

**GURPS**

Fourth Edition

# MONSTER HUNTERS 2™

## *THE MISSION*™



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Illustrated by ROD REIS

*An e23 Sourcebook for GURPS®*

**STEVE JACKSON GAMES**

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## About GURPS

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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.

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*Additional Material:* Sean Punch

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# INTRODUCTION

"Why are you bothering m— oof!" Pitt grunted as the muscular hunter slammed him into the alley wall.

"Four girls dead. Two kidnapped. And word is, you were at the scene," Scott growled. "If I were you, I'd start talking *fast*. What were you doing in Antoine Colby's house?" Behind him, the rest of the team stayed alert for backup.

"Never heard that name in my life," the thug wheezed.

"Save it," Brad snapped, "I hacked your e-mail to be sure. You told him to meet you there."

Danielle moved closer. "Murder isn't your style, Pitt. What's really going on?"

Too late, Scott realized that Pitt had been slowly working a bracelet into his grasp. The charm broke with a snap, in a brilliant flash of light that stunned the champions. As the spots cleared, they could barely make out his form leaving the far end of the alley.

Danielle shook her head. "I hate it when they run."

"I don't." Everett grinned and sprinted after his quarry.

The monster-hunting tradition goes back centuries. Beowulf may be the archetypal example: a warrior who stood apart from all other men, taking on impossibly dangerous creatures, risking his life to save others. Today, "monster hunters" remains a popular genre, with new films, books, and TV shows coming out every year. There are few things as viscerally satisfying as a larger-than-life hero defeating a manifestation of pure evil!

**GURPS Monster Hunters 2: The Mission** attempts to capture this feeling, building on the rules and assumptions from **GURPS Monster Hunters 1: Champions**. Such a game needs to focus on the *hunt* – from the investigation to the final battle – and this book provides streamlined rules allowing you to do just that!

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Players should read the first two chapters to be aware of what kinds of things their characters are expected to do. Doing so *before* making a character, if possible, may help in deciding which advantages, disadvantages, and skills to take. For convenience, all of the important traits for a champion to have in a given situation are listed in **boldface**. With a few specific exceptions, this does not include *wildcard skills*, which are defined as much by the situation as by the skill being replaced. Follow the description of the wildcard skill – for example, any roll against Occultism can be replaced with one against Lore!, even if the rules don't mention Lore! explicitly. See *Wildcard Summary* (p. 5) for more.

**The Mission** provides the GM with guidance for setting up a challenging, fun hunt, from a simple system for handling

investigations to streamlined combat rules. He'll also find a wealth of advice for setting up an ongoing campaign, with dark conspiracies and interesting bad guys. In short, everything needed to run a great **Monster Hunters** game!

Many of the rules herein intentionally deviate from "official" **GURPS** and are *not* recommended for anything other than over-the-top, cinematic, supernatural action! The advice herein assumes that you're using the templates and rules from **Champions**. For readers without that book, **The Mission** will still provide plenty of useful information about running a high-powered supernatural game.

## What Is a Monster Hunter?

Some horror fiction depicts ordinary people surviving a monster attack, and sometimes even going on to defeat the attacker: a household fends off zombies, bar patrons stop a group of vampires, etc. While these "ordinary folks in extraordinary situations" are certainly heroes, they are not the focus of this series. A monster *hunter* is a formidable foe with the will and the strength to seek out and destroy The Enemy. It's about being proactive, but it's also about being special.

The majority of cinematic hunters work alone – but this isn't a genre requirement. *Most* fiction, monster-hunting or otherwise, tends to focus on a single hero known as the "viewpoint character." This makes it easier for the audience to identify with him, but it *doesn't* translate well to an RPG. The **Monster Hunters** series assumes a typical three- to six-gamer group, which is why the templates from **Champions** each cover a distinct niche instead of being omni-competent. For good fictional examples of monster-hunting *teams* (as opposed to lone wolves), see *Vampire\$, Blade: Trinity*, and the TV series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.

## PUBLICATION HISTORY

Some of the material in **The Mission** was adapted from **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons** and **GURPS Action 2: Exploits**, both by Sean "Dr. Kromm" Punch. **GURPS Horror**, by Kenneth Hite, was a source of inspiration for this entire book.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Reverend Jason "PK" Levine became a monster hunter at a very young age, when he first mastered the use of a flashlight as a weapon against the closet creatures. He has since grown up into the Assistant **GURPS** Line Editor and written a few books, including **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 5: Allies**, **GURPS Psionic Powers**, **GURPS Psionic Campaigns**, **GURPS Psis**, and **GURPS Powers: Divine Favor**. He lives in northern Georgia with his adorable wife, a couple of in-laws, two attack dogs, four attack cats, and several hundred (peaceful) Transformers.

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## Books and Records

Access to an occult library allows a roll to find information pertinent to the monster. The GM will roll against the *higher* of the champion's **Occultism**, **Research** or appropriate **Hidden Lore**. (This assumes a monster; replace Hidden Lore with **Expert Skill (Psionics)** for psis, **Thaumatology** for witches, **Biology** for experiments, etc.) Since the best books are *old*, add +1 for every three points the researcher has in ancient written **Languages**, using the costs *before* any discount for Language Talent.

A religious library (whether in a seminary or the back room of a charms dealer) allows a roll against **Theology**, though this will only turn up clues for certain monsters, depending on the specialty – see *Know Thy Enemy (Champions)*, p. 16).

Public libraries only allow rolls against **Research** (for general information) or **Current Affairs** (for newspaper and magazine headlines relevant to the specialty), and do not contain answers to most supernatural queries (-4 to all such requests). Public records (e.g., the back room of the DMV) are often harder to access – like crime scenes (p. 6) – but you may use the higher of **Administration** or **Research**, and the information obtained will be more detailed.

High-quality libraries or records sources give a bonus, from +1 for a large university's stacks to +3 for the Library of Congress. In all cases, multiple attempts to find information from the same library or records source are at a cumulative -2 instead of the usual -4 (*Beating a Dead Horse*, p. 6).

## Computers

*Web Search:* Researchers may use the Internet as a broad but shallow source of information. Use **Computer Operation** (*not* Research!) to make the best use of a search engine. The lack of depth only nets a minor clue (p. 6), however, and the GM will not answer the question in detail *unless* the answer was publicly available. A critical success obtains hard-to-find information, giving the usual +2 clue. Multiple search attempts are as for libraries (see above).

*Hacking:* A savvy computer geek may obtain better data by hacking his way into an appropriate database. This requires a **Computer Hacking** roll, at no penalty for a personal database, -2 for a corporate one, -4 for a government one, or -8 for “black ops” (whether government *or* private). The hacker chooses what type of database to attack – there are *millions* of them out there – though the GM is free to declare that certain pieces of information are only available in databases with a minimum level of security.

Success doesn't net a clue, but gets him in, so he can use the better of **Computer Operation** or **Research** to pull up specific data, as for records (see above); since well-guarded databases have more information, these rolls are at -2 for a personal database, no modifier for a corporate one, +2 for a government one, and +4 for a “black ops” database.

Failure may mean he made himself known; roll against the system administrator's Computer Operation skill (assume 10 if unknown), at a bonus equal to the hacker's margin of failure. Success means the administrator is aware of the intrusion *and* has a rough idea of what the hacker was looking for! Critical

## Grimoire Sales

Dealers in grimoires (*Champions*, pp. 39 and 56-57) are part of a niche market, which makes it almost impossible to guarantee privacy. When someone buys a +7 compilation of destructive spells, the magical underworld keep their heads down for the next few weeks. Thus, champions can try to research recent grimoire sales if they suspect a situation involves magic.

There are a few different approaches: asking a magical **Contact** (p. 8), finding the word on the street (p. 8), hacking (see *Computers*) a dealer's database, or using social engineering (pp. 8-9) on a grimoire merchant that a teammate already buys from. In all cases, the roll to obtain the information is at -5 with only a vague idea of what kind of grimoire may be involved, -3 with a detailed description, or no penalty if the exact ritual(s) are known. *If* the GM has decided that a grimoire of that type was sold recently, he secretly adds (its ritual bonus - 2) to this roll – but also applies penalties equal in size to any Reputation the seller has for discretion and/or the buyer has for being scary (“You talk – you die!”), which may give a net penalty!

If the modified roll succeeds, the champion learns whether someone bought such a grimoire, and when. Success by 5+ or a critical success *also* reveals a fair amount of detail about who bought it.

Casters should note that their enemies can use this technique against them! If a sage or witch obtains a powerful grimoire, some people in the local magic scene *will* eventually find out about it. Some paranoid casters avoid grimoires for this very reason . . . or work hard to develop a scary Reputation!

success also nets him the hacker's IP address, location, etc., which may mean a visit . . .

*Self-Assistance:* Before searching or hacking, the champion (or his teammate) may use **Computer Programming** to create a custom program to help mine relevant data. This takes 1d hours but gives +1 to all web-search and hacking rolls for this investigation – or +2 with a critical success! Only one such attempt is allowed per adventure.

## Magic 8-Ball

Some champions can simply ask the universe for clues! **Path of Chance** makes divination (*Champions*, p. 34) possible for casters, crusaders may have **Blessed** or use **Prayer** to seek guidance, and psis can make active use of **Precognition**. (Always use the stated time for these abilities instead of assuming an hour.) This is a good way to get a clue, though multiple uses are subject to *Beating a Dead Horse* (p. 6) – “information flowing from the universe” counts as a single source, even if different people use different abilities to ask the same question.

Even a non-powered quester can use **Meditation** to focus his mind in an attempt to understand the big picture. If successful, he achieves a new perspective on the hunt, which counts as a clue in itself. (The GM decides which type of clue, and is not obligated to provide *actual* spiritual insight; fortune-cookie wisdom is fine!) Hunters without **Meditation** may use their Will-6 default, but if so, success only nets a minor clue (p. 6), while critical success grants a normal one. Only one clue per adventure can be derived in this manner, no matter how many hunters end up sharing the same point of view.

## LOCAL GUARDIANS

Most of the students, staff, and professors at the University are blissfully ignorant of the creatures and people who prey upon them. Fortunately, a small group is aware of the truth, and its members take it upon themselves to keep the populace safe – between classes, of course.

### Movers and Shakers

The *Rightful Masters*, a mixed group of nearly 100 members, is an odd collection of psis and casters. Using telepathic abilities and spells, they have worked their way deep into the system. They regularly capture monsters and normal humans for experimentation, with the goal of creating their own supernatural army. The mummy *Menkheperre* (known locally as August Timms) has made a tentative alliance with the *Khaimov* vampire clan against them. Meanwhile, researchers for the military's *Project 273* are doing their own super-soldier experiments; the Masters are attempting to co-opt this.

### Dark Places

The school's small *chapel* is Abrahamic holy ground (p. 23), with an effective ward skill of 14. The extensive *drainage tunnels* under the campus (leading to the nearby river) contain many local vampires and a small group of demons; it could be considered a mixed underworld (p. 33). *Project 273* is run from the top of the *photonics lab*, under heavy security. The Masters live throughout the campus and town, but as one particular *dormitory* houses many of the more powerful members, it has become an unofficial base. Timms resides in a small *town-house* just southwest of the campus.

### Adventure Seeds

- Some of the Masters test out mass-hypnosis at a campus arena event; the next step is to try it at the nearby baseball stadium.
- *Project 273*'s experiments turn psychotic and escape; the *real* threat is that of the military coming in and “cleaning up” if they're not contained quickly.
- One vampire clan decides to move into the river, and begins attacking victims on the shore by dragging them underwater.

## RESEARCH GRANT

When a small town has a zombie or gargoyle infestation, but they're willing to cowboy up and deal with it, where do they turn for advice? If they're smart, they call *Hyperforlean Studies Group*, whose research information and over-the-phone consultation are made available for all sponsors. HSG studies *The Enemy* to determine how best to defeat them – using a combination of discrete observation, direct confrontation, and vivisection (they always attempt live capture when possible). They choose targets based on their own research needs, but must also accommodate their sponsors' occasional requests.

### Movers and Shakers

An odd mix of outcast angels and demons, known simply as the *Order*, takes issue with HSG's “casual murder” of monsters.

When not opposing HSG's actions, the *Order* encourages the creation of new inhumans. The researchers have run across *Maxwell Gulth* on multiple occasions; this vampire spawns packs of destructive progeny in highly religious towns (he has a particular hatred for the faithful). *M-Branch* a military program that seeks to weaponize the supernatural, is HSG's research rival.

### Dark Places

HSG's operations are usually in-state, but they visit *many* locations. *M-Branch* is based a few counties to the north. The *Order* has followers embedded in the nearby *college*, keeping an eye on the researchers. A large *swamp* to the west (bisected by the interstate) has spawned many zombies, apparently through inherent magic.

### Adventure Seeds

- After eliminating a parasite infestation, evidence shows that it was manufactured . . . *possibly* by *M-Branch*.
- A “simple” zombie outbreak in a small, isolated town turns out to be a setup by *Gulth*.
- *M-Branch* loses a team in the swamp, who come back animated *and* intelligent enough to use their weapons and gear.



## ROAD TRIP

Intelligence agencies, who gather a *lot* of information, outsource much of the non-sensitive stuff to small sorting-and-filing businesses. One of these, *DataSifters*, has realized that many of the “impossible” reports are actually true. Since the government won't listen, the employees take it upon themselves to follow up on these incidents.

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Inga: Werewolf!  
Dr. Frankenstein: Werewolf?  
Igor: There.  
Dr. Frankenstein: What?  
Igor: There, wolf. There, castle.  
– Young Frankenstein

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