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FEARS OF DAYS ONGT

CREATURES, FROM THE PIT

by Stephen Dedman

PENANGGALAN
by David L. Pulver

DOMINION DAY
by J. Edward Tremlett

DRIVING US MAD by Michele Armellini

THE AIR LOOM by Graeme Davis

THE TYPEWRITERS OF TERROR
by Steven Marsh

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CONTENTS

CREATURES FROM THE PIT4 by Stephen Dedman by J. Edward Tremlett EIDETIC MEMORY: PENANGGALAN 18 by David L. Pulver THE TYPEWRITERS OF TERROR 20 by Steven Marsh by Michele Armellini by Graeme Davis **RANDOM THOUGHT TABLE:** THE APPEAL OF THE PAST35 by Steven Marsh, Pyramid Editor



Article Colors

Each article is color-coded to help you find your favorite sections.

Pale Blue: In This Issue

Brown: In Every Issue (letters, humor, editorial, etc.)

Dark Blue: **GURPS** Features
Purple: Systemless Features
Green: Distinguished Columnists

COVER ART

Igor Fiorentini

Experience the fear of yesterday . . .

IN THIS ISSUE

We can't let bygones be bygones – especially when so many bygone eras offer so much frightening fun! With this month's theme of *Fears of Days Past*, we go from the dawn of the atomic era all the way back to the first found fungus.

Our first stop back in time is the 1950s, when Communism was almost eclipsed by another invisible menace: radiation. Can you help contain the *Creatures From the Pit* before they take over the world? Written by *GURPS Martial Arts Adventures* coauthor Stephen Dedman, this article provides *GURPS* stats for the key participants – including the titular terrors!

Before the Cold War came the Great War. Unknown to most, this tragedy opened the way for the denizens of Hell to more freely walk the earth. The era that followed hides the preparations for the secret war between Angels and Demons. There's nothing quiet about the Roaring Twenties in this systemless campaign framework; will you help or hinder the coming of *Dominion Day?*

In his latest *Eidetic Memory, GURPS Fourth Edition* coauthor David Pulver presents a testy terror from Southeast Asia and Oceania. Amid a backdrop of Victorian colonialism, learn more about the dreadful secrets (and dangerous *GURPS* stats) of the *Penanggalan*.

What's more perilous than a unique tome of terror? Multiple copies. *Pyramid* Editor Steven Marsh presents an adventure framework suitable for any era where QWERTY conquers all, in *The Typewriters of Terror*.

Adventurers need not fear only otherworldly threats. *GURPS WWII: Grim Legions* author Michele Armellini reminds us that Nature herself delights in *Driving Us Mad*. Discover one such danger (including *GURPS* effects) that heroes could encounter during their nature walks – or villains could serve in their stew!

During the Age of Reason, not everyone was in his right mind. Today we blame mental illness, but it's remotely feasible that sinister agents were using *The Air Loom* on their victims. *GURPS Vikings* author Graeme Davis delivers the details on this device, including adventure ideas and suggestions for using it in *GURPS*.

What is the appeal of the past? Steven Marsh offers his reasons why he prefers "period pieces" over modern stories in this month's *Random Thought Table*.

Once you're wound up with fear, catch your wind with the usual humor and itty-bitty ideas of *Odds and Ends*. The *Pyramid* plane is fueled and ready for its Fright Check!

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Chief Operating Officer PHILIP REED
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FROM THE EDITOR

THERE'S NO PRESENT LIKE THE PAST

I offer some no-doubt life-changing insight about the benefits of mixing horror with historical gaming elsewhere in this issue (pp. 35-36, to be exact). So for this section, I thought I'd give some tangential words on the subject.

When you think about it, horror in a bygone time can be almost comforting. It's hard to envision many eras where there *wasn't* fear and uncertainty about the future. Even generally optimistic periods such as the Victorian era (when it seemed that enough science and ingenuity could overcome any obstacle) had darker or conflicted sides. Sure, humanity might someday build a cannon to shoot ships to Mars . . . but what if there are beings on Mars already, looking for an excuse to come *here?*

Still, regardless of the dark times the world faces, humanity endures. It's one of the continuing messages of my own beloved *Doctor Who* (itself often a mix of hope and horror). That's not much consolation for the folks who have to go

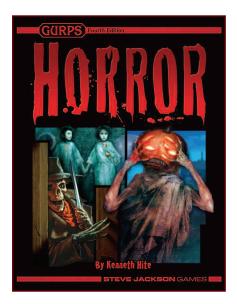
through the periods of pain, but – as modern-day observers – it can help with our own journey.

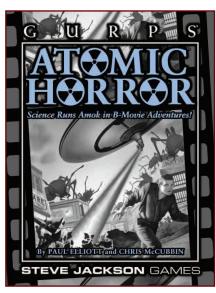
Horror gaming relies on hope of a possible (even if futile) attempt to overcome; there isn't much of a market for predestined can't-affect-an-outcome gaming. ("Let's play the *You Are On Death Row RPG!*") Some settings – including *Infinite Worlds* – encourages seeing what-ifs and what-might-bes . . . all with an eye toward possibly making things better somewhere.

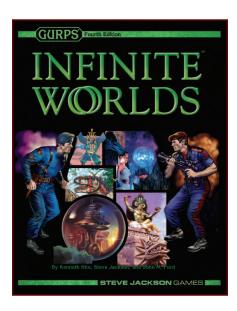
Hopefully this issue will give you some food for thought as your body travels in the present and your mind wanders to the past.

WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW

Did you enjoy your otherworldly vacation for six days and seven frights? Did you not care for the I-scream social? Send your innermost thoughts to **pyramid@sjgames.com**, or scream from the asylum for the world to hear at **forums.sjgames.com**.







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CAST OF CHARACTERS

These are the main people that the investigators are most likely to encounter.

Dr. CHARITY TAMBLIN

136 points

Dr. Charity Tamblin is a well-respected biologist, specializing in plants and fungi. She also writes cookbooks under a pseudonym. Prohibited from driving because of her epilepsy, she spends most of her time in the lab, but usually wears hiking boots and jeans under her white lab smock in case she has a chance to do field work. She's in her late 40s, with a tanned complexion, strawberry blond hair, and hazel eyes.

ST 10 [0]; **DX** 11 [20]; **IQ** 15 [100]; **HT** 10 [0].

Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 15 [0]; Per 15 [0]; FP 10 [0].

Basic Speed 5.25 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0]; Dodge 8. 5'7"; 165 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 7 [0].

CF: Western [0].

Languages: English (Native) [0]; French (Broken) [2]; Latin (Broken) [2]; Spanish (Accented) [4].

Advantages

Acute Vision 3 [6]; Night Vision 4 [4]; Reputation +4 (Authority on radiation-induced mutation; To academics) [7].

Disadvantages

Curious (6) [-10]; Epilepsy [-30]; Gluttony (12) [-5]; Insomnia [-10]; Overweight [-1]; Workaholic [-5].

Quirks: Imaginative; Incompetence (Accounting); Loves horror movies. [-3]

Skills

Artist (Drawing) (H) IQ [4]-15; Biology/TL7 (Terrestrial) (VH) IQ+2 [16]-17; Chemistry/TL7 (H) IQ [4]-15; Cooking (A) IQ+1 [4]-16; Current Affairs (Science & Technology) (E) IQ [1]-15; Electronics Operation/TL7 (Scientific) (A) IQ [2]-15; First

Aid/TL7 (E) IQ [1]-15; Forensics/TL7 (H) IQ [4]-15; Gardening (E) IQ [1]-15; Hazardous Materials/TL7 (Biological) (A) IQ [2]-15; Hazardous Materials/TL7 (Radioactive) (A) IQ [2]-15; Photography/TL7 (A) IQ [2]-15; Physics/TL9 (VH) IQ-1 [4]-14; Research (A) IQ+1 [4]-16; Survival (Forest) (A) Per-1 [1]-14; Teaching (A) IQ-1 [1]-14; Writing (A) IQ [2]-15.

GEORGE KNOX (HUMAN FORM)

111 points

George Knox began his criminal career as a shoplifter at the age of seven, and was soon filching on demand for a local fence. He served in the Army during World War II, until he was caught stealing. On his release, he turned to car theft and armed robbery. He escaped from jail after his third felony arrest and hid in the mine shaft where he'd stashed the loot he'd stolen from an armored car.

Knox has few redeeming qualities apart from bravery, so it doesn't take much to turn him into a monster. His human form has a weathered complexion, dark crew-cut hair (with a widow's peak), gray eyes, crooked teeth, and tattoos on both arms. He usually wears a leather jacket, work shirt, blue jeans, and steel-toed boots, and carries a .45 auto pistol (p. B278) with two spare clips.

ST 13 [30]; **DX** 11 [20]; **IQ** 11 [20]; **HT** 11 [10].

Damage 1d/2d-1; BL 34 lbs.; HP 13 [0]; Will 12 [5]; Per 12 [5]; FP 11 [0].

Basic Speed 6.00 [10]; Basic Move 6 [0]; Dodge 9; Parry 9 (Brawling).

6'1": 190 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 7 [0].

CF: Western [0].

Languages: English (Native) [0]; French (Broken) [2]; German (Broken) [2]; Spanish (Broken) [2].

Advantages

Fearlessness 2 [4]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Night Vision 2 [2]; Temperature Tolerance 2 [2].

Get on your radios and sound an all points alarm. Block all highways, stop all traffic, and call every law enforcement agency in the state. . . . Operator, get me the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Yes, it's an emergency!

- Dr. Hill, in Invasion of the Body Snatchers

I'll Light the Sky for You

Creation is sliced into five different layers, which must be visited in turn, without skipping any "steps." The central layer, upon which most of this tale will be told, is the Prime. Earth, its moon, the Solar System, and the rest of the universe sit within the Prime, turning and whirling among the invisible gears of the Great Machine.

One step "above" the Prime is the seemingly endless, light-filled expanse known as the Ether. It overlaps the Prime, and things within the "lower" realm can be dimly glimpsed within it. In fact, it is from the Ether than guardian Angels observe their mortal charges, and arrange for voices, miracles, and other visitations. Only Holy things, or those protected by them, can enter the Ether without taking Good damage every turn.

"Above" the Ether is Heaven, itself. Nothing but Holy things, or those protected by them, can withstand even the mere sight of it. What happens there is a mystery to all but the Angels, but they will do almost anything to stay in its favor.

One step "below" the Prime is the darkened Void, through which the Prime is *not* visible. Anything that dies or is destroyed in the Prime creates a dark echo of itself

within the Void, and many forgotten ghosts and undead things flitter through it. Anything can enter the Void without penalty, though the many horrible things that patrol its empty reaches may soon make unprepared explorers wish they'd stayed in the Prime.

"Below" the Void is Hell, itself – a vast realm of iron and blood, fire and cold, pain and pleasure. As with the Void, anything can enter Hell. It's getting back out again with one's body and soul intact that's the issue.

Travelling between the realms is something only Holy and Demonic things are supposed to be doing. Mortals can still make the trip, but usually need an Angelic or Demonic guide, a special item that allows it, or a creature sent to take them hence. Various places in the Prime act as gateways to other realities, but these are often watched by fear-some guardians.

Weird science can be used to teleport people from the Prime to the Void or the Ether, and back again. However, Heaven and Hell remain out of the reach of such devices; entering these two realms requires a spiritual leap that no mere machine can accomplish.

As for what Lucifer is trying to get out of this act of rebellion, no one – not even the former Angels by his side – dare to ask. Some say he prefers to rule in Hell than risk being forced to create a whole new universe, but that makes no sense. Others say he likes his job just as it is, but given his seeming disdain for most things, that doesn't make sense, either.

One thing is certain – he's planning *something*. What, how, and why will only be revealed in time.

POWERS AND PRINCIPLES

All of the following generic mechanics have been written to reflect the duality inherent in creation. GMs are free to tweak it as they will. Power levels are arranged on a scale of Weak, Poor, Good, Very Good, and Excellent.

Holy and Demonic

Anything having to do with Heaven, or directly acting in its name with its blessing, is Holy. Anything having to do with Hell, or directly acting in its name with its approval, is Demonic. Some things, such as Hellknights, are neither wholly Holy nor Demonic due to the mixed nature of their being.

Holy weapons, armor, and objects are forged in the armory of Heaven, and blessed with a connection to at least one of the Seven Heavenly Virtues: Chastity, Temperance, Charity, Diligence, Patience, Kindness, or Humility. Demonic items are consecrated in obscenity, and dedicated to at least one of the Seven Deadly Sins: Lust, Gluttony, Greed, Sloth, Wrath, Envy, or Pride. When items that are imbued with directly opposing ideals clash – A Lust sword versus a breastplate of Chastity, for example – the pyrotechnics are truly amazing, and may cause significant damage to nearby combatants.

Regardless of their power level, Holy weapons do normal damage to Holy targets, double damage to normal targets, and triple damage to Demonic targets. Normal or Demonic beings carrying them are physically weakened for doing so, which usually takes the form of a penalty to a physical statistic. Demonic wielders take a small amount of damage per turn for using it. Normal beings using them are in danger of being overwhelmed by the Virtue; they must succeed at a spiritual-attribute roll (which increases in difficulty the longer they use the items), or else sit in a trance contemplating how to be better people. The GM may decide that certain advantages, disadvantages, or other traits affect the roll.

Demonic weapons do normal damage to Demonic targets, double damage to normal targets, and triple damage to Holy targets. A Holy being who wields one not only takes a small amount of damage per turn for using it, but is in danger of losing Heaven's favor for merely holding it. Normal or Holy beings who use these weapons suffer no physical weaknesses, but normal beings are in danger of being overwhelmed by the urge to commit whichever sin the weapon is consecrated with. To resist the urge takes an increasingly difficult spiritual-attribute roll, modified based on appropriate advantages, disadvantages, or other traits.

Knights of Heaven

All Apocalypse Knights have a direct, spiritual link to one of the Horsemen. This connection grants them their powers, but also destroys their individual will and personality, leaving them little more than robots. They have to be given specific orders with no details left to chance. For example, if told to build a device, they must be instructed to defend it if it's attacked, or they'll keep building it while someone's smashing it.

The four Horsemen have distinct dominions, and have chosen their Apocalypse Knights based on how they died. All of their defense and offense characteristics are at high levels.