become a dual-caster; fortunately, she already has an excellent Thaumatology skill. Because she has Magery 5 [55] and Ritual Adept [40], she must purchase an Unusual Background costing  $(55+40)/5 = 19$  points.

# CHAPTER THREE

# THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE

"Scott, the leader's getting away!"

Scott pointed the alien flame-gun (it had **way** too much range to call it a flamethrower) down the hospital hallway and blasted the head Reptoid in the back. "Blam! I **love** this thing! Totally my new favorite toy!" Then he noticed the fire spreading. "Uh-oh, Brad?"

Brad nodded and cracked one of his charms, snuffing out the fire instantly. "It's ironic that I made these to counter the Reptoids, but have mainly just kept **your** fires under control."

"Hey man, whatever works," Scott said as he started dragging the alien's body toward the laundry cart they'd been using for body storage. "Maybe you and I can be a superhero team now: Fire and Ice. Catchy, right?"

Suddenly the door at the end of the hall burst open. Scott instinctively threw a sheet over the Reptoid and moved behind cover, before realizing it was Anna. "Jeez, you gave me a heart attack, girl."

"Great! We're like two floors above the Emergency Room, so it'll be a short trip. Anyway, Danielle and Samantha pulled the ladies to safety and even managed to get them admitted without raising any eyebrows."

"Really?" Scott was genuinely surprised. "How'd they avoid a million questions?"

Anna gave her best patronizing smile, "Because everyone is more concerned about the explosions they heard. Up here. From **that**." She nodded to the fire-gun. "In fact, I'm pretty sure the police are on their way."

Brad's jaw dropped, "What? But we've got six alien corpses here!"

"Yes, and Everett has the truck backed up underneath that window there. So let's get to tossing."

As they threw the first dead Reptoid out the window, Brad turned to Scott. "So, about the whole 'Fire and Ice' thing . . ."

"Yeah, I know, I know. I'll save her for special occasions." Scott sighed. "At least, until I figure out how to build her a silencer."

A team of technology-armed champions needs some pseudoscientific foes to fight! Admittedly, there's no reason your handy sages and technomages can't continue to do battle with the undead, spirits, and critters of **GURPS Monster Hunters 3: The Enemy** – in fact, *A Thin Veneer of Plausibility* (pp. 47-48) aims to help you do just that. But this chapter exists to scratch an itch that's long been missing from **Monster Hunters** . . . extraterrestrial threats.

The tradition of fighting aliens may not go back as far as stories of ghosts and curses, but its recency makes it no less iconic. Films like *Aliens* and *Predator* are the flip side of *John Carpenter's Vampires* and *Night Watch* – brave heroes fighting against horrific creatures that are not of this world. In many ways, the only *real* difference between a demon and a Stalker is the conveyance by which it ended up on our planet.

Thus, before perusing the advice on how to add a scientific spin to existing monsters, consider the various threats that originated in outer space, from large (aliens) to small (microbes and plagues). If nothing else, it gives players one more direction from which The Enemy may arrive . . . and a little extra paranoia never hurt.

## ALIENS

Each alien race has certain overall goals and drives, but it's important to remember that because these are all sapient beings, individuals have personal plans and motivations; if the GM wants a Grey to blow up the nearby dam, he doesn't have to point to any racial traits to justify it, he just decides why this *particular* Grey wants it to go boom.

To help emphasize the sense of confusion and paranoia surrounding aliens (see *The Conspiracy*, p. 39), each one includes an "A.K.A." (also known as) line showing some of the other names used to describe them. Many civilians who believe in aliens (called "believers" by those who *know*) take

these classifications very seriously and will fight over whether (e.g.) the Reptoids, Draconians, and Nagarians are all different species.

You may notice that the descriptions omit one important datum: where each race comes from. This is intentional. In a typical **Monster Hunters** game, either this will be completely irrelevant (as all of the action stays on Earth) or it will involve a major plot point of the campaign, probably in which the heroes make their way to the aliens' homeworld and shut them down at the source. In the latter case, this secret information is too important to spell out here!

That said, the alternative names for many of the alien races hint at suggested homeworlds – but in all cases, the GM should make the decision that best fits the game.

By default, none of these monsters are “supernatural” for the purpose of Mysticism or magical wards. If the team contains mainly crusaders and spellcasters, however, this may make them feel less useful. The GM can certainly overrule this without hesitation; if the crusader’s god(s) and the witch’s connection to the universe agree that these creatures are a threat to existence, it’s fine for them to get painted with the same brush as demons and undead. (If the campaign is already underway when the GM makes this decision, he could make it part of the game; perhaps the PCs have to convince the gods and/or cosmos of how dangerous and evil these monsters are!)

## Technology

Not every alien race has access to advanced technology. Some have been trapped here on Earth for centuries, their only equipment stolen from humanity. However, many have arrived in spaceships full of shiny alien gear, all ready to be wielded against the people of Earth! Each race’s description includes their most commonly used equipment, but if the GM has **GURPS Ultra-Tech**, **GURPS Bio-Tech**, or **GURPS Psi-Tech**, he shouldn’t hesitate to rely on them to equip his aliens.

Of course, that raises the specter of what to do when the PCs kill The Enemy and take their stuff! The commando will be far scarier with a Gauss needler, while the techie will figure out how to use that personal force-field in no time . . . the next thing you know, the GM has to make every bad guy five times tougher just to keep the challenges up. To avoid this, the GM should think carefully about which devices he’s comfortable with the PCs owning, and make those the only universally usable gear. Other gear can be tied to the alien user’s life force or presence: Kill the alien or drive it away, and any of its left-behind gear slugs itself internally. For in-between cases (e.g., the GM is okay with the PCs having DR 10 force-fields, but really needs to give his aliens DR 50 for this adventure to work), have the devices short out, but in a way that the geek or techie can *mostly* fix – the gear works again, but not as well as it originally did for those aliens.

## Morphology Inducer

This common piece of gear needs statistics as a gadget, since it pops up frequently on inhuman racial templates. It is a belt that allows any *humanoid* alien to appear as a human of the same body type and mass. This will fool all senses, even touch, and fools most human technology; however, many aliens and a few human groups have sensors that can see past it. The basic model stores a single human “template,” while the advanced one can adapt to look like any human and even allow impersonation (of someone of similar mass).

The morphology inducer is DR 2, HP 4, SM -6, 1 lb., and must be worn touching the user’s skin

(usually underneath clothing). Three consecutive Concentrate maneuvers are required to shift between forms, during which the user’s appearance flickers rapidly between the two. It is connected to the user’s mind, which allows him to control it mentally *but* means that he reverts to his actual form upon losing consciousness. It lacks the Unique limitation (p. B117); in theory, if a PC’s were stolen or destroyed, he could obtain another one from the right aliens (or certain conspiracy groups).

## ALIEN ANTIPATHY

An unofficial “cold war” exists between the Greys (pp. 29-32), the Nordics (pp. 34-37), and the Reptoids (pp. 39-41). All three races’ goals and motivations are complex and varied, but they can be (over)simplified as the Greys wanting to experiment on humanity, the Nordics wanting to exploit humanity, and the Reptoids wanting to eat humanity.

Each race has a different view of themselves and the others:

- The Greys see themselves as enlightened, progressive scientists, advancing the cause of knowledge via research and experimentation. To them, the Nordics are immature hedonists, foolishly sinking to the level of these human animals by interacting with them. And the Reptoids are barely sapient monsters, driven by their base impulses – content to merely survive, without any thought toward advancing their race’s circumstances.

- The Nordics see themselves as perhaps the only sane race in existence. They are willing to do whatever it takes to come out ahead, but prefer to avoid violence and bloodshed whenever possible because that wastes resources on all sides. To them, the Greys are narrow-minded obsessives who can’t see the forest for the trees; handed a golden goose, they’d likely just cut it up to see how it works. And the Reptoids are as much a danger to themselves as to others, spreading destruction and violence wherever they go; even from a distance, their actions make everyone’s lives harder.

- The Reptoids see themselves as the strongest and most dominant race in existence; they allow the others to exist as long as they know their place. Some members agitate for war to prove their might against the Greys and Nordics, but most believe that their assured victory is so self-evident that it is proof. To them, the Greys are laughably weak, hiding behind their psi (which is easily countered) and technology (which the Reptoids have as well). And the Nordics are cowards, running from any threat of violence and spouting whatever lies they think you want to hear to save their own skins.

The three races are in *détente*, all aware of each others’ presence on Earth, but choosing to avoid each other rather than to let things escalate. The exception is when one race interferes (deliberately or not) with the machinations of another, in which case the cold war can grow extremely hot in no time at all! When this happens, it can set up an interesting situation for the champions to wander into, quickly turning a dispute between two groups of aliens into a three-way battle. Afterward, it’s up to the GM whether this local incident ripples further, disrupting the *détente* . . . but usually, things will settle back down, as all sides are fairly comfortable with the current arrangement.

*Basic Morphology Inducer:* Alternate Form (Breakable, DR 2, SM -6, Machine, -35%; Can Be Stolen, Must be removed by force, -10%; Cosmetic, -50%; Mundane countermeasures, -5%; Reduced Time 2, +40%) [6]. 6 points.

*Advanced Morphology Inducer:* Morph (Breakable, DR 2, SM -6, Machine, -35%; Can Be Stolen, Must be removed by force, -10%; Cosmetic, -50%; Mundane countermeasures, -5%; Reduced Time 2, +40%; Retains Shape, -20%) [20]. 20 points.

The inducer makes it trivial to avoid any problems from low Appearance or a Social Stigma, as the alien can spend all of its time “morphed” with no drawbacks. Because of that, those disadvantages take a special -80% limitation: “Mitigator, Morphology Inducer.” (If a demonic PC were to get his hands on one, he’d have to make the same changes, buying down those racial disadvantages in addition to paying for the morphology inducer.)

### Alien Spaceships

For most alien races – definitely including the Greys, Nordics, and Reptoids – treat their typical spaceship as a shuttlecraft (p. B465), but with stealth systems that give -4 to be spotted visually and -8 to be picked up by any sensors. In addition, once the ship escapes orbit, it can safely engage a warp drive to return to the home planet.

## DEVOURERS

A.K.A.: Anakim, Gels.

In their natural state, Devourers are disgusting blobs of gelatinous mucus . . . and if they were to stay in this form, champions would have no trouble identifying and confronting them. Unfortunately, Devourers are body thieves, assimilating their victims by dissolving them and then recreating their physical form as a “shell” around the alien mucus. And as they consume more victims, they grow and multiply, until a single Devourer has become its own pack.

### The Attack

A Devourer in gel form will conceal itself in cracks, in drains, under the dirt, etc. to attack an unsuspecting victim or to wait (e.g., as a puddle) until a victim makes accidental contact. A mere touch requires the victim to roll HT-5, with a bonus equal to *twice* DR (and +1 for even normal clothing). The alien will usually target exposed legs, arms, etc., to avoid allowing this bonus. If the victim succeeds, he may make a Touch roll, with a bonus equal to that margin of success, to realize what just happened. If not, he is paralyzed for minutes equal to the margin of failure.

After paralyzing its prey, the Devourer will quickly (one Attack maneuver) ooze inside the victim’s clothing, coating him fully – and then dissolve him, inflicting 1d(5) corrosion *per second*. Non-sealed armor, and innate DR with the Tough Skin limitation, is *ignored* rather than divided by 5; the armor divisor is reserved for sealed armor and any *other* inherent DR (which humans do not normally have). Note that even thick

sealed armor *will* be dissolved eventually, though the Devourer would normally not attack such a target to begin with.

Once the victim is fully dissolved, the Devourer adds him to its collection of available “shells” (see template, p. 27). Forming such a shell takes 10 minutes of rest, after which the Devourer appears to *be* that person in every appreciable way. The Devourer retains the memories of all of its victims – even their deepest, darkest secrets. Thus, losing a hunter to a Devourer can be a terrifying situation, as the alien now knows *everything* that champion knew about its greatest enemy: a dedicated alien-hunting group.

### Divided We Stand

A Devourer’s size can be measured in “person equivalents”; for example, a three-person Devourer masses about as much as three humans, and could split into three different one-person Devourers. These would be formless gels to begin with, but each could then grow a shell around itself. Similarly, those three Devourers could later recombine back into a three-person gel. Splitting and recombining requires one Ready maneuver regardless of how many Devourers are involved. Experts disagree over whether two *different* Devourers can combine, as they are usually encountered solo – and when not, it’s difficult to keep track of which gel spawned from which monster!

Every *two* humans (or, roughly, every 300 lbs. worth of other creatures) consumed increase the size of a Devourer by one person-equivalent. Devourers’ mucus-like bodies are compressible enough to squeeze up to a two-person Devourer into a human shell; anything bigger must either split off or use a larger animal as a shell.

### Distributed Intelligence

A Devourer’s consciousness is spread throughout its various bodies. Anything one sees, they all see, because they are just one creature (albeit one capable of amazing multitasking). However, the drawback is that the “pieces” of the Devourer must remain in fairly close proximity or it gets harder for it to think. This affects its IQ (though not Will and Per, which remain constant).

Figure the distance between the two farthest-apart members of the Devourer’s collective self and then consult the table below to determine its IQ (for *all* of its “selves”). For distances that fall between two values, use the larger, farther one.

Distance	IQ
2 yards or less	12
7 yards	11
20 yards	10
70 yards	9
200 yards	8
700 yards	7
1 mile	6
Over 1 mile	See below

The Devourer’s pieces cannot be more than one mile apart. If this ever happens, it *must* instantly decide which of its selves need to be removed from the collective to correct this problem. Those bodies die, rapidly dissolving into an acidic puddle that inflicts 1d corrosion (without the Devourer’s usual (5) armor divisor) per second to anyone touching it; it loses this potency after one minute.

## Close Encounters: Devourers

A Devourer will try to take over a small group of people, particularly those who could logically explain staying close together; e.g., a family. From there, it will spread out, keeping some of its parts in gel form for easy feeding and others in human shells to lure in new victims. A small Devourer is a minor threat, but it's possible for one to assimilate an entire town if left unchecked – at which point, if threatened badly enough to combine and revert to its natural form, it may be the size of a city block! And it *is* smart enough to know to leave a piece of itself behind and hidden, so that even if it's "killed," a part of it lives on.

Thus, the true threat of a Devourer is rooting it out completely so it cannot come back. In a straightforward combat situation, it isn't likely to pose a huge challenge – though it will stick to heavily populated areas, making explosives (the most effective weapon against it) an inadvisable choice. However, it has no reason to engage in straightforward combat and is *far* more likely to run, escape down drains, and so on!

*Jennings: The organism is growing at a geometric rate. By all accounts, it's at least a thousand times its original mass.*

*Scientist: This will put U.S. defense years ahead of the Russians.*

*– The Blob (1988)*

## Formerly Human Shell

This is the reformed body of one of the Devourer's human victims, recreated around the core of a one-person gel (below) – or a two-person gel compressing itself (and thus not acting at its full potential). It is a separate entity from the Devourer itself, and in combat, it acts as a sort of ablative armor. Any attacks that penetrate DR do a flat 2 HP (or 1 HP for impaling or piercing) to the gel within, with the remaining damage taken by this shell. This applies even to explosive attacks, unless they explode *inside* the body (which damages the Devourer and shell simultaneously). The shell is destroyed automatically at -HP; the Devourer may also choose to dissolve the shell at any time as a free action. Destroying the shell does not prevent the Devourer from reforming it later (with the visage of *any* previous victim), but doing so takes it a full 10 minutes of rest.

A shell is hard to identify as a fake human without invasive tests. Devourers excel at "running" the victim's mind as a sort of program, mimicking even their body movement and facial quirks (use the Devourer's Acting to fool observers). In addition, surface tests will show the DNA, blood, etc. as belonging to the victim, and even bioscanners can be thrown off by

the recreated vital signs (roll a Quick Contest of Electronics Operation vs. the shell's HT to see past this).

<b>ST:</b> 15	<b>HP:</b> 15	<b>Speed:</b> 6.25
<b>DX:</b> 12	<b>Will:</b> 15*	<b>Move:</b> 6
<b>IQ:</b> *	<b>Per:</b> 12*	<b>Weight:</b> 150 lbs.
<b>HT:</b> 13	<b>FP:</b> 14*	<b>SM:</b> 0
<b>Dodge:</b> 10*	<b>Parry:</b> 11*	<b>DR:</b> 5

**Fright Check:** N/A

**Punch or Bite (14):** 1d+1 crushing; Reach C.

**Weapon (varies):** Based on Damage 1d+1/2d+1.

**Traits:** Fragile (Unnatural); High Pain Threshold; Injury Tolerance (Unliving).

**Skills:** As for the Devourer. It can also use any skills this victim had, at -4.

**Notes:** Statistics marked with \* are for the gel within; for IQ, see *Distributed Intelligence* (p. 26). May be wearing armor, if available. A Devourer can also form shells for larger animals that it has eaten; this requires person-equivalents equal to (animal weight in lbs.)/150, rounded to the nearest whole number. Improve the animal's ST by 50% and add +2 to DX, +3 to HT, and +5 to DR. Optionally, use the same method to create the shell of any exceptional character (e.g., a devoured PC).

## Devourer (One-Person Gel)

This Devourer is the beginning of an incursion, something split off as the mass grows, or the result of a human shell being dissolved. The term "one-person" refers to its size and volume, nothing more. If multiple such gels touch, they can combine into larger ones; e.g., three of these would form a "three-person" gel (*Divided We Stand*, p. 26).

The Devourer's body is not *inherently* corrosive; it has to expose a bit of its inner core to dissolve things or to strike with an inverted "limb." However, it *is* inherently paralyzing; anyone punching or kicking it must roll to avoid this! It regenerates 1 HP every 15 minutes.

This Devourer is a fair fight for one or two champions with the capability of doing area-effect attacks – and note that jets (like flamethrowers and sprayers) count for this purpose – or two to three who cannot. This assumes that it's free to fight sneakily, slipping under cracks and into drains; in a sealed room or featureless plains, it will be half as effective.

<b>ST:</b> 15	<b>HP:</b> 40	<b>Speed:</b> 6.25
<b>DX:</b> 12	<b>Will:</b> 15	<b>Move:</b> 7
<b>IQ:</b> *	<b>Per:</b> 12	<b>Weight:</b> 125 lbs.
<b>HT:</b> 13	<b>FP:</b> 14	<b>SM:</b> 0
<b>Dodge:</b> 10	<b>Parry:</b> 11	<b>DR:</b> 0

**Fright Check:** -2

**Acidic Punch (14):** 1d+1 crushing + 1d(5) corrosion follow-up; Reach C. See Notes.

**Paralyzing Touch (14):** Resisted with HT-5(0.5); see *The Attack* (p. 26).

**Traits:** Appearance (Monstrous); Bestial; Combat Reflexes; Doesn't Breathe; Duplication (Variant); Hidebound; High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards (Earth; see p. 29); Immunity to Mind Reading and Control; Injury Tolerance (Diffuse; Infiltration); Injury Tolerance (No Eyes; No Head; No Neck); Low Empathy; Mind Reading (Selves; Sensory); Mindlink (Selves); Morph (Variant; Victims only); No Legs (Slithers); Obsession (Growing) (9); Possession (Variant); Regeneration (Regular); Regrowth; Telesend (Selves); Unusual Biochemistry.

**Skills:** Acting-(IQ+2); Brawling-14; Stealth-14; Tactics-(IQ).

**Notes:** See *Distributed Intelligence* (p. 26) for IQ. The corrosion follow-up for Acidic Punch *ignores* DR with the Tough Skin limitation.

### *Devourer (Two-Person Gel)*

Remember that this Devourer can split into two of the versions above, each sharing the same mind and thus able to coordinate precisely. Thus, it's fairest to think of this as "two one-person Devourers" in terms of challenge level.

**ST:** 18                    **HP:** 50                    **Speed:** 6.25  
**DX:** 12                    **Will:** 15                    **Move:** 7  
**IQ:** \*                    **Per:** 12                    **Weight:** 250 lbs.  
**HT:** 13                    **FP:** 14                    **SM:** +1  
**Dodge:** 10                    **Parry:** 11                    **DR:** 0

**Fright Check:** -2

**Acidic Punch (14):** 1d+2 crushing + 1d(5) corrosion follow-up; Reach C, 1. See Notes.

**Paralyzing Touch (14):** Resisted with HT-5(0.5); see *The Attack* (p. 26).

**Traits:** As for *Devourer (One-Person Gel)* (pp. 27-28) plus Extra Attack 1.

**Skills and Notes:** As for *Devourer (One-Person Gel)*.

### *Devourer (Three-Person Gel)*

The note for the two-person version above applies here as well.

**ST:** 21                    **HP:** 57                    **Speed:** 6.25  
**DX:** 12                    **Will:** 15                    **Move:** 7  
**IQ:** \*                    **Per:** 12                    **Weight:** 375 lbs.  
**HT:** 13                    **FP:** 14                    **SM:** +1  
**Dodge:** 10                    **Parry:** 11                    **DR:** 0

**Fright Check:** -2

**Acidic Punch (14):** 2d+1 crushing + 1d(5) corrosion follow-up; see Notes.

**Paralyzing Touch (14):** Resisted with HT-5(0.5); see *The Attack* (p. 26).

**Traits:** As for *Devourer (One-Person Gel)* (pp. 27-28) plus Extra Attack 2 and Extra Arms 1.

**Skills and Notes:** As for *Devourer (One-Person Gel)*.

### *Devourer (Five-Person Gel)*

The note for the two-person version above applies here as well.

**ST:** 25                    **HP:** 68                    **Speed:** 6.25  
**DX:** 12                    **Will:** 15                    **Move:** 7  
**IQ:** \*                    **Per:** 12                    **Weight:** 625 lbs.  
**HT:** 13                    **FP:** 14                    **SM:** +1  
**Dodge:** 10                    **Parry:** 11                    **DR:** 0

**Fright Check:** -3

**Acidic Punch (14):** 2d+3 crushing + 1d(5) corrosion follow-up; Reach C, 1. See Notes.

**Paralyzing Touch (14):** Resisted with HT-5(0.5); see *The Attack* (p. 26).

**Traits:** As for *Devourer (One-Person Gel)* (pp. 27-28) plus Extra Attack 4 and Extra Arms 3.

**Skills and Notes:** As for *Devourer (One-Person Gel)*.

### *Devourer (10-Person Gel)*

At this size, the Devourer can be scarier in combined form than split into a horde of one-person gels. If the champions lack the area-effect attacks to truly hurt it, the alien is likely to use All-Out Attack (Strong) to hit for 3d+6 damage plus corrosion – 10 times per turn! Even if they come armed with explosives, flamethrowers, etc., this gel will likely be a fair fight for an entire team, as it disappears into sewers and pops up behind (or amid) them.

**ST:** 32                    **HP:** 86                    **Speed:** 6.25  
**DX:** 12                    **Will:** 15                    **Move:** 7  
**IQ:** \*                    **Per:** 12                    **Weight:** 1,250 lbs.  
**HT:** 13                    **FP:** 14                    **SM:** +2  
**Dodge:** 10                    **Parry:** 11                    **DR:** 0

**Fright Check:** -4

**Acidic Punch (14):** 3d+3 crushing + 1d(5) corrosion follow-up; Reach C, 1. See Notes.

*I know I'm human. And if you were all these things, then you'd just attack me right now, so some of you are still human. This thing doesn't want to show itself, it wants to hide inside an imitation. It'll fight if it has to, but it's vulnerable out in the open. If it takes us over, then it has no more enemies, nobody left to kill it. And then it's won.*

– MacReady, in *The Thing* (1982)

**Paralyzing Touch (14):** Resisted with HT-5(0.5); see *The Attack* (p. 26).

**Traits:** As for *Devourer (One-Person Gel)* (pp. 27-28) plus Extra Attack 9 and Extra Arms 8.

**Skills and Notes:** As for *Devourer (One-Person Gel)*.

## *Devourer (100-Person Gel)*

These statistics are included mainly as an illustration. A team having to face a beast like this would be justified in *instead* concocting an excuse to call in an air strike or rigging a gas main to explode!

<b>ST:</b> 69	<b>HP:</b> 185	<b>Speed:</b> 6.25
<b>DX:</b> 12	<b>Will:</b> 15	<b>Move:</b> 7
<b>IQ:</b> *	<b>Per:</b> 12	<b>Weight:</b> 12,500 lbs.
<b>HT:</b> 13	<b>FP:</b> 14	<b>SM:</b> +4
<b>Dodge:</b> 10	<b>Parry:</b> 11	<b>DR:</b> 0

**Fright Check:** -9

**Acidic Punch (14):** 7d+7 crushing + 1d(5) corrosion follow-up; Reach C-3. See Notes.

**Paralyzing Touch (14):** Resisted with HT-5(0.5); see *The Attack* (p. 26).

**Traits:** As for *Devourer (One-Person Gel)* (pp. 27-28) plus Extra Attack 99 and Extra Arms 98.

**Skills and Notes:** As for *Devourer (One-Person Gel)*.

## *Further Devourers*

A Devourer gel gets attacks and arms equal to the person-equivalents, and has weight in pounds equal to 125×(person-equivalents). Once weight is established, use the cube root of that weight to figure the following:

**ST:** Equal to 3×(cube root of weight), rounded down.

**HP:** Equal to 8×(cube root of weight), rounded down.

**Fright Check:** The penalty is -1 for every full 20 HP.

**SM:** Divide cube root of weight by 3, and then look up that result as “Longest Dimension” (in yards) on the *Size Modifier Table* (p. 19). Remember that in-between values use the larger SM.

*Example:* A 50-person Devourer weighs  $50 \times 125 = 6,250$  lbs. The cube root of 6,250 is 18.4. So this Devourer has ST of  $18.4 \times 3 = 55$ , has HP of  $18.4 \times 8 = 147$  (and thus Fright Checks are at -7), and its SM is calculated as though it were  $18.4/3 = 6.1$  yards long, or SM +3.

If a value is needed on the fly, or no decent calculator is available, the GM can simply eyeball the values by comparison to the existing examples.

## **GREYS**

A.K.A.: Martians, Reticulans, Sauroids.

These small, pale humanoids may be the most common extraterrestrials to visit Earth.

This is not a good thing.

It's dangerous to generalize about the Greys' motivations, goals, plots, and so on, because they have multiple factions and groups within their own culture. However, it *can* be safely

said that they regard humanity with roughly as much respect as we regard mice. Even the most “friendly” one is more likely to dissect a human to find the answer to a question than to *ask him*. (Some do learn to speak our languages, though they sound *wrong* doing so – like a voice box was thrown into the street and trampled over by a rampaging mob to produce the sounds of speech.)

Grey culture is extremely science-focused. In many ways, science takes the place of religion; they worship at the altar of knowledge. Thus, most of their activities on Earth involve acquiring knowledge: about our strengths, our weaknesses, our technology, our minds, and so on. They do so coldly, dispassionately, logically, and thoroughly. It's impossible to say how many humans have died at their hands, but those victims may be the lucky ones. The Greys take a “highly experimental” approach to their science; they will abduct people and implant devices, take them apart and put them back together, see what sonic frequencies can shatter their sanity, or other terrifying experiments . . . and then, frequently, will drop the victims off in a field and leave. It's rare, but heartbreaking, for a team of hunters to shut down a threat to humanity, only to realize at the end that it was an innocent person whom the Greys turned *into* this terrifying monster.

For the Greys' relations with other races, see *Alien Antipathy* (p. 25).

### *Immunity to Metabolic Hazards (Earth)*

Most aliens (not robots) in this chapter have Immunity to Metabolic Hazards (Earth, -20%). The limitation reflects the fact that the being is immune to the issues that *humans* face, but that tailored poisons, Martian viruses, etc., remain a danger. When dealing with alien PCs, the GM should throw that danger in every once in a while to justify the reduced cost; regarding NPCs, expect the heroes to find every way possible to exploit the limitation.

## *Anatomy and Physiology*

A Grey stands between 4' and 5' tall, with relatively short legs, a long neck, and large head. Greys are slender, but not frail; the average Grey is physically weaker than a human, but not by much. They have pale skin with faint patterns reminiscent of scales (though they are not scales and do not provide DR).

They have neither noses nor a sense of smell and taste, but their huge eyes are capable of perceiving a wider range of light than humans' can. Their hands end in four fingers; though they lack thumbs, their digits are dexterous enough to serve as opposing pairs.

Greys are asexual and reproduce via cloning, using biological material from multiple donors to preserve genetic diversity. (Presumably they had a different method at some point in the past, but the details are unknown.) Their cloning technology is highly advanced; they have even been known to clone humans and force-grow them to adulthood in a matter of days. (If you escape the Greys and then see yourself on the news a week later killing the president, that's why.)

## Terrifying Tech

Greys are TL10, though with a heavy reliance on much TL9 gear. Their brilliant engineers and scientists have produced a few TL11 marvels, though these are rare. They make use of a *wide* range of gear; the advice under *Technology* (pp. 25-26) is very appropriate here. In particular, the GM shouldn't feel

### INHUMAN GREYS

You've gone over to the side of the humans, after taking one of your people's morphology inducers to better fit in. You aren't physically strong or fast, and you definitely won't be the social one, but you're smart, hardy, and those huge eyes aren't just for show!

#### Grey

0 points

**Attribute Modifiers:** ST-2 [-20].

**Secondary Characteristic Modifiers:** HP+1 [2]; Basic Move-1 [-5]; SM 0 or -1\*.

**Advantages:** Basic Morphology Inducer (p. 26) [6]; Hyper-spectral Vision [25]; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards (Earth, -20%; see p. 29) [24]; Language (Grey; Native) [6].

**Disadvantages:** Disturbing Voice [-10]; Low Empathy [-20]; No Sense of Smell/Taste [-5]; Social Stigma (Monster) (Mitigator, Morphology Inducer, -80%) [-3].

**Features:** Can buy off Low Empathy. Drugs and biotech calibrated for humans do not work on Greys, and vice versa.

\* Your choice; Greys range from 4' (SM -1) to 5' (SM 0). If SM 0, you can use your morphology inducer to appear as a short adult. If SM -1, you are limited to appearing as a child or little person.

#### Notes

Alone among all inhumans to date, the Grey is a 0-point racial template instead of a 200-point one. This means that it can be added to any of the existing character templates as-is; particularly apt choices include the commando, psi, and techie, though don't hesitate to try other things; there's no reason you couldn't be cybernetically enhanced, a holy warrior, or even a spellcaster! Ironically, the inhuman character template and monstrous lens are the only *truly* invalid choices, as each earmarks 200 points just for race. You *are* considered an "inhuman" champion wherever that matters.

You can (and should, unless the GM says otherwise) take Reputation -4 (Traitor; Greys; 10 or less) [-5] as one of your template disadvantages. *With GM permission*, even a Grey who is not a gifted (psi), psi, or psychic can spend advantage points and earned character points on psionics.

In your native form, you have Social Stigma (Monster) but not a negative Appearance. This is because you don't look particularly terrifying – in fact, most humans find a certain elegance to the Greys – but there's still the "holy cow, that's an alien!" factor.

restricted to just the devices that have been written up in existing **GURPS** catalogs; if a nifty new device or process would lead to a fun adventure, *include it!* (Just make it a fragile, one-off experiment if it might unbalance the game.)

Areas in which the Greys specifically excel include:

**Bioengineering:** The Greys don't just clone living things, they *invent* living things. Any cryptid could be a creation of the Greys, and they have the skill to invent creatures specifically for a given situation. For example, if they wanted to start a fire in a coal mine without getting personally involved, they could drop off coal-sniffing badgers with endocrine systems so hyperactive that they'll eventually burst into flame.

**Cloning:** Any living being can be cloned if the Greys have a sample of its DNA. They can force-grow a clone to maturity at the rate of 10 years per 24 hours. This produces a specimen who is physically identical – unless the original suffered an accident, etc., in which case it's easy for the Greys to reproduce that! Attempting to "copy" a person is difficult, however. If they have a detailed brain-scan (which takes four hours and a *completely* subdued patient), they can copy that over into the clone; his DX, IQ, Per, and Will are all at -1 and his skills are at an *extra* -2, but that's close enough to fool most people. If not, they can program a basic personality with DX 10, IQ 9, Per 9, Will 8, 1 point in each of a few skills, and the Delusion that "he" is the original.

**Human Upgrades:** Many Greys are fascinated with the idea of turning our pathetic species into something . . . more. This frequently takes the form of a human/Grey hybrid, often with other genes mixed in (for "flavor"). Ideally, such a creation must be able to sustain *and* reproduce itself, so it cannot simply be "decanted" as a clone would. Instead, the Greys kidnap human women and implant these monstrous embryos into them, before microchipping them (see below) and turning them loose. As far as most hunters know, no such experiment to date has survived the birthing process.

**Microchipping:** The Greys can implant a chip into a human brain as a major surgical procedure. This allows them to track the subject – using Electronics Operation (Sensors) with *Long-Distance Modifiers* (p. B241) – and to force him to take (or not take) certain actions. Treat these commands as posthypnotic suggestions; roll a Quick Contest of the Grey programmer's Hypnotism at +2 vs. the victim's Will-5 if he is unaware or Will if he knows he's been chipped. The chip can contain multiple suggestions, but each separate order past the first gives -1 to the Grey's Hypnotism. Frequently, the Greys will microchip a clone (above) instead; clones are programmed never to resist, so a successful Hypnotism roll is all that's needed.

**Psi-Tech:** All of the devices in *Psychotronics (Champions)*, pp. 57-58) and *More Psychotronics* (p. 9) are available to the Greys, along with many more devices. The GM can draw from **GURPS Psi-Tech** or simply invent new devices as he sees fit.

**Psychopotation:** Though the rarest psionic power among humans, Teleportation is fairly common among psychic Greys. By cloning the brains of these psis, the Greys create powerful psychotronic teleportation machines that *anyone* can use. These have two significant restrictions, however.

First, they are too massive to be portable, and are found only in their ships and bases. Second, they require *orgone energy* to use – vital life force. This is usually acquired by strapping humans to special tables and then draining their life energy in the form of FP and HP. Refer to the Warp tables on p. B98; in addition to the penalty for distance, each use of teleportation requires FP and HP equal to  $10 \times (1 + \text{the absolute value of that penalty})$ . That is, 10 FP and 10 HP for 10 yards, 20 FP and 20 HP for 20 yards, 30 FP and 30 HP for 100 yards, and so on. This cost is unaffected by preparation time.

*Psychoportive Beacons:* Many Greys assigned to work in the field will wear these 2-lb. belts that read their vital signs. Should they be killed, the psychoportation machine back at base will teleport their bodies (and possibly their gear) away.

*Space Travel:* The Greys have been visiting Earth for centuries and have established countless hidden bases; at this point, they rarely need to make trips off-planet. Still, they have the capability to do so, and sometimes use spaceships (p. 26) even for planetbound travel.

*I don't believe the greys have souls,  
but are more like "Frankensteins"  
or "zombies" or whatever term you  
want to use for the "living dead."*

– Karla Turner

## Close Encounters: Greys

The Greys operate out of a series of well-disguised bases, from subterranean lairs bored underneath mountains to office buildings where no human ever travels above the second floor. Most have adequate knowledge of Earth – certainly enough to blend in using a morphology inducer, though not if the role requires speaking. A Grey in disguise might feign laryngitis, program a visible throat injury (e.g., from a laryngectomy) into its disguise, lip-sync to prerecorded questions, or use a synthesized speech generator; smart hunters will look for all of these tells.

Greys are invariably encountered on missions of some type. These vary greatly, but the most common are kidnapping (often single targets but occasionally whole groups), theft of some sort of technology, assassination, introducing an experiment into the wild (e.g., adding chemicals to a town's water supply or returning an "improved" child back to his family), and reconnaissance or research.

Even if a Grey team's short-term objective is obvious, the long-term goal behind it is usually difficult to discern, as the Greys do not shy away from complex plots. For example, a kidnapping victim may be needed for genetic material, as part of a cybernetic implant experiment, for a morphology scan so they can impersonate him, to telepathically provide detailed blueprints of his place of employment, as a micro-chipped pawn to cause a later distraction, or for any number of other plans.

In a confrontation, even the toughest Greys are not that *physically* imposing. They rely on their technology (and occasionally psionics) to give them the edge in any fight, and will not hesitate to retreat. The more important their mission,

the more likely they are to stick around and fight, but only if an experiment is the culmination of its life work will a Grey stay and fight an obviously losing, suicidal battle.

## Grey

This is a typical specimen, but a Grey's traits will vary as much as any human's. If the heroes ever manage to *truly* draw the ire of the Greys, the aliens may even send their own "champions" to hunt them; use the *Inhuman Greys* (p. 30) template with those in *Champions* to create some terrifying "human hunters"!

Two to three normal Greys in light armor are a fair fight for most hunters. Equipping them with heavy armor or adding one of the lenses below roughly doubles their threat level; doing both triples it.

<b>ST:</b> 9	<b>HP:</b> 11	<b>Speed:</b> 6.00
<b>DX:</b> 12	<b>Will:</b> 14	<b>Move:</b> 5
<b>IQ:</b> 14	<b>Per:</b> 14	<b>Weight:</b> 80-100 lbs.
<b>HT:</b> 12	<b>FP:</b> 12	<b>SM:</b> -1 or 0
<b>Dodge:</b> 10	<b>Parry:</b> 10	<b>DR:</b> See Notes.

**Fright Check:** +2

**EMP Pistol (15):** All electronics within a one-yard radius (of impact) must roll HT-3 or short out for minutes equal to margin of failure. Acc 6, Range 90/270, RoF 1, Shots 33(3), Bulk -2, Rcl 1.

**Laser Pistol (15):** 3d(2) burning. Acc 6, Range 200/600, RoF 10, Shots 33(3), Bulk -2, Rcl 1.

**Traits:** Combat Reflexes; Disturbing Voice; High TL 2; Hyperspectral Vision; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards (Earth; see p. 29); Low Empathy; No Sense of Smell/Taste; Social Stigma (Monster). Quick Gadgeteer and psionics (*Champions*, pp. 45-48) are *very* common, but not universal.

**Skills:** Varies *greatly*, but usually includes Beam Weapons (Pistol and/or Projector)-15. Grey enemies should be treated much like rogue humans; they will have skills befitting their current mission.

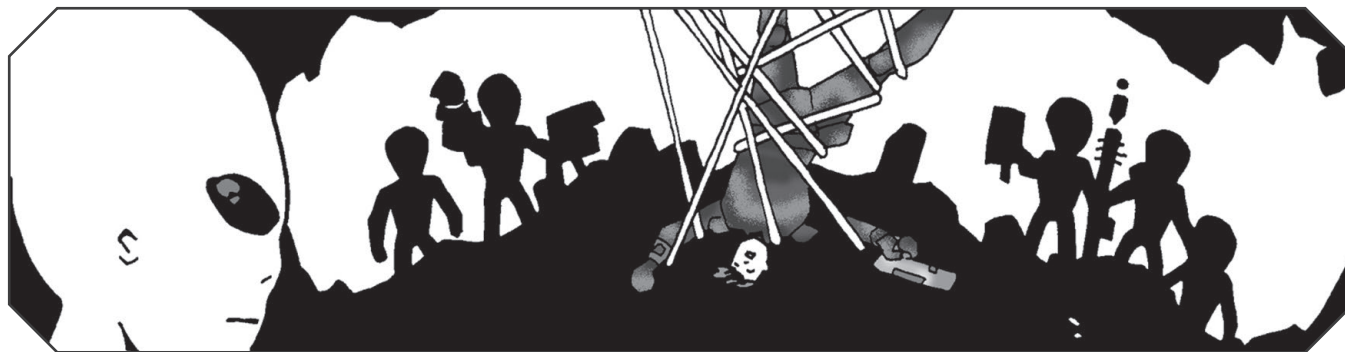
**Notes:** No inherent DR, but most wear light armor (DR 10 vs. crushing, DR 20 vs. everything else) with or without a helmet (DR 18 for skull, DR 12 for face/eyes). On the rare times they knowingly plan for a straightforward fight, they wear heavy armor (DR 50 for torso, DR 30 for other locations) and helmets (DR 40 for skull, DR 30 for face/eyes). Many have morphology inducers (pp. 25-26).

## Grey Lenses

Apply one of these lenses to the Grey above to quickly create a more dangerous foe.

*Psychokinetic:* Add Cryokinesis 2, Pyrokinesis 3, and Telekinesis 8 (all as alternative abilities) and Psychokinesis Talent 4 to *Traits*. This Grey can roll a Quick Contest of effective Will 18 (minus range penalties) vs. victim's Will. Victory inflicts 2d-2 fatigue with the freezing hazard or 3d burning, bypassing DR. Alternatively, it can lift things within 20 yards as ST 8 (BL 13).

*Scientist:* Raise IQ to 16. Add Quick Gadgeteer and Curious (12) to *Traits*. Add Inventor!-15 and Science!-15 to *Skills*. Improve one weapon in a minor way (e.g., give the laser armor divisor (3) or widen the EMP to a two-yard radius).



**Soldier:** Raise ST to 11, DX to 14, HT to 14, Basic Speed to 7.00, and Basic Move to 6. Add Enhanced Dodge 1 and either Danger Sense or Gunslinger to Traits. Add Tactics-15 and Judo-16 to Skills. Dodge and Parry become 12.

**Telepath:** Add Mental Blow, Mind Control 2, Mindwipe, and Telesend (all as alternative abilities), at least one human language, and Telepathy Talent 4 to Traits. This Grey can roll a Quick Contest of effective Will 18 (minus range penalties) vs. victim's Will. Victory mentally stuns him, forces him to follow the Grey's orders, or erases the last (margin of loss) minutes from his memory. (If Mind Control fails, the victim is immune for the next 24 hours.) Alternatively, it can project its thoughts into the mind of anyone within view.

## INSECTOIDS

A.K.A.: Chrymorphids, Sirians.

No one knows whether these terrifying killing machines evolved naturally or were genetically engineered. Either way, Insectoids are apex predators – an absolutely terrifying threat from another world. They do not appear to be fully sapient, but are cunning and careful, showing awareness of tactics and using the environment against their foes. And every enemy they dispatch becomes a potential incubator for creating a new Insectoid to terrorize our world!

### Anatomy of a Nightmare

An Insectoid is a centaurian creature with four legs and two arms. True to its name, it has an exoskeleton of hard chitin which protects it from most threats; its feet are similarly covered, but have thick pads of “chitinous hair” resembling fur, allowing the monster to move quietly and stealthily even on hard surfaces. Its chitin has a limited ability to shift colors, matching any *dark* hues in the immediate vicinity; this allows the alien to become nearly invisible at night.

The Insectoid's hands end in four claws, all opposable but not optimized for fine manual dexterity. Its head is a flat, protruding oval with four eyes in a horizontal row across the front; it would almost look comically ungainly, if not for the four rows of razor-sharp teeth displayed when it opens its *wide* maw!

It possesses a circulatory system of sorts, which appears to be its gastrointestinal and reproductive system as well, confusing even skilled xenologists. Its bodily fluid (part blood, part waste, part reproductive material) resembles a thin oil, apparently under heavy pressure, as it sprays out when the Insectoid is injured badly enough. This fluid is highly poisonous to

humans, posing a problem for hunters; even brief contact on bare skin can induce toxic shock. Because of this, this fluid is referred to as the Insectoid's *venom*. Sealed defenses like an NBC suit (p. 10) are helpful, but the erosive spray can eat right through their seals. Roll against the suit's HT 12 every time it's exposed to the venom; on a failure, enough gets through to affect the user *and* the suit's HT drops by 1 for future rolls!

Far worse results happen when the venom is administered *internally*, however . . .

### Unwilling Surrogates

An Insectoid's tongue is hollow and connected to its reproductive (etc.) system. It can use this organ to inject reproductive venom into a living *or* recently dead human. Anyone with Immunity to Metabolic Hazards is immune; the Insectoid may still inject them, but they will suffer no ill effect from it. The Insectoid stores enough genetic material to infect only one person; after that, it must wait 1d hours before attempting it again.

Against a living foe, this requires the alien first to grapple him. The injection is then a separate attack, which may be defended against normally. (Though being grappled, the victim has -2 to parry and -1 to dodge, and cannot retreat or make an acrobatic dodge.) If the Insectoid has time, it may first *pin* the subject, after which he cannot defend. Once injected, the victim gets *one* HT roll; Resistant to Metabolic Hazards applies. On a *critical* success, the venom fails to take; otherwise, he is now infected.

The venom is a poison that inflicts 1d+1 toxic damage every minute for an *unlimited* number of cycles; the victim is in agony (p. B428) the entire time. Use the rules under *Neutralizing Plagues* (**The Mission**, pp. 23-24) for any attempt to stop the progress; powers are at -10 and the venom resists magic with HT 14.

The GM must track damage inflicted by the venom separately. If the victim dies, he will rise up as a venom zombie (p. 34) within 1d minutes. When this happens, erase all injury caused by the venom to determine its current HP.

*Example:* A champion with HP 13 loses a fight to an Insectoid. It battered him down to -2 HP before grappling and infecting him, after which he began losing 1d+1 HP every minute. After three minutes, he's taken a total of 12 HP of injury from the venom, bringing him to -14 HP, and he fails his HT roll to survive. When “he” comes back as a venom zombie, he will be at -2 HP, not -14. (Because venom zombies have Unkillable 1, his body is a long way from worrying about “death,” as that doesn't occur until -130 HP.)

With a *dead* body, the Insectoid has a much easier time; no attack roll is even required. However, the GM must roll 1d, subtracting 1 for every *full* 30 minutes since the person's death. If the result is 0 or less, or the body was at -10xHP or worse, the process fails; otherwise, the body gets up as a venom zombie in 1d minutes. Its HP are whatever they were when the person died, which will generally be much lower than they would be for someone infected while alive. Due to these issues, Insectoids prefer living hosts over dead ones, even if the latter *are* easier to handle.

A venom zombie is not automatically hostile. Instead, its priority is on personal survival. It will run and hide if possible, but will fight *viciously* if confronted. Attacks to the vitals and skull are the best way to put it down, just as for a living human. The GM will secretly roll 3d to determine how many hours until the zombie explodes, releasing a baby Insectoid (p. 34) into the world. The child grows up *quickly*, imprinted with the knowledge it needs to survive, reaching the adult statistics once it is two days old.

### Behind the Chitin

Insectoids have very simple, basic motivations: They want to survive, both individually and as a species (by reproducing frequently). Unfortunately, this requires fresh humans. No one has ever witnessed an Insectoid attempt to infect an animal, only humans, which lends credence to the "Insectoids are engineered weapons" theory. However, some xenologists have proposed that the aliens' high intelligence (relative to their evolutionary development and brain size) may depend on incubating their children in the most intelligent hosts possible (which, on Earth, are humans).

There doesn't seem to be any "Insectoid society"; they are loners who don't even attempt to track down their own spawn. While this has the downside of making it hard to find the babies that get away, most hunters agree that if the Earthbound Insectoids ever began working *together*, we'd all be in serious trouble.

### Close Encounters: Insectoids

Hunter groups are alert for reports of bodies that appear to have exploded from within, as this is often the first indication of an Insectoid infestation. Once the champions move in, the question becomes "Who spots whom first?" If the Insectoid is aware that the hunters are on its trail, it will either ambush them all (using its Tactics skill to estimate when they'll be most vulnerable), ambush and infect a single champion (if possible), or – if the team is moving slowly – infect more unrelated victims to help even the odds. If the heroes can locate the alien first, they must corner it where it can't easily escape, and then survive the attack without having one of their own turned into an incubator!

Perhaps the most dangerous "false flag" is if multiple Insectoids are in the same area, infecting people, at which point the town bears all the hallmarks of a classic zombie infestation. Hunters prepared to deal with standard zombies may be taken by surprise when the Insectoid "parents" move in to protect their creations.

## ANDROIDS

Most intelligent alien races can't easily interact with humanity, due to looking . . . well, like *aliens*. For those races that lack access to morphology inducers (pp. 25-26), or who just want some extra manpower, androids are an excellent choice. These are robots, shaped to look like humans and programmed to behave like them, which can be operated remotely or trusted to follow specific orders. An android can be crafted to resemble (or replace!) a specific person or it can be given nondescript features that are intentionally difficult to describe.

In addition to aliens, many conspiracies are accused of using robotic henchmen. In particular, the dreaded Men in Black – the spooky guys in black suits and sunglasses who show up to intimidate witnesses and cause problems – are often accused of being more machine than human. In some cases, this may be true.

Each android is *roughly* a fair fight for a typical champion. Hunters who rely on bullets will be at a slight disadvantage, though, as the android's Machine meta-trait includes Injury Tolerance (Unliving).

<b>ST:</b> 25	<b>HP:</b> 50	<b>Speed:</b> 6.50
<b>DX:</b> 13	<b>Will:</b> 8	<b>Move:</b> 8/16
<b>IQ:</b> 8	<b>Per:</b> 10	<b>Weight:</b> 200 lbs.
<b>HT:</b> 13	<b>FP:</b> N/A	<b>SM:</b> 0
<b>Dodge:</b> 9	<b>Parry:</b> 10	<b>DR:</b> 10 (Hardened 1)

**Fright Check:** N/A

**Implanted Pistol (15):** Based on weapon.

**Punch (15):** 2d+3 crushing; Reach C.

**Traits:** Digital Mind; Enhanced Move 1 (Ground); High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Indomitable; Machine; Maintenance (Five People; Weekly); Payload 5; Protected Senses (All); Sealed; Unfazeable.

**Skills:** Brawling-15; Intimidation-12; Wrestling-14; *either* Beam Weapons (Pistol)-15 or Guns (Pistol or SMG)-15.

### Insectoid

A killing machine. See *Baby Insectoid* (p. 34) for its (indirect) spawn. One of these should be able to challenge one or two champions; err on the lower side if they know in advance to wear NBC suits (p. 10).

<b>ST:</b> 27	<b>HP:</b> 27	<b>Speed:</b> 8.00
<b>DX:</b> 16	<b>Will:</b> 15	<b>Move:</b> 12
<b>IQ:</b> 6	<b>Per:</b> 15	<b>Weight:</b> 400 lbs.
<b>HT:</b> 14	<b>FP:</b> 14	<b>SM:</b> +1
<b>Dodge:</b> 13	<b>Parry:</b> 13	<b>DR:</b> 15

**Fright Check:** -6

**Bite or Claw (16):** 3d+1(2) cutting; Reach C (bite) or C, 1 (claw). Made as a Deceptive Attack (-1 to defend against).

**Venom Spray:** 1d+1 toxic area-effect erosive contact agent (p. B111). This fills one square yard immediately adjacent to the Insectoid (toward its attacker) on any turn in which it takes at least 1 HP of injury from a cutting, impaling, or piercing attack.

**Traits:** Bestial; Chameleon 4 (Only in dark surroundings); Combat Reflexes; Doesn't Breathe; Enhanced Dodge 1; Extra Attack 1; Extra Legs (Four legs); Ham-Fisted 1; High Pain Threshold; Indomitable; Injury Tolerance (No Vitals); Loner (6); Low Empathy; Peripheral Vision; Pressure Support 3; Resistant to Psionics (+3); Sealed; Silence 4; Ultravision; Unfazeable (Not vs. fire); Vacuum Support.

**Skills:** Brawling-18; Camouflage-10; Observation-15; Stealth-18; Tactics-10; Tracking-18.

**Notes:** Stealth does not include Chameleon/Silence bonuses.

## Baby Insectoid

This is a newborn. The GM should interpolate the "baby" and "adult" statistics as it grows up over the course of two days. It's about half the threat level of an adult Insectoid.

**ST:** 11                    **HP:** 11                    **Speed:** 6.50  
**DX:** 12                    **Will:** 13                    **Move:** 8  
**IQ:** 6                      **Per:** 12                    **Weight:** 50 lbs.  
**HT:** 14                    **FP:** 14                    **SM:** -1

**Dodge:** 11              **Parry:** 11              **DR:** 10

**Fright Check:** -2

**Bite or Claw (14):** 1d-1(2) cutting; Reach C.

**Venom Spray:** As for *Insectoid* (pp. 33-34).

**Traits:** As for *Insectoid*, but delete Extra Attack.

**Skills:** Brawling-14; Camouflage-8; Observation-12; Stealth-14; Tactics-6; Tracking-13.

**Notes:** Stealth does not include Chameleon/Silence bonuses.

## Venom Zombie

Values in parentheses are *modifiers* to be applied to the victim's original attribute or secondary characteristic. See *Unwilling Surrogates* (pp. 32-33) to determine how many HP the zombie actually starts with.

Venom zombies are more of a side effect than an actual threat; including several in a hunt will mainly have the effect of distracting the champions, as they will (hopefully) prioritize the zombies' destruction to stop *further* Insectoids from spawning.

**ST:** (+2)                    **HP:** Same                    **Speed:** Same  
**DX:** (-2)                    **Will:** 14                    **Move:** (+1)  
**IQ:** 2                      **Per:** 10                    **Weight:** Same  
**HT:** (+2)                    **FP:** N/A                    **SM:** Same

**Dodge:** Same              **Parry:** (-1)              **DR:** Same

**Fright Check:** 0

**Venom Spray:** As *Insectoid* (pp. 33-34).

**Traits:** Fanaticism (Survival); High Pain Threshold; Terminally Ill (Less than a day); Unkillable 1.

**Skills:** Same, but based on modified attributes and characteristics.

## NORDICS

A.K.A.: Aryans, Lemurians, Men From Planet X ("Xists").

Tall, imposing, beautiful, perfectly sculpted . . . the Nordics are an idealized version of humanity. They have been visiting Earth for some time now in their spaceships (p. 26), helping us advance and evolve to the next level, guiding us to discover new things rather than simply handing them to us. New Age "believers" point to the Nordics as proof that aliens are fundamentally benevolent beings, or at least not *all* bad, and look forward to the day when we can join our fellow races in the harmonious galactic union.

It's all lies, of course. But the Nordics have gone to a *lot* of trouble to spread them. As a race, they put public relations and reputation above all other concerns, because they know that fighting a war is *much* harder than simply convincing others that you're their greatest allies. The Nordics need only dole out a few trinkets and solve a few basic scientific problems, and the nations of the world happily give them what they want – or just look the other way when they *take* it. Just ask the Nazis, the Nordics' most productive partners to date.

For the Nordics' relations with other races, see *Alien Antipathy* (p. 25).

*The real good guys are other nordic factions and whatever miscellaneous lesser alien types are on their side of non-interventionism.*

– Tom Montalk

## More Human Than Human

It's no coincidence that the Nordics look like idealized humans. Long ago – no human knows exactly when, but at least two centuries back – the "Nordics" who visited Earth looked nothing like us. They were humanoid (the universe seems to default to that for sapient races) but hideous to our eye. Undeterred, they began kidnapping and interrogating humans to discover what we like – what our ideal "person" would be. Once they narrowed that down, the genetic engineering of their own kind began. Within two generations, they had achieved an ideal exterior without compromising their minds.

Yes, the Nordics here on Earth represent a small fraction of their race who have been specifically optimized to interact with humans. Across the galaxy, other such "planet-optimized" Nordics exist, each bred to appeal to the inhabitants of that world. Should the Nordics ever decide to abandon Earth, all of the human-like Nordics would simply choose not to reproduce, allowing this subrace to die out.

Despite the names "Nordic" and "Aryan," these terrestrially adapted aliens come in all races. For every country and community on Earth, there are at least a few Nordics who fit right in. However, most human believers erroneously assume that all Nordics are Caucasian with blond hair and blue eyes – simply because the infamous ones who partnered with the Nazis *did* fit that mold.

## The Originals

What do unaltered Nordics look like? That's up to the GM. If he decides to introduce them to a game, the revelation should be a total surprise, which is why they're not described here (beyond "humanoid" and "two sexes").

## We Come in Peace

The Nordics have a few overarching goals and plots. First, they want to keep humanity fragmented and desperate, to encourage the leadership to turn to the Nordics for help. The best possible situation is a world war, and the Nordics were instrumental in bringing about WWI and WWII. (To be clear, they didn't *cause* those wars – socio-economic issues and political tensions did – but they worked behind the scenes to exacerbate things, get other nations involved, and string things out so the wars lasted longer than they otherwise might have.) Currently, much of their focus is on the Middle East and Eastern Europe, fomenting distrust and stoking the fires within would-be conquerors and fanatics. A large part of this is encouraging intolerance (racial, religious, national, you name it), to keep us at odds with each other.

Second, they want to slow humanity's natural progress, preventing any scientific or technological breakthroughs. They were largely responsible for tanking the American and Russian space programs. They assassinate or kidnap obscure scientists, and discredit famous ones, before they can announce discoveries. If that isn't possible, they'll do whatever is necessary; several wildfires and gas explosions were caused by Nordics to destroy someone's work as collateral damage.

Past these general themes, every group of Nordics has a different short-term plot. Some acquire humans to sell to the Reptoids (pp. 39-41) as breeding stock. Others arrange for ritualized deaths in a building equipped to capture the *orgone energy* of the departing souls; they then sell these "orgone batteries" to the Greys (pp. 29-32) to power their psychoportive technology (pp. 30-31). Patient ones may work to drive humans away from an area with precious underground resources; once the area is completely deserted, they can mine it (quickly and destructively) and then cover up their actions with a fire, explosion, etc.

## White Noise

Decades of research have produced the Nordic's latest creation, the street drug "White Noise." This designer drug sends its users into a euphoric trance (ecstasy, p. B428) for 2d×10 minutes, after which they are Manic-Depressive (p. B143) for three times that duration. (Those who were already bipolar have mood swings on a 12 or less and all effective self-control numbers are *half* of Will, rounded down.)

White Noise is an inhalant. It cannot be "rushed" into the system with a single breath, but must be administered via nasal tube (*cannula*) over the course of a minute before it takes effect. Thus, its dealers also administer the drug, rather than selling it "to go," creating "White Noise dens" similar to the opium dens of old. A portable delivery system is the size of a paperback and weighs 1.5 lbs.

A far lesser known effect of the drug is that the user must make a HT roll while coming down from the euphoria;

on a critical failure, his Will drops by 1 *permanently*. This represents the majority of his body's serotonin fleeing his system to bind with the White Noise proteins! The resultant microscopic package is exhaled and collected by the delivery system. The dealers are either Nordics in on the scam or humans who know to bring the system back "for cleaning" (receiving a small cash stipend for doing so).

This serotonin, which is purer than anything even high-end biotech can produce, is sold as its *own* drug to races in other systems, who have quickly become hooked on it. This situation has been a win-win for the Nordics, who are able to accumulate wealth on both ends of the transaction, which gives them further leverage in each race's world.

## NEW WEAPON OPTIONS

The following options are adapted from those in *GURPS Ultra-Tech*. The GM may declare them off-limits, at least to starting characters. They make excellent rewards for champions who secure alien tech; see *Upgrade Via Acquisition* (p. 44) for more.

Costs are *doubled* from the usual progression (p. B27): ×4 for TL9, ×8 for TL10, ×16 for TL11, and ×32 for TL12. This reflects the difficulty of reproducing these with TL8 terrestrial equipment. A gadgeteer uses these harsher prices *and* replaces the "every decade away" penalty with a flat -5 per +1 TL, plus an additional -5 if he hasn't yet been able to break one down and study it; both penalties can be reduced via Weird Science.

*Caseless Electrothermal-Chemical (ETC) (TL9)*: These guns use an electrical ignition (using batteries built into the magazine) to propel projectiles more efficiently. Multiply range and basic damage by 1.5 (round down); turn 1d into 1d+2. For example, think of 7d+1 as 6d+1d+1, which becomes 9d+(1d+2)+1, or 10d+3. This does not affect the damage of anything carried as a special payload. Any gun\*: +4 CF for the weapon, magazine, *and* ammo.

*Superfine (TL9)*: Gives +2 *and* a (2) armor divisor to cutting and impaling damage. Any edged weapon: +23 CF (unless also a vibroblade; see below).

*Vibroblade (TL10)*: Gives +1d and a (3) armor divisor – or (5) if the blade is also superfine (above) – to cutting (but not impaling!) damage. See the Stalker's longsword (p. 43) for an example. Requires a Ready maneuver to switch on unless a successful Fast-Draw roll is made. Internal battery lasts for 300/(weapon weight in lbs.) seconds before needing a recharge. Any edged weapon: +79 CF or a *total* of +239 CF if also superfine.

\* Specifically, any weapon that uses Guns (LMG, Pistol, Rifle, Shotgun, or SMG).

## Sweet-Talkers

Enthrallment skills (pp. B191-192) are the exclusive domain of the Nordics, who use them to masterfully manipulate people. These are not magical or psionic abilities; merely a reflection of the Nordics' deep understanding of psychology and memetics; those with Indomitable are immune.

A Nordic may attempt to enthrall a group up to (his Charisma+4) squared, with no upper limit. If the audience listening is larger than that limit, the GM will randomly determine who is targeted by the Enthrallment; the Nordic *cannot* say, "I realize there are 200 people here, but I'm going to focus on just the 49 congresspersons among them."

Multiple Nordics may work together to win over large groups. Doing so allows them to add their effective audience limits together! First, each must roll against Public Speaking; only the ones who succeed can contribute. Then, all contributing Nordics roll against the same Enthrallment skill; use their *lowest* margin of success in the Quick Contest against the audience's Will.

That said, Nordics rarely need to affect more than a dozen people. They don't give motivational speeches to sold-out arenas or appear on television; doing so would invite too many people to realize the truth. Instead, they use these skills to manipulate small groups of politicians, businessmen, etc. And even then, it is usually limited to Persuade and Sway Emotions, with the occasional Suggest ("Stop bickering and compromise!"); after all, there's no point in forging an alliance that will fall apart 10 minutes later.

Nordics can use *Time Spent* (p. B346) to speed up their Enthrallment. However, Enthrallment can never be done instantly; at -10, read "minutes" as "seconds." This lets the Nordics attempt Enthrallment in combat – but anyone currently fighting them resists at +5! Elite Nordic NPCs have access to "Speed Enthrallment" techniques to offset the penalty for fast attempts; each is a separate Hard technique that defaults to one Enthrallment skill and can be bought as high as skill+10. Apply haste penalties to the Speed Enthrallment technique, and then roll against the *lower* of the modified technique or unmodified skill. (In other words, the technique is limited to offsetting speed penalties; it will never give a *bonus*.) With permission, PCs can learn these techniques as well.

Note that the skill Talker! (*Champions*, p. 30) replaces Public Speaking for all purposes, including these rules, but does not include Enthrallment skills.

### Close Encounters: Nordics

More so than any other alien race, the Nordics are likely to have powerful human allies, including politicians, corporate CEOs, and more. These allies may or may not believe that the Nordics are truly benevolent – whether they know of their alien nature or think them human – but at minimum, they see them as important, valuable partners, and will use their significant resources to protect their working relationship. In other words, Nordics and dark conspiracies (p. 39) go hand-in-hand.

Champions confronting Nordics may have to do so in a White Noise den, where things could quickly turn ugly. Addicts coming down from White Noise are manic-depressive and have low Will, making them vulnerable to Enthrallment (or even just Influence skills) to turn them against the PCs. For a greater challenge, perhaps a new, more potent strain of White Noise temporarily turns its victims into zombies (*The Enemy*, pp. 12-14); if so, tweak the zombie statistics by deleting Immunity to Metabolic Hazards, Infectious Attack, Injury Tolerance, Unhealing, and the Notes; adding Manic-Depressive; and raising IQ to 8.

While they should not be underestimated in a combat situation – even the lowliest Nordic is stronger, faster, and

tougher than a typical human – they do not get into fights if they can help it. The Nordics prefer to solve things without violence if possible . . . and when violence *is* the only solution, they ambush, snipe, set traps, or blow up entire city blocks to take out their target. Facing Nordic enemies is thus a game of cat and mouse, each side trying to figure out the best way to deal with the other without overplaying their own hand.

*There are about 80 different species and some of them look just like us and they could walk down the street and you wouldn't know if you walked past one. They are what we call "Nordic blondes" and also the Tall Whites who were actually working with the U.S. Air Force in Nevada.*

– Paul Hellyer

### Nordic

Nordics have two sexes; the ones on Earth appear to be idealized humans. This genetic change affects even their biology; the Nordics are one of the only alien races who are vulnerable (though resistant!) to human drugs, poisons, etc.

In a straight fight, it will usually take two to three Nordics per champion to pose a real threat. However, Nordics usually retreat from such direct conflict. They love using Enthrallment skills on unwitting foes; if one can do so before a fight starts, he'll usually attempt it – especially if he has the Speed Enthrallment technique. Once a fight starts, the +5 for foes to resist makes it pointless to target *them*, so the Nordic is more likely to whip innocent bystanders into a frenzy for use as expendable meat-shields.

<b>ST:</b> 15	<b>HP:</b> 18	<b>Speed:</b> 8.00
<b>DX:</b> 15	<b>Will:</b> 17	<b>Move:</b> 9
<b>IQ:</b> 15	<b>Per:</b> 15	<b>Weight:</b> 160 lbs.
<b>HT:</b> 15	<b>FP:</b> 15	<b>SM:</b> 0
<b>Dodge:</b> 12	<b>Parry:</b> 13	<b>DR:</b> See Notes

**Fright Check:** N/A

**Electrolaser Pistol (18):** 1d-3 burning + linked HT-4 roll (at a bonus equal to *half* DR) to resist being stunned. This affects living beings *and* electronics. In "lethal" mode, each shot counts as two, but if the HT roll fails by 5+ the victim suffers a heart attack (or electronics burn out). Acc 4, Range 40/80, RoF 3, Shots 36(3), Bulk -2, Rcl 1.

**Judo Throw (16):** Victim falls and must roll HT or be stunned; see p. B203. Can follow a successful grapple or Judo parry. Made as a Deceptive Attack (-1 to defend against).

**Kick (16):** 1d+3 crushing; Reach C, 1.

**Punch (16):** 1d+2 crushing; Reach C. Made as a Deceptive Attack (-1 to defend against).

**Traits:** Appearance (Beautiful/Handsome); Broad Appeal\*; Callous; Charisma 4; Combat Reflexes; Compulsive Lying (15); Empathy; High TL 2; Jealousy; Megalomania; Nordic Manipulation Talent\* 4; Resistant to Metabolic Hazards (+8) (Earth; see p. 29); Sadism (15); Sanitized Metabolism; Unusual Biochemistry; Very Fit; Voice.

**Skills:** Acting-16; Administration-15; Beam Weapons (Pistol)-18; Captivate-20; Diplomacy-20; Fast-Draw (Pistol)-18; Fast-Talk-20; Interrogation-16; Intimidation-20; Judo-18; Karate-18; Leadership-20; Mimicry (Human Speech)-16; Persuade-20; Politics-16; Propaganda-18; Psychology (Human)-15; Public Speaking-22; Sex Appeal-22; Streetwise-15; Suggest-20; Sway Emotions-20.

**Notes:** No inherent DR, but Nordics usually wear nanoweave clothing (DR 18 vs. piercing and cutting, DR 6 vs. everything else) that is not detectable as armor.

\* See *Inhuman Nordics* (below).

## PHASITES

A.K.A.: Azurites (“Blues”), Ultraterans, Venusians.

These bizarre energy-based aliens may best be described as a central nervous system without the system. They are almost intangible clusters of neural energy that exist largely

perpendicular to our own dimension, only nominally affected by gravity and nearly impossible to see. Unfortunately for them, our environment (from the atmosphere to within the very earth) is toxic to the Phasites, slowly killing them for as long as they’re exposed to it. But more unfortunately for us, they have a way around this problem: possessing our nervous systems and taking over.

## Fish Out of Water

The Phasites’ natural environment is within the plasma of a star. The loops of a stellar magnetic field are to them what the continents and oceans are to humans. Due to reasons even experts have yet to discover (overpopulation? war? wanderlust?), some Phasites have come to Earth, despite its relatively hostile environment.

A Phasite on our planet can live safely inside of a large plasma ball (yes, those novelty lamps *do* contain plasma) or by possessing a body (p. 38). Otherwise, it is exposed to our world and loses 1d HP every 5 minutes. If possession is out of the question (e.g., because every nearby host has resisted), the Phasite can stay alive by draining energy (p. 38) from living things. A Phasite exposed with *no* living things around for miles is almost certainly doomed; its best chance is fleeing straight up, trying to reach space.

An exposed Phasite is nearly invisible unless the viewer is “out of phase” as well. It can be spotted only as a faint shimmering in the air, which requires a Vision roll at -6. Once seen, it can be attacked, though this is also at -6 as it is difficult to track the Phasite’s movements. Even if hit, only attacks capable of harming insubstantial beings will do anything; the Phasite ignores standard physical *and* energy-based attacks.

## INHUMAN NORDICS

You are the ideal of a perfect human, because that’s exactly how your race *wanted* to be perceived. This makes it trivial for you to manipulate the world around you, an ability that’s very easy to abuse . . . but no! You have forsworn your people’s wicked ways and vowed to *help* the humans rather than dominate them.

### Nordic

200 points

**Attribute Modifiers:** ST+2 [20]; DX+2 [40]; IQ+2 [40]; HT+2 [20].

**Advantages:** Appearance (Beautiful/Handsome) [12]; Broad Appeal\* [1]; Charisma 2 [10]; Empathy [15]; Fit [5]; Language (Nordic; Native) [6]; Nordic Manipulation Talent† 4 [20]; Resistant to Metabolic Hazards (+8) (Earth, -20%; see p. 29) [12]; Sanitized Metabolism [1]; Voice [10].

**Disadvantages:** Callous [-5]; Casual Liar‡ [-1]; Proud [-1]; Unusual Biochemistry [-5].

**Features:** Taboo Traits (Lowered Appearance; Truthfulness). Can buy off Callous, Casual Liar, and Proud. Considered human (though with Unusual Biochemistry) for drugs, biotech, etc.

\* Your audience size for Enthrallment skills is not capped at 25 people.

† A racial Talent (p. B89) benefiting Captivate, Diplomacy, Fast-Talk, Persuade, Suggest, and Sway Emotions. *Note:* Instead of giving a reaction bonus, this Talent adds to your Charisma when determining your maximum audience size for Enthrallment. For more rules, see *Sweet-Talkers* (pp. 35-36).

‡ You aren’t a compulsive liar, but you’d rather tell a pleasant lie than an unpleasant truth. If you take Compulsive Lying (which is always a valid option for a Nordic, regardless of your character template), you must buy off this quirk, as it *replaces* this.

### Notes

This template is light on disadvantages because for a Nordic to be heroic, he must buy off (or at least reduce to quirk level) almost every racial disadvantage his people have!

Enthrallment skills are not included in this template (they aren’t racially learned), but a Nordic PC may divert up to 15 points from his template’s optional advantages and/or background skills to spend on Fast Talk, Diplomacy, Public Speaking, and Enthrallment skills.

## Body Snatching

A Phasite may overlap the body of any creature with a racial IQ of 7+ and attempt to possess it. This requires *winning* a Quick Contest: the Phasite's IQ vs. the subject's Will (at +5 if he is aware of what the Phasite is attempting). If it loses or ties, the alien is mentally stunned for 1d seconds and can never attempt to possess that person again.

If it wins, the Phasite is in control of that body indefinitely, as the original owner loses consciousness. With a successful IQ roll, the alien can learn any important fact about its host, as the host's mind and memories are an open book to the invader. This makes it relatively difficult to spot the change (reflected by its unusually high Acting skill), though the Phasite will avoid loved ones as much as possible to be safe.

*We came here from a dying world.  
We drift through the universe, from planet  
to planet, pushed on by the solar winds.  
We adapt and we survive.*

– Dr. Kibner, in *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1978)

## Your Energy Is Mine

Phasites can drain others' life energy. They do so not only to regain HP lost due to "exposure," but also as their source of nourishment while on Earth. A Phasite who goes a full day without acquiring someone's life energy loses 2 HP while sleeping; these points can *only* be replenished through draining.

An exposed Phasite can easily overlap an unsuspecting victim. Once they've been in "contact" for a full second, the victim immediately loses 1d HP or FP (Phasite's choice), which is then transferred directly to the alien. If they stay together another second, the victim loses another 1d to the creature, and so on. There is no resistance roll! The only way to stop this is to escape the alien, which is difficult when the victim probably can't even see it and has no idea what's happening.

A Phasite possessing a body retains this ability, but using it requires actual *physical* contact. A brief touch won't do, but a handshake, hug, or grapple will. The Phasite may transfer the HP or FP to its own "body" or to its host body; as a general rule, it will always top itself off first and *then* "fix its ride."

## Close Encounters: Phasites

Phasites are often found in groups. Even experts don't understand how they reproduce; theories include "they build a giant plasma ball and introduce stolen energy into it somehow" and "they possess humans and reproduce naturally, so the child's mind spawns a new Phasite."

Their thought processes are truly alien. When their survival is in any doubt, they act logically (to the human eye): finding a new host, draining energy as needed, and so on. But once a Phasite is established, its goals and plans can be downright bizarre. One might kidnap a dozen children and force them

to sing a strange, atonal melody. Another could adulterate the output of a food-preparation facility with an odd combination of chemicals – perhaps part of a long-term plan to affect our nervous systems?

Facing a Phasite can be a challenge, as killing its *host* does nothing but inconvenience the alien (and leaves innocent blood on the killer's hands). Driving it out of a body without violence is usually the work of a techie, though Exorcism works as well on a Phasite as it does on a ghost (which is to say excellently, unless the GM has changed it). Once out, however, the challenge of how to hurt it remains. The Phasite's Electrical disadvantage gives surge attacks a chance to stun the alien, but only if they can target Insubstantial foes. Psychotronics such as ethereal barrier cords (*Champions*, p. 57) might work. Theoretically, any energy weapon could be modified *specifically* to affect magnetized plasma fields (adding Affects Insubstantial); doing so *quickly* requires a techie, though if there's more time, a geek or similarly tech-minded champion may be able to pull it off. The GM should reward creative plans!

## Phasite

Much like ghosts, Phasites can be tricky to balance in terms of challenge level. If the team has no way to affect an insubstantial foe or force it to materialize, they may be unable to do anything to stop it! If they can – and do so to one of the Phasites – the others are likely to stay in their possessed bodies, at which point the danger they pose is based on whom they're possessing. A possessed *champion*, for example, becomes about 50% more dangerous (due to the special drain attack and knowledge of his friends' weaknesses). It would take about two or three typical bystanders, possessed, to challenge a full hunter, but note that if a crowd of people is nearby, one Phasite can effectively keep swapping bodies unless stopped during the brief instant in which it is exposed!

<b>ST:</b> 0*	<b>HP:</b> 20*	<b>Speed:</b> 7.00*
<b>DX:</b> 12*	<b>Will:</b> 14	<b>Move:</b> 8*
<b>IQ:</b> 12	<b>Per:</b> 12	<b>Weight:</b> –
<b>HT:</b> 15*	<b>FP:</b> 15*	<b>SM:</b> 0*
<b>Dodge:</b> 10*	<b>Parry:</b> 9*	<b>DR:</b> 0*

**Fright Check:** -2\* (if seen)

**Energy Drain:** 1d HP or FP loss, ignoring DR. This is transferred to the Phasite (or its host). Requires a grapple (using DX) or subterfuge.

**Traits:** Digital Mind; Doesn't Breathe; Draining; Electrical; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards (Earth; see p. 29); Insubstantiality (Affect Substantial; Always On); Invisibility (Fringe; Substantial Only); Leech 4 (Accelerated Healing; Heals FP; Selectivity; Steal FP); Possession (Full Memory Access; Spiritual); Weakness (Environment; 1d per 5 minutes).

**Skills:** Acting-15; Stealth-13\*.

**Notes:** Stealth does not take the bonus from Invisibility into account.

\* In natural form only. Use the host's value when in possession of a body; for DX- or HT-based skills, modify the skill relative to the host's DX or HT.

## THE CONSPIRACY

You *could* have aliens without dark conspiracies . . . but where's the fun in that? Our governments, military-industrial complexes, corporate interlocking directorates, and scientific groups have been covering up the existence of aliens for decades if not centuries, often for different reasons. Some want the alien tech for themselves. Some just want to avoid a panic. Some want to stay under the radar of the aliens to better oppose them. And some have simply been microchipped into obedience and are doing it because the aliens *want* them to.

While aliens may have a hand in matters, these conspiracies are invariably human – or at least *mostly* human (the Nordics really love to get involved in these). They tend to use a lot of code names to avoid talking about things openly: “Project Aquarius,” “the MAJIC classification,” “Plato Group,” and so on. They often comprise strange bedfellows; a nutritional research group, an interlocking directorate of chemical corporations, and a subcommittee of Congress with NSA ties could all be working together to introduce anti-Reptoid chemicals into our water supply in return for technology promised to them by the Greys.

Everything in *Assemble the Parts (GURPS Monster Hunters 2: The Mission*, pp. 34-35) applies here. The GM doesn't need to figure out who all the players are, but should try to introduce new ones on a regular basis; after a while, he can determine how they all lock together. Most conspiracies are *not* friendly with each other, and often disagree not only on the way to handle aliens, but also on just what the aliens are (and what they want) to begin with.

When these human-led conspiracies get involved, they're as likely as the aliens to be behind terrible plots (usually to cover up the truth). An entire small town disappears one day? Maybe it's the Nordics selling them into slavery somewhere – but it could just as likely be that they learned the truth and now a conspiratorial group has them prisoner as part of an attempt to wipe their memories.

### Deducing the Truth

Most of the rules in *Deduction (The Mission*, pp. 9-11) work fine as-is for unraveling alien or conspiracy plots. But some additional notes are called for:

**Who:** Against conspiracies, this will reveal details about the person(s) who took the specific action the PCs are following up on, not necessarily anyone in charge! However, success by 3+ reveals who he works for, which lets them investigate that group. Whether an alien uses a human role or not depends on its race and plan; if so, that cover ID can be determined using the normal rules.

**What:** Use **Hidden Lore (Extraterrestrials)** for aliens and **Expert Skill (Conspiracy Theory)** or **Intelligence Analysis** (at -4) to identify the work of a conspiracy. For a conspiracy, success by 0-2 reveals one group involved, 3-4 reveals how two groups are connected, and 5+ or a critical success paints a *rough* picture of the conspiracy as a whole.

**When:** Because conspiracies function via interlocking organizations, **Administration** is always applicable.

**Where:** If aliens are hiding out far from civilization, **Hidden Lore (Extraterrestrials)** will reveal that. While most parts of a conspiracy have public addresses, finding their *secret* bases requires **Area Knowledge**, an appropriate **Current Affairs** specialty (e.g., Science & Technology for a research group), or, if the team is able to first look through company records, **Administration**.

**Why:** For aliens, **Hidden Lore (Extraterrestrials)** (at -3), **Intelligence Analysis**, or **Psychology** (at -4 unless you're one of them) are valid rolls. For conspiracies, **Expert Skill (Conspiracy Theory)**, **Intelligence Analysis**, or **Psychology** (at -4 because this is *actually* a Sociology roll) all work.

**Deduction Rolls in General:** Regardless of what foes are used in the game, all deduction rolls should be made against *IQ*-based skills; see *Using Skills*

**With Other Attributes** (p. B172) if the skill is normally based on a different attribute or characteristic. This is because Per-based rolls reflect good senses and reaction time, Will-based rolls represent sheer grit and self-awareness, but IQ is the attribute of careful contemplation and analysis. This *only* applies to deduction rolls, not to the rolls to find clues, *several* of which are (rightly) based on Per, Will, or even HT!



## REPTOIDS

A.K.A.: Alphans, Draconians, Nagas.

The best thing that can be said about the Reptoids is that they are a straightforward and relatively honest race. They hate everyone who is not a Reptoid, they greatly enjoy killing things, and they prefer to devour the flesh of sapient beings – not because of any special nutritional needs, but simply to establish dominance.

Unfortunately for potential food (like *us*), the Reptoids are neither simple-minded nor shortsighted, and are willing to take the time to put detailed, long-term plans into motion. For over a century, they have been siphoning away members of the human race to act as breeding stock, without revealing themselves. Considering that they have relatively few human collaborators (compared to the Greys and Nordics), this is impressive . . . and thus cause for *grave* concern.

For the Reptoids' relations with other races, see *Alien Antipathy* (p. 25).

## Up Close and Personal

Reptoids stand about 5' to 7' in height, with a lean and muscular physique. Their hands and feet end in five digits with wickedly sharp claws on the end. (Contrary to some reports, they do *not* have tails, not even vestigial ones.) Their scales

range from brown to dark green in color; they are small and fine, allowing the Reptoid surprising flexibility.

Their eyes are large and black, with X-shaped pupils that move independently of the eye as a whole. Their heads are somewhat conical, resembling that of a dragon, with two bony (almost horn-like) ridges defining their brows. Their teeth are as sharp as their claws, and instead of a tongue, they have a set of extended throat muscles which help tear food apart.

Reptoids are fairly strong and tough, but their greatest virtue is their *speed*. They are fast both physically (able to rapidly close the distance to prey or slip behind cover when attacked) and mentally (calmly reacting to situations that would have taken anyone else by surprise).

Psychologically, the Reptoids are violent, blood-thirsty, and utterly convinced of the superiority of their race. However, whereas the members of many races with a superiority complex tend to overestimate their own personal abilities, the Reptoids are surprisingly clear-sighted about this; they are more than capable of recognizing when "lesser" beings have turned a situation to their advantage, and they're willing to call for backup, rethink their approach, etc.

If they have a significant "hole" in their perception, it's for subtext; Reptoid culture favors clear, straightforward dialogue. Reptoids thus fail to understand things like artistic embellishment, hyperbole, metaphor, humor, sarcasm, or any other communication that conveys multiple levels of meaning. They are equally confused by sex- or gender-specific terms, as Reptoids are hermaphroditic; reproduction is possible between any two members.

## INHUMAN REPTOIDS

You have overcome your racial Intolerance and learned that the humans are good for more than just food. Fortunately, you stole a morphology inducer so you can fit in among them . . . physically, at least. Socially, you tend to miss sarcasm, interpret metaphors literally, and get confused by humor. Your friends say you can "work on this one day at a time," which seems redundant to you; how *else* would time function?

### Reptoid

200 points

**Attribute Modifiers:** ST+2 [20]; DX+1 [20]; HT+2 [20].

**Secondary Characteristic Modifiers:** Basic Speed+1.25 [25].

**Advantages:** Basic Morphology Inducer (p. 26) [6]; Danger Sense [15]; DR 4 [20]; Enhanced Time Sense [45]; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards (Earth, -20%; see p. 29) [24]; Language (Reptoid; Native) [6]; Night Vision 6 [6]; Peripheral Vision [15]; Regeneration (Regular) [25]; Sharp Claws [5]; Sharp Teeth [1].

**Disadvantages:** Appearance (Monstrous) (Mitigator, Morphology Inducer, -80%) [-4]; Bad Temper (12) [-10]; Bloodlust (12) [-10]; Chauvinistic [-1]; Clueless [-10]; Oblivious [-5]; No Sense of Humor [-10]; Social Stigma (Monster) (Mitigator, Morphology Inducer, -80%) [-3].

**Features:** Taboo Trait (Voice). Can buy off all disadvantages except Appearance and Social Stigma. Drugs and biotech calibrated for humans do not work on Reptoids, and vice versa.

### Notes

In a *Monster Hunters* game, assume that Enhanced Time Sense allows you to *effectively* take the maximum extra time (p. B346) on tasks that rely purely on processing and reacting to perceived information in real time. In practice, this gives +5 to Per-based skills – including Per-based rolls against skills normally based on another attribute – but only when the GM rules that extra time would matter or haste would cause a penalty. It only benefits mundane actions, never spellcasting, power use, or any other supernatural effect.

Suitable tasks include Per-based Hidden Lore to figure out what kind of monster you're currently battling, Observation when analyzing a potential threat, Per-based Tactics to size up foes mid-fight, and Tracking rolls to follow a trail without slowing down. Passive rolls, such as Sense rolls to notice something, are never affected, only those requiring active concentration. Deduction rolls also never benefit; in fact, as these have nothing to do with reaction time, they should always be based on IQ, not Per (for more see *Deducing the Truth*, p. 39).

Enhanced Time Sense also includes Combat Reflexes. Thus, if that trait is mandatory on a template (which it frequently is), drop it and choose 15 points in other template (or lens) advantages.

### Underground Conspiracies

Reptoids have spaceships (p. 26), but where their vehicular technology truly excels is in *burrowers*. Treat these as grav jeeps (p. B465) with Tunneling (p. B94) at Move 10. These have allowed the Reptoids to dig tunnel systems that lead to vast underground caverns, often naturally occurring, with water from underground streams. There they set up bases, far below Earth's cities, with a few tunnels strategically connected to the sewer systems or subways of each.

After setting up lighting, the Reptoids can then head up the connecting tunnels to venture above ground, usually wearing morphology inducers (pp. 25-26). The next move depends on what the current mission is. The most common plot is kidnapping and breeding humans for food. The usual first step there is acquiring bedding, shackles, and the minimal personal supplies needed to keep a person healthy. They can then begin kidnapping humans (a few men and the rest women) and bringing them down for forced breeding, while venturing up occasionally to steal food (usually cartons of protein bars) and supplies. At some point, they begin bringing down medical equipment and perhaps kidnapping a medical professional; unfortunately, this generally boils down to "someone at a hospital who was wearing a uniform," which may take several tries to get right.

(Nothing is lost, however, as a “wrong” victim can just become more breeding stock.) Ideally, the medical professional aids the births out of a desire to help fellow humans, and the Reptoids let the tender, succulent babies nurse until they’re ready to be eaten.

There are countless other reasons why the Reptoids may emerge from their tunnels, of course. They are always on the hunt for new technology and inventions (which sometimes brings them into conflict with the Nordics), they frequently provoke fights with street gangs just to blow off some steam (and have learned that such “lower-class humans” can be killed without causing a media uproar), they research humanity to learn of further weaknesses and opportunities, and so on. In the sewers, runoff pipes, and subways of major cities, the further down you explore, the more likely you are to end up *eaten*.

## Into the Light

It would be a mistake to assume that the Reptoids spent *all* of their time underground. While they find it distasteful to use morphology inducers (pp. 25-26), they *do* have them, and a small percentage of socially adept Reptoids are hard at work in the upper echelons of human society, forming their own dark conspiracies (p. 39). In particular, these aliens have been responsible for most of the obesity epidemic affecting many prosperous nations. By making deals that privilege fast-food chains, subsidize high-sucrose sodas, and more, the Reptoids are *literally* fattening up humanity for the slaughter!

## Close Encounters: Reptoids

The Reptoids’ advanced technology is optimized for them, which means any plan involving kept humans (which is *most* of their plans!) requires that they steal things to maintain their herd: human food, human medicine, etc. Champions may investigate a series of break-ins and put two and two together, or they may be there when the Reptoids kick in the warehouse door.

Reptoids can also be encountered unexpectedly, particularly underneath major cities. Considering that they have to worry about their access tunnels being compromised, they tend to deal with “unexpected encounters” rather violently. Worse, their lightning-fast reaction time makes Reptoids almost impossible to surprise. Thus, any hostile situation will be an open fight – or the hunters being ambushed by the Reptoids!

If the situation turns against the aliens, they will not hesitate to take hostages or otherwise use human lives as a bargaining chip. They *really* hate to retreat from a fight, but will do so (leaving as much destruction in their wake as possible) if that’s the only reasonable option.

## Reptoid

A typical Reptoid is a challenge for one champion. Reptoids are effectively immune to surprise, so any ambush will achieve one second of surprise at *best* – or not even that, if their Danger Sense roll succeeds.

**ST:** 15                    **HP:** 18                    **Speed:** 9.00  
**DX:** 15                    **Will:** 12                **Move:** 11  
**IQ:** 12                    **Per:** 15                **Weight:** 120-220 lbs.  
**HT:** 14                    **FP:** 14                    **SM:** 0 or +1  
**Dodge:** 14                **Parry:** 13                **DR:** 4+ (See Notes)

**Fright Check:** -2

**Ceremonial Blade (16):** 2d+4(2) cutting or 1d+1(2) impaling; Reach 1.

**Claw or Bite (16):** 1d+1 cutting; Reach C. Made as a Deceptive Attack (-1 to defend against).

**Flame Rifle (18):** 5d burning. Acc 6, Range 50/150, RoF 1, Shots 28(3), Bulk -3, Rcl 1. Damaging or destroying it will *not* make it explode.

**Traits:** Appearance (Monstrous); Bad Temper (9); Bloodlust (6); Clueless; Danger Sense; Disturbing Voice; Enhanced Dodge 1; Enhanced Time Sense; High Pain Threshold; High TL 2; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards (Earth; see p. 29); Intolerance (Racial); Night Vision 6; No Sense of Humor; Oblivious; Odious Racial Habit (Eats sapient beings); Peripheral Vision; Regeneration (Regular); Social Stigma (Monster).

**Skills:** Beam Weapons (Projector)-18; Brawling-18; Short-sword-16.

**Notes:** In addition to natural DR 4, most wear light armor (DR 10 vs. crushing, DR 20 vs. everything else) with or without a helmet (DR 18 for skull, DR 12 for face/eyes).



## STALKERS

A.K.A.: Manhunters, Orions, Ten-qu-Hish.

Stalkers live for the hunt. They track down, kill, and take as trophies the most dangerous game in the universe. On Earth, that usually means humans – specifically, the toughest, smartest, and strongest humans on the planet. If that sounds like “champions” to you, then congratulations for paying attention.

The one spot of good news is that our world is full of *other* dangerous things for Stalkers to hunt. Sometimes they’re even willing to team up with human heroes, *if* the prey turns out to be far tougher than they’d planned. However, once a Stalker has declared a hunt on a human (or team), it will *not* call that hunt off even if something “better” turns up; to do so would violate the Hunter’s Code (p. 43).

## Now You See Them . . .

Stalkers range from about 5' to 6' tall, with powerful, muscular bodies covered with fine dark fur that helps augment their senses. Their "hair" is actually flexible spines that help them maintain balance, and their faces look vaguely like skulls, with deep-set, beady eyes and teeth exposed in a lipless mouth. Their hands and feet resemble humans', but with a ring of spikes around the wrists and ankles; these allow the Stalkers to climb *incredibly* well, a trait they use to their benefit when sniping.

Stalkers are easily twice as strong as a typical man, and their long, sinewy legs allow them to move incredibly fast. Their organs are built redundantly, able to function at full capacity even if 75% damaged; because of this, Stalkers can shrug off gunfire that should have left them bleeding out on the ground. Their only physical vulnerability is their preference for warmer climates; when the temperature drops close to freezing, they stiffen up and have a hard time coping. If one is pursuing you, consider hiding in a deep-freeze.

Male and female Stalkers are equally likely to show up as hunters; their personalities are not noticeably different. Most Stalkers divide the world around them into predators and potential prey, and enjoy lording their strength over the latter. A particularly cruel (but common) "joke" is to pick on the leader in a group of weaker people, hurting and embarrassing him without causing permanent damage, *just* to force the others to face how pathetic they all are. Among their peers, on

the other hand, Stalkers are downright chummy! They love to celebrate after completing a successful hunt – sharing stories, tips, and dares while inhaling intoxicant powders together.

## . . . Now You Don't

All Stalkers carry morphology inducers (pp. 25-26) on them, even if they don't need a handy disguise. This is because the Stalker's unique combination of mind and metabolism allows it to push the inducer to do things it shouldn't be able to. This requires a Concentrate maneuver, a Will roll, and 2 FP. If the Will roll is successful, the Stalker doesn't just change appearance; he disappears from sight completely! (If it fails, he may try again, but now every attempt costs 3 FP until he succeeds or rests and recovers completely.)

This is stressful and difficult to maintain, however. While invisible, the Stalker cannot take *any* action other than continued Concentrate maneuvers. This precludes attacking, moving at full speed, and so on. In addition, every minute that it remains up, he must pay another 1 FP and succeed at another Will roll.

This ability is a knack of the Stalkers, not something special about their morphology inducers. Someone stealing a Stalker's belt will be unable to use it for anything except disguise. It is one of the reasons they are so feared; unless the target has special senses (e.g., Infravision or Vibration Sense) to overcome this advantage, the Stalker can disappear completely while slowly tracking him, and then drop the cloak to attack!

## INHUMAN STALKERS

You can no longer see humans as prey. Some of them deserve the title "hunter" more than most Stalkers you've known. So you've thrown in with them, taking on better hunting challenges than you've ever known before.

### Stalker

200 points

**Attribute Modifiers:** ST+4 [40]; DX+2 [40]; HT+2 [20].

**Secondary Characteristic Modifiers:** Per+2 [10]; Basic Move+2 [10].

**Advantages:** Basic Morphology Inducer (p. 26) [2\*]; Brachiator [5]; Catfall [10]; Enhanced Tracking 1 (Multi-Shot†, +20%) [6]; Flexibility [5]; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards (Earth, -20%; see p. 29) [24]; Infravision [10]; Injury Tolerance (No Vitals; Unliving) [25]; Invisibility (Breakable, DR 2, SM -6, Machine, -35%; Can Be Stolen, Must be removed by force, Won't work for thief -5%; Can Carry Objects, Light Encumbrance, +20%; Costs Fatigue, 2 FP, -10%; Requires Concentrate, -15%; Requires Will roll, -5%) [20]; Language (Stalker; Native) [6]; Silence 2 [10].

**Disadvantages:** Appearance (Monstrous) (Mitigator, Morphology Inducer, -80%) [-4]; Bloodlust (12) [-10]; Code of Honor (The Hunter's Code; see p. 43) [-15]; Cold-Blooded (50°) [-5]; Earnest Hunter‡ [-1]; Overconfidence (12) [-5]; Social Stigma (Monster) (Mitigator, Morphology Inducer, -80%) [-3].

**Features:** Can buy off Bloodlust, Code of Honor (though that's rare!), Earnest Hunter, and Overconfidence. Drugs and biotech calibrated for humans do not work on Stalkers, and vice versa.

\* Bought as an alternative ability to Invisibility, at 1/5 cost.

† Allows you to aim at multiple targets with the same weapon.

‡ Quirk-level Manic-Depressive. After a successful hunt, you hit the town and party like there's no tomorrow. After a failed hunt, you lock yourself in your room to brood all night. If you add full Manic-Depressive (which is always a valid option for a Stalker, regardless of your character template), you must buy off this quirk.

### Notes

Regardless of your template, add Climbing to your list of skill choices (and note that Brachiator and Flexibility give you a net +5). Your Code of Honor requires you to warn your prey at some point before you attack, but once you've done this, you can set up ambushes, traps, etc.

Your morphology inducer is built as Alternate Form + Invisibility, with slightly different gadget limitations (since the Alternate Form will work for anyone, but the Invisibility only works when *you* use it). It uses the rules under *Now You Don't* (above).

## The Hunter's Code

A Stalker on the hunt follows a very strict code of honor. He must always ensure that his prey knows it's being hunted and knows who's hunting it. The prey's friends and associates are fair game, but he must take all reasonable measures to avoid killing innocent bystanders; this goes *double* for children and pregnant women (the woman may be fair game, but the child inside is not). Once a hunt has begun, the Stalker must either see it through to completion, putting nothing else ahead of it until he gets his kill . . . or acknowledge defeat and treat that target as a peer for the rest of both their lives.

The code allows multiple Stalkers to work together if the prey (generally *also* a group) truly justifies the effort, but no Stalker can join another's hunt without his express permission.

*We begin finding our men . . .  
without their skins, and sometimes  
much, much worse. "El caza trofeos  
de los hombres" means "the demon  
who makes trophies of men."*

– Anna, in *Predator*

## Close Encounters: Stalkers

Unless the champions frequent the kind of intergalactic bars where Stalkers go to celebrate afterward, they're going to encounter Stalkers only in the middle of a hunt. This means one of two possibilities.

The Stalker(s) may be on the hunt for someone or something else. If so, the only thing the heroes have to do is stay out of the way. Of course, the GM wouldn't be doing his job if he made it that easy, right? If the champions cross paths with the Stalker, they're likely to get one warning before getting added to his list for dealing with afterward. In the more likely case that they're trying to *prevent* his hunt, they'll be added as *current* targets and dealt with (possibly after the Stalker calls in backup, if the PCs seem particularly dangerous).

Or the Stalker(s) may start off hunting the PCs, skipping all of that preliminary lead-in and getting straight to the attempted murder. There should always be a clear reason, something that led to the Stalker deciding to hunt *this* group; the players will (rightly) complain if the GM decides that the alien just pulled their names out of a hat. The one good thing is that the Stalker won't just blow up their headquarters or snipe them all before they even know what's happening. However, the Stalker *may* show up from out of nowhere, visually confirm that they have their weapons, announce who he is, and then attack while he still has initiative (p. B393).

## Stalker

The best way to build a "monster-hunter hunter" is to add the Stalker racial template (*Inhuman Stalkers*, p. 42) to one of the **Champions** templates, taking Bully (9) [-15], Compulsive

Hunting (6) [-20], and Sadism (12) [-15] instead of the template's normal disadvantages, and putting points earmarked for Occultism and *Know Thy Enemy* skills into more appropriate options. This will produce a 600-point enemy: 200 points from the racial template + 400 points from the character template.

The example below was based on the commando, but with TL9-10 weaponry to further upgrade his capabilities. It serves well as a representative example of the species. A Stalker like this is matched to about one or two champions in an open fight, but remember that Stalkers are adept at ambushes! A couple of Stalkers *can* wipe out an entire team in a manner of seconds, given the opportunity. Smart heroes will go on the offensive the moment the Stalker declares the hunt, making sure *they* dictate the terms of the fight, not the alien.

**ST:** 17                      **HP:** 22                      **Speed:** 8.00  
**DX:** 18                      **Will:** 14                      **Move:** 10  
**IQ:** 12                      **Per:** 15                      **Weight:** 175 lbs.  
**HT:** 15                      **FP:** 15                      **SM:** 0  
**Dodge:** 12                      **Parry:** 13                      **DR:** See Notes  
**Fright Check:** -3

**Hunting Knife (17):** 3d(2) cutting or 1d+4(2) impaling; Reach C, 1. Often stabbed into the vitals (-3 to hit).

**Punch or Bite (15):** 1d+3 crushing; Reach C. Made as a Deceptive Attack (-2 to defend against).

**Sonic Stun Rifle (20\*):** HT-4(5) affliction to resist falling unconscious. Acc 6, Range 60/180, RoF 1, Shots 56(3), Bulk -3, Rcl 1.

**Storm Rifle (20\*):** 9d large piercing. Acc 5, Range 1,300/5,800, RoF 3, Shots 12+1(3), Bulk -4, Rcl 3. Fires 10mm caseless rounds.

**Survival Laser Carbine (20\*):** 4d(2) burning. Acc 12, Range 300/900, RoF 6, Shots 56(3), Bulk -3, Rcl 1. Can be broken into small parts for smuggling.

**Vibrobladed Longsword (17):** 4d+2(5) cutting (Reach 1) or 1d+6(2) impaling (Reach 1, 2).

**Traits:** Absolute Direction; Appearance (Monstrous); Bloodlust (12); Brachiator; Bully (9); Catfall; Code of Honor (The Hunter's Code; see above); Cold-Blooded (50°); Combat Reflexes; Compulsive Hunting (6); Danger Sense; Earnest Hunter†; Enhanced Tracking 1 (Multi-Shot†); Fit; Flexibility; Gunslinger; High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards (Earth; see p. 29); Infravision; Injury Tolerance (No Vitals; Unliving); Invisibility (see *Now You Don't*, p. 42); Luck; Overconfidence (15); Quick Reload (Gun!); Sadism (12); Silence 2; Social Stigma (Monster).

**Skills:** Blade!-17; Camouflage-12; Carousing-15; Climbing-23; First Aid-13; Gesture-12; Gun!-20; Karate-19; Knot-Tying-18; Observation-16; Soldier-12; Stealth-18; Swimming-15; Tactics-15; Traps-12; Tracking-16; Wrestling-18.

**Notes:** No inherent DR, but Stalkers often wear nanoweave clothing (DR 18 vs. piercing and cutting, DR 6 vs. everything else), which is light enough not to interfere with their invisibility. Stealth does not include Invisibility or Silence bonuses. Tracking *does* include Infravision bonus.

\* Plus the bonus from Gunslinger (Acc/2 for these long arms).

† See *Inhuman Stalkers* (p. 42).

## UPGRADE VIA ACQUISITION

As noted in *New Weapon Options* (p. 35), ultra-tech gear is difficult to create. For example, inventing a vibro-blade katana (\$52,000) calls for the techie to roll at -12 to skill – or -17 without an example to study! Weird Science knocks those down a bit (to -7 or -10), but it's still an uphill battle.

The best way to offset this is by acquiring the gear in question and reverse-engineering it directly. However, the aliens (and human conspirators) who possess this tech will have taken safeguards against this happening. Weapons can be designed to explode once the user dies, gear may slag itself upon being opened (preventable with a Traps roll at a *hefty* penalty), and so on. The more the GM is concerned about a piece of equipment unbalancing the game, the harsher these measures are likely to be!

As a compromise reward, the GM can have the team uncover “miscellaneous alien tech” (MAT). Instead of being the equipment that they actually *want*, this is gear or data that seems useless on the surface but can assist them in reverse-engineering new alien tech. It is rated by \$ value and will usually fall into one of the following categories:

*Broken Gear:* A relatively intact but non-functioning weapon, sensor, etc. might provide MAT equal to 1/20 to 1/4 its original value.

*Information:* Blueprints, sketches, or the result of a good interrogation session could give *any* amount of MAT.

*Unrelated Equipment:* Stuff that works but has no direct adventuring utility, such as digital writing implements or cooking gear, usually provides its value as MAT; the GM may adjust this as he sees fit.

The players should track each source of acquired MAT, separating it by alien race (unless the GM agrees that certain races share technology). At any point, a techie may

use MAT from any number of sources to offset the TL penalty when using *Gadgeteering* (*The Mission*, pp. 24-25) for one task. Not all sources have to be used, but a source cannot be “broken up”; e.g., you cannot use just \$1,200 out of a \$5,000 blueprint.

Look up the MAT value on the *Gadgeteering Table* and apply a bonus equal to how many lines down that is: +1 for MAT up to \$10, +2 for MAT up to \$100, +3 for MAT up to \$1,000, and so on. The MAT bonus can only offset the -5 per +1 TL and -5 for not having studied the gear; it cannot counteract other penalties or provide a net bonus. If using Weird Science, apply this MAT reduction *before* halving those penalties.

Whether the gadgeteering roll succeeds or fails, mark that MAT as used and note which project it was used for. It is “spent” and cannot contribute to a different project, but will continue to assist rolls for the *same* thing in the future. The heroes may acquire further MAT and add it to the spent MAT to work their way up to a larger bonus.

*Example:* Over time, a team has acquired \$11,500 in Nordic MAT. The techie decides that this is a good time to try replicating the electrolaser pistol that the aliens use; per *Ultra-Tech*, it's worth \$7,200 (at ×4 cost for TL9), for a Complexity Modifier of -1. He's also at -5 for the +1 TL and -5 because he's never taken one apart and studied it. His base roll is thus at -11 (or -6 with Weird Science). However, the MAT falls into the “Up to \$100,000” range, giving +5, so his Scrounging and Inventor! rolls are actually at -6 (or -4 with Weird Science) – not just for *this* invention, but for every time he rolls to invent an electrolaser pistol from this point on! If the team wants to mitigate that penalty further, they'll need to devote at least *another* \$88,501 in Nordic MAT, to push its total bonus into the “Up to \$1,000,000” range.

## MICROBES AND PLAGUES

Some of the most dangerous menaces are the unseen ones – the microscopic monsters that work their way into a body by the billions to do . . . something. Any of these threats could be an organism native to outer space, but they work just as well as tailored bioweapons, the result of a *massive* magical botch involving Path of Life, or even just something a demon sneezed out one day. The GM, as always, should keep the players guessing (and making those deduction rolls).

Apart from the description, there is one main thing that sets alien microbes apart from terrestrial ones: their unusual biology. As these microorganisms are not from our world, they do not respond predictably to our antibiotics, chemotherapy, retroviruses, and so on. This effectively negates any bonuses from high-end medical equipment or drugs, unless they were tailor-made to deal with such extraterrestrial threats. It should also be reflected in a higher-than-normal effective Will (about +2 to what's suggested on p. 24 of *The Mission*) for resistance purposes – at least until the

healer is able to truly understand how the disease works. It's worth noting that plagues from spirit realms (*The Enemy*, pp. 15-16) *may* count as “coming from an alien world” at the GM's option! This is likely to twist cures in a supernatural manner rather than a scientific one; e.g., the champions' efforts fail until they learn that Hellish Flu only responds to antibiotics cultured in holy water. (Ignore all of this if any of these microbes came from Earth.)

Each threat below uses the statistics for *Disease* (pp. B442-444), with one change: “Damage” has been replaced by the more general “Effect,” as many of these do not do damage. For “Contagiousness,” note that “mildly contagious” means that a resistance roll is required after each day (or one cycle, if shorter) of exposure, while “highly contagious” means that even momentary exposure requires a roll. The GM who uses these will also need to be familiar with *Neutralizing Plagues* (*The Mission*, pp. 23-24).

Regardless of the specifics, Resistant or Immunity to Disease always helps here, as do any broader versions that include it (e.g., Resistant or Immunity to Sickness, and Resistant or Immunity to Metabolic Hazards).

## New Infections

Microorganisms are a perfect way for the GM to justify a plot that involves a large number of people being simultaneously affected by something (“Wouldn’t it be cool and scary if an entire town turned into some sort of hive mind?”). Making a virus, bacteria, prion, or similar microbe responsible for the problem gives the heroes a fair way to stop it and won’t seem unduly arbitrary.

The GM can easily create new plagues, tailor-made to fit whatever adventure he has in mind. Just follow the steps on pp. B442-443, assigning statistics befitting the threat. The most important decision is the resistance roll, as that will determine not only how hard it is for the public at large to avoid catching this, but also how likely the PCs are to become infected! As a rule, champions have excellent HT, but even a HT 14 warrior will be easily laid low by a resistance roll against HT-8.

## BRAIN FLU

*Vector:* Respiratory.

*Resistance Roll:* HT-5.

*Delay:* 1d days.

*Effect:* Gain one level of Susceptible to Telepathy.

*Cycles:* 30 × one day.

*Symptoms:* Special.

*Contagiousness:* Highly contagious.

Brain flu is a fairly benign virus, all things considered. All it does is open up the subject’s mind, making it easier for others to commune with it. Of course, in a world full of rogue psis, that’s slightly problematic to say the least. Because there are no physical effects (until Supersensitive kicks in), the victim must make a Per-4 roll each time it gets worse even to notice that he feels “a bit off.”

The victim of brain flu gains one level of Susceptible to Telepathy per day, making it harder and harder to resist the influence of telepathic psis. Anyone with a specific immunity retains protection from the listed effect, but unless it’s Immunity to Telepathy as a whole, he remains vulnerable to other issues. For example, someone who’s had brain flu for 13 days but who has Immunity to Mind Control would *still* be completely immune to Mind Control, but would resist Mental Blow, Mind Probe, etc., at -13. Once the virus has run its course, the victim “heals” one level of Susceptible per *week* until back to normal.

Brain flu’s symptoms are based on the victim losing a certain fraction of his normal Will-based resistance roll for Telepathy. For example, a subject with Will 13 and Resistant to Psionics (+3) has a resistance roll of 16. So when he gains Susceptible to Telepathy 8 he has lost 1/2 of his Will-based resistance, while with Susceptible to Telepathy 16 he has lost all of it. It is possible for brain flu to push resistance into the negatives.

*Once 1/2 of Will-based resistance is lost:* The subject begins “broadcasting” his thoughts, making it possible for nearby

psis to pick up on his signal without even trying. The chance (on 3d) is equal to the total levels of Susceptible, minus standard range penalties to the psi. With one person, even a *heavily* infected one, this is likely to matter only if psis are very near . . . however, if *many* people within that range are infected, the odds go up tremendously. Roll again, using the highest level of Susceptible among everyone, at +1 if three or more people are infected, +2 for 10, +3 for 30, +4 for 100, +5 for 300, and so on. Success doesn’t let the telepath hear any specific thoughts; instead he picks up a garbled susurrus of subconsciouses. Either way, he knows where it’s coming from, and thus where he can find easily dominated victims.

*Once all of Will-based resistance is lost:* The victim gains Supersensitive (p. B158).

If brain flu isn’t from outer space, it’s a good candidate for a manmade psychotronic bioweapon. Any large group of rogue telepaths would *love* to infect as much of the population as possible, rendering the world helpless to resist their mental domination. Of course, if this *is* their plan, it means they have an immunization for hunters to find and steal!

*She’ll eye me suspiciously  
Hearing the whir of the servos  
inside*

*And she’ll scream and try to run  
But there’s nowhere she can hide  
When a crazy cyborg wants to  
make you his robot bride*

– Jonathan Coulton,  
“The Future Soon”

## CYBERCYTES

*Vector:* Contact (or Network, for computers).

*Resistance Roll:* HT-2.

*Delay:* 3d hours.

*Effect:* Attempt to take control.

*Cycles:* 28 × six hours.

*Symptoms:* None.

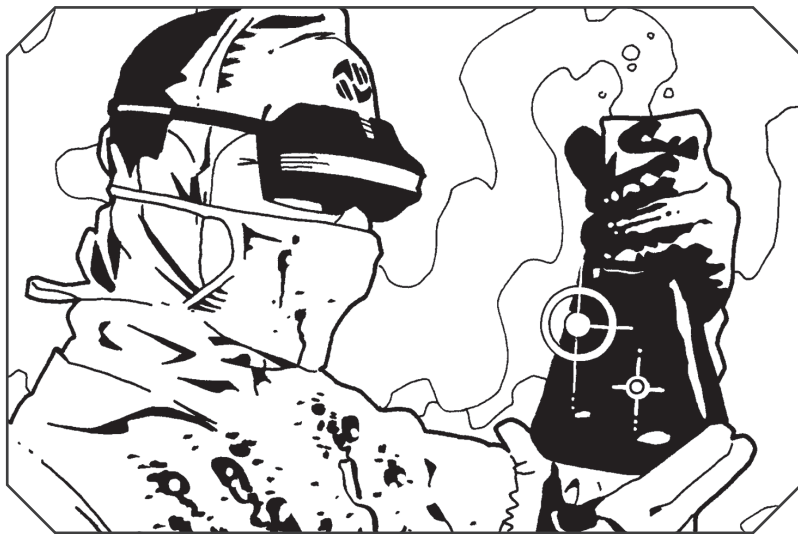
*Contagiousness:* Mildly contagious.

Cybercytes are microbial, cybernetic parasites. They have the unusual ability to infect people *or* computers. In fact, they blur the line between the two in more ways than one . . .

Treat a cybercyte infestation as any normal disease, using the statistics above. For computers, treat “contact” as any infected person actively using the system for at least six hours, while “network” means that any infected computer connected to a local area network may attempt to spread this to every other system on that network.

Once the cybercytes have physically infected a person or computer, the subject does not take damage every cycle. Instead, the victim makes the usual resistance roll every cycle to throw off the infection; if it fails, the cybercytes get a chance to *take over*. For people, roll a Quick Contest of the cybercytes' Will 14 against the subject's Will. For computers, roll the cybercytes' Will 14 at a penalty equal to the subject's Complexity. If the cybercytes tie or lose (or fail), nothing happens; they'll just try again next cycle. If they win (or succeed), they take control of the subject.

The cybercytes' control is more akin to Mind Control than to Possession. The victim is completely conscious and self-aware, but is unable to resist following the microbes' suggestions. Living victims feel the urge to infect the nearest computer; if no one is watching, they will spit into the ports, rub their face on the keyboard, and so on, so that the cybercytes' infection roll is at +3 (the reverse of the usual -3 from *Contagion*, p. B443). Computers will instead display error messages and pop up helpful diagnostic windows that recommend the user sniff the system exhaust ("to check for smoke"), check for a food spill on the bottom of the mouse (yes, *many* people will do this via taste), etc., for -3 to resist the cybercytes' infection.



Once both a computer and a person are infected, the person will curl around the computer as the cybercytes transfer back and forth between them, carrying microscopic particles with them. Gradually, the person and the computer begin to merge into one. For the first 10 hours, every 30 minutes adds 1 character point worth of cybernetics (see p. B46 or *GURPS Ultra-Tech*, pp. 207-221). However, the cost of these are balanced with an equal magnitude of disadvantages – such as Delusion (Humanity is destined to become cyberbeings), Low Empathy, Obsession (Change others to be like me), and Reprogrammable – so that the victim's point value does not change. The GM should decide what to add *after* seeing how long until the person is discovered.

After these changes, if the victim has still not been pulled away from the computer, the next 2.5 hours are spent making the final changes to his brain. At the end of this time he emerges as a full cyborg with Digital Mind [5] and Sense of Duty (Cybercytes) [-5]. His transformation stops here, but the

GM may continue it as a plot device if the subject is able to infect, say, a large server room.

Note that even while this is happening, the subject still gets a HT-2 roll every six hours to throw off the infection – though any physical changes *are* permanent, barring radical surgery. A basic cyborg victim is comparable in threat level to a fast zombie (*The Enemy*, p. 14); one who's been able to make more radical changes, like built-in weaponry and armor, will be scarier.

## HUSK VIRUS

*Vector:* Contact.

*Resistance Roll:* None (treat as HT-8 where this matters).

*Delay:* 1d×1d hours.

*Effect:* Special.

*Cycles:* 1 (treat as one hour where this matters).

*Symptoms:* None.

*Contagiousness:* Mildly contagious.

The husk virus is a typical example of a "zombie plague" (*The Enemy*, p. 12) that only affects dead bodies, which then rise up and begin walking around and biting people. The virus is most often spread when a husk zombie is killed (well, re-killed) near other, uninfected bodies. If the infected body is not separated from the others within the hour, all of the once-normal bodies rise up, starting the cycle anew! The body of anyone *killed* by a husk zombie is automatically infected with the plague as well, though attack victims who *survive* are unaffected and uninfected.

Treat husk zombies as slow zombies (*The Enemy*, pp. 13-14) with one crucial exception: They can be killed *only* by complete dismemberment. If a husk zombie's body is intact, even a head shot from a sniper-rifle won't faze it. To kill it, both arms, both legs, *and* the head must be severed from the body, at which point it dies. Each limb requires 16 points of injury to sever. This must come from a cutting, impaling, or piercing attack – though the latter two are *far* less effective due to the zombie's Injury Tolerance (Unliving) (see *The Enemy*, p. 25).

Once a limb has been severed, it will continue to attack! Fortunately, at this point it can be hurt by any attack, even crushing, burning, etc. It's more efficient to focus on finishing the dismemberment, but champions without blades or bullets can still be useful fighting off the small army of limbs that a husk zombie fight produces.

Severed limbs use the slow zombie's statistics (ST 15, IQ 3, HT 10, Will 12, Per 8, etc.), except as shown below. Note that *all* attacks are made as All-Out Attacks; limbs do not defend themselves. Dropping any limb to -8 HP or worse "cripples" it, effectively taking it out of the fight.

*Arm:* DX 9; HP 8; Move 3. Punches for 1d+1 crushing damage or grapples on a 13 or less. Treat every *two* full arms grappling you as one zombie for mob rules (*The Enemy*, p. 14).

*Leg:* DX 7; HP 8; Move 1. Kicks on a 9 or less for 1d+2 crushing damage.

*Head:* DX 9; HP 8; Move 0. Bites on a 13 or less for 1d+1 cutting damage.

# A THIN VENEER OF PLAUSIBILITY

In addition to all of the new pseudoscientific threats in this chapter, many of the existing monsters from *The Enemy* and other sources can be given a more analytical “makeover.” These suggestions don’t focus on statistics; they’re about changing the explanation *behind* the monster more than changing the monster itself.

## THE UNDEAD

Even in stories that are nominally not about the supernatural, life after death is a surprisingly prevalent trope. Most “converted” undead fall into one of two categories: man-made creation or disease victim.

### Ghosts

This foe fills the role of “intangible threat,” so before adapting ghosts, consider simply *replacing* them with the Phasites (pp. 37-38). There can be a specific place for ghosts in the game, however, as “ghosts in the machine.” People whose minds have been uploaded into a computer may continue to live on even after the death of their body. This may have been a voluntary process (perhaps a radical new alternative to brain surgery) or an involuntary one, such as an accident or a run-in with cybercytes (pp. 45-46). A ghost with the Possession ability (*The Enemy*, p. 5) can take over machines rather than people – which has the potential to be much scarier!

### Mummies

Of all the undead, mummies are the hardest to justify without the supernatural; no one could fault the GM for simply leaving them out. However, they *could* represent the result of a radical transformation program – something designed to turn normal people into implacable guardians. In this case, the weakness should be a variant on the funerary amulet, such as an injection pack that keeps their altered internal systems stable.

Or perhaps they *were* dried-out corpses, but then aliens got hold of them! By outfitting the dead with robotics, a group of extraterrestrials could easily intimidate lower-tech humans into avoiding burial sites-turned-secret-bases. A running battle with the Reptoids (pp. 39-41) through the Pyramids as their pharaoh-bots defend the “mummy’s curse” (actually a bioweapon like the cybercytes, pp. 45-46) is sure to inject fun into any campaign!

Either way, the “spirit form” ability has to go, sadly.

### Vampires

The view of vampirism as a disease is *very* common, so much so that the players are unlikely even to blink if the GM introduces enemies suffering from “hyper-porphyrin” or “the Sanguine-B strain.” The only significant change is that the condition is passed on via infection, turning it into a modified HT roll to see if vampirism is passed on to a victim, rather than a specific blood-feeding ritual.

### Zombies

Zombies turn up in science fiction as often as fantasy, with viruses or internal parasites to blame for the restless corpses. Support for this view is already built into the system; see *Creation* (*The Enemy*, p. 12) for more and *Husk Virus* (p. 46) for an example.

*Today they call them angels  
and demons, tomorrow they’ll  
call them something else.*

– Aleister Crowley

## SPIRIT BEINGS

Technically, spirit beings *are* extraterrestrials; their world is just separated from ours by a dimensional barrier rather than by the vastness of space. So if travel between other dimensions is kosher in the campaign, there are no changes needed except perhaps to their names (since “angel” and “demon” are fairly loaded terms).

If other dimensions are a problem, then the most reasonable way to handle these foes is to add them to the roster of aliens in this chapter. By changing the name, altering the description slightly, and emphasizing “alien” motivations over religious ones, it can be surprisingly easy to throw demons at your players without them ever realizing it!

### Angels

These become powerful winged aliens, with fewer religious overtones. Either their sword becomes superfine and droppable, or it becomes a psionic “mind sword” that they can generate as a racial ability. They remain scary as hell.

### Demons

Change the Weakness (and maybe the Vow) and these *easily* become aliens from a planet with a wide variety of subraces – or a race of “biokinetic” psis with unique abilities that often involve physical upgrades to their bodies. Just be sure that none of the *Demonic Variety* (*The Enemy*, p. 19) abilities give things away; avoid obviously supernatural options like Channeling, Medium, Detect Magic Use, etc.

### Skin-Changers

The skin-changer and the Devourer (pp. 26-29) are similar in many ways; it may be simpler just to use the Devourer. They can coexist, however, with the skin-changer representing a less “blobby” alien race capable of secreting special enzymes that allow them to rejuvenate the skin of others while it’s worn.

## Fae

While these foes do not appear in *The Enemy*, they are covered in depth in “The Wild Hunt” (from *Pyramid* #3/45: *Monsters*).

The various fae will need a few tweaks, specifically to the restrictions involving religion and their various Divine Curses. However, issues with iron and loud noises make as much sense for an alien as for a magical race. The changeling and unseelie’s glamours are explainable as Telepathy (or can drop the Glamour limitation and become “real”); the yuki onna is obviously wielding Cryokinesis; and the others are perfectly usable as-is.

## TRAITS TO TOSS

When converting the supernatural monsters of *The Enemy* into a more scientific context, there are certain specific advantages and disadvantages that must be erased, replaced, or at least heavily “rebranded” in pseudoscientific terms.

- **Alternate Form** and **Morph** should *usually* have the Cosmetic limitation, to ensure that mass is preserved.
- **Detect** may be psionic (ESP) or the result of amazing senses.
- **Divine Curse** can be replaced with an appropriate psychological disadvantage if it constrains behavior – such as giving vampires Vow (Never enter a home without permission) – or deleted if the curse is more external.
- **Dread** becomes Phobia.
- **Flight** without wings can be psionic; alternatively, replace it with Super Jump or Flight (Winged).
- **Glamours**, like the fae have, can either remain as telepathic abilities or simply drop the Glamour limitation and become “real.”
- **Mind Control** becomes a psionic attack or is deleted.
- **Supernatural Features** can become low Appearance or just go away.
- **Terror** can be explained as a memetic or psionic attack.
- **True Faith** and other “holy” abilities may or may not exist; see *Mysticism* (pp. 6-7).
- **Vulnerability** or **Weakness** to holy attacks should be erased. Other threats are fine; even Vulnerability to Silver could believably be a chemical issue.

In addition, magical traits like Magery and Ritual Adept may not fit, depending on the choices the GM has made for magic (*Decisions, Decisions*, pp. 3-4). If they don’t, simply erase them.

## Features

Most 0-point features are supernatural in nature, particularly those stating which magical Path and/or Mysticism abilities affect the monster. If magic or Mysticism still exists, just those relevant features can stay; otherwise, delete them *all*.

## THE LIVING

The nice thing about living creatures is that they require *far* less work to justify. The cryptids in particular can be used with no changes in practically *any* game. It’s only when shapeshifting enters the picture that creative rebranding is called for.

## Cryptids

With so many other threats coming from mad-science laboratories and outer space, the GM may just want to

leave cryptids (like the albino alligators and chupacabras) as they are. Alternatively, they could be weird experiments that escaped into the wild, which would provide an excuse to have *others* hunting them as well – perhaps even Stalkers (pp. 41-43). Nothing like preparing to dispatch a chupacabra, only to be attacked by the lab geeks who have orders to bring it back alive!

If the prevalence of either science or magic is supposed to be a major theme in the game, try tying it into the appearance of new cryptids. For example, in a scientific game, a group of researchers working on a time machine (in a remote location) may open a rift to the past, allowing *dinosaurs* to enter our world as a new threat!

## Lycanthropes

These are tricky. There are a few possible approaches, depending on what you’re willing to change about them.

The modern view of lycanthropy is that it was a mix of certain physical and psychological illnesses that provoked animalistic behavior. Taken to an extreme, this can justify the “humanoid animal” type of lycanthropy, where hormonal triggers cause hair to lengthen, muscles to thicken, etc. until the person becomes a “wolf-man.” This would require reworking the statistics of the beast forms, however, making them into humanoids rather than animals.

Lycanthropes as aliens, or as the result of a *cutting-edge* biotech program, could simply shift their bodies between two forms. This requires maintaining the same mass, however, which means that were-eagles have to either disappear or become *huge*.

One unexpected take would be to turn lycanthropes into intelligent animals; make the beast form their *normal* form, but with higher IQ. Then give them the Telepathic ability to convince those around them that they’re actually interacting with a human. Or they may have the Psychokinetic (Photokinetic, if you’re using **GURPS Psionic**

**Powers**) ability to create that illusion around themselves. “Shapeshifting” here just means dropping the illusion so they can concentrate on threats, tracking, etc.

## ROGUE HUMANS

These are covered at length in Chapter 1; for advice on making rogue crusaders fit the game, see *Crusader* (pp. 6-7), and so on. Cultists exist in every setting, regardless of whether the religion they follow is real or not.

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*Two possibilities exist: Either we are alone in the universe or we are not. Both are equally terrifying.*

*– Arthur C. Clarke*

*This whole thing is a farce, because in the end,  
after you've killed and captured every freak out there –  
there's still one left: you.*

– Tom Manning, in *Hellboy*

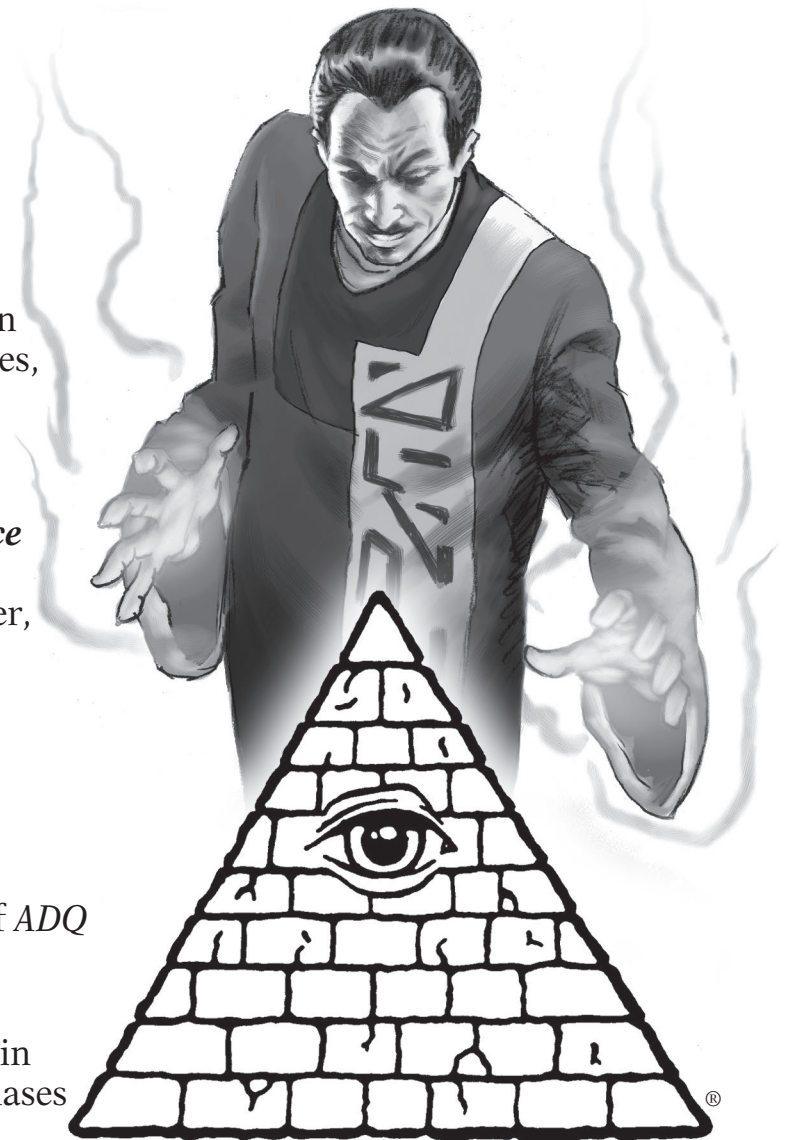
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