

**GURPS**<sup>®</sup>

Fourth Edition

# INFINITE WORLDS<sup>™</sup> **NIGHTREIGN**<sup>™</sup>



Written by **JAMES AMARAL**  
and **JOSHUA LOPEZ**

Edited by **NIKOLA VRTIS**

Illustrated by  
**ALEX FERNANDEZ,**  
**JOHN HARTWELL,**  
and **JASON WALTON**

Additional Material by **KENNETH HITE**

**GURPS** System Design ■ **STEVE JACKSON**

**GURPS** Line Editor ■ **SEAN PUNCH**

**GURPS** Project Manager ■ **STEVEN MARSH**

Production Artist and Indexer ■ **NIKOLA VRTIS**

**GURPS** FAQ Maintainer ■

**VICKY "MOLOKH" KOLENKO**

Chief Executive Officer ■ **PHILIP REED**

Chief Creative Officer ■ **SAM MITSCHKE**

Chief Operating Officer ■ **SUSAN BUENO**

Director of Sales ■ **ROSS JEPSON**

Page Design ■ **PHIL REED** and **JUSTIN DE WITT**

Art Direction and Prepress Checker ■ **NIKOLA VRTIS**

*Lead Playtester:* Roger Burton West.

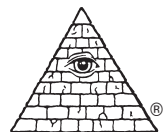
*Playtesters:* Topher T. Brennan, Phil Masters, Marco Mazza, and Sam Vrtismarsh

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*But you can't cheat death,  
You can't outrun the Grim Reaper.  
— Dear Brother, "Puscifer"*

### Art Acknowledgments

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# INTRODUCTION

The sun has set on the Thirteen Colonies – perhaps for good. In a world already made brutal by the threats of gangrene, smallpox, and famine, ancient evil is unleashed to stalk the land once again in an 18th-century America where day never breaks. Armed with flintlock firearms, a little magic, and a whole lot of grit, what remains of the local populace must fight unflinchingly for the right to exist. But in this twilight nightmare, who's to say what lengths, and indeed what depths, humanity will need to resort to if it has any chance of survival.

Should they manage to persevere, in what condition will they emerge on the other side? And will the price paid prove worth the pyrrhic victory?

**GURPS Infinite Worlds: Nightreign** is about making the best of bad situations, about deciding how far you'll go to keep on going, and about fighting a losing battle against impossible odds. It presents a fledgling United States of America set upon from all sides by horrific threats in a land of eternal night. Much has changed in the decade since the parallel's divergence, and adventurers will have to use every resource at their disposal for any hope of success, be they native or outtimer.

This worldline is cruel and unforgiving, and **Nightreign** provides the GM with the tools, both mechanical and narrative, with which to convey those ideas. It is not a setting for the faint of heart, but those who feel that survival is its own reward will feel right at home.

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

While only the **GURPS Basic Set** is required, several other books are referenced to add more details to the setting. **GURPS Infinite Worlds** offers insight into the larger context surrounding this setting. The GM interested in a master class on all things horror should nab a copy of the invaluable **GURPS Horror**; it's also an excellent source of additional monsters. Other suitable monsters can be found in **GURPS Zombies**; the GM who has **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters** series and **GURPS Monster Hunters 3: The Enemy** should consider tapping them for even more options. Additional gear appropriate to the setting's period (which is up to tech level 5) can be found in **GURPS Low-Tech** and **GURPS High-Tech**. Those interested in the arcane arts should pick up **GURPS Magic** and **GURPS Thaumatology**. Finally, **GURPS Powers** and **GURPS Psionic Powers** may prove useful to the GM and players interested in supernatural abilities that aren't strictly magical in nature.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Joshua Lopez first truly sank his teeth into tabletop games with **GURPS**. Since then, he has had an on-again/off-again romance with the system, but consistently returns to foster his **GURPS** nightmare-child: the horror setting of **Nightreign**. As a simple man from the dreary

Pacific Northwest, Mr. Lopez enjoys tormenting his games' players, crafting nightmarish fiction, and deciphering the cryptic messages left by his cat Mako after she walks across his computer's keyboard. **Nightreign** is Joshua's first official publication.

A habitual underachiever by nature, James Amaral is still in shock that this work was ever published. Exposed to role-playing games at a tender age, he's continued running and playing them more or less constantly for the last two decades. Presently staving off the cold clutches of death in Vancouver, Washington, he rooms with a longtime friend and the hypothetical dog he someday dreams of having. Though a simple, mild-mannered amateur writer by night, he daylights as a vastly overqualified corporate drone with degrees in finance and managerial economics and with aspirations of financial security and niche-community recognition.

## ABOUT GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of **GURPS** players. We can be reached by email: [info@sjgames.com](mailto:info@sjgames.com). Our address is SJ Games, P.O. Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Resources include:

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*Pyramid* ([pyramid.sjgames.com](http://pyramid.sjgames.com)). For 10 years, our PDF magazine *Pyramid* included new rules and articles for **GURPS**, plus systemless locations, adventures, and more. The entire 122-issue library is available at Warehouse 23!

*Internet.* To discuss **GURPS** with our staff and your fellow gamers, visit our forums at [forums.sjgames.com](http://forums.sjgames.com). You can also join us at [facebook.com/sjgames](https://facebook.com/sjgames) or [twitter.com/sjgames](https://twitter.com/sjgames). Share your brief campaign teasers with #GURPShook on Twitter. Or explore that hashtag for ideas to add to your own game! The **GURPS Infinite Worlds: Nightreign** web page is [gurps.sjgames.com/nightreign](http://gurps.sjgames.com/nightreign).

*Store Finder* ([storefinder.sjgames.com](http://storefinder.sjgames.com)): Discover nearby places to buy **GURPS** items and other Steve Jackson Games products. Local shops are great places to play our games and meet fellow gamers!

*Errata.* Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Errata pages for **GURPS** releases are available at [sjgames.com/errata/gurps](http://sjgames.com/errata/gurps).

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.

## CHAPTER ONE

# MUSKETS, MAGIC, MONSTERS, AND MADNESS

When all light is lost, the night reigns supreme. The world of *Nightreign* is a land of monstrous horrors and eternal darkness. Set in an alternate version of the early United States of America, its history departs from Homeline's in the early

years of the American Revolution. Over a decade after its divergence, the parallel has become a home to strange magic, familiar monsters, and infinite perils across infinite worlds.

## THE DIVERGENCE

In July of 1776, American colonists declared their independence from Great Britain. The newly established Continental Army under General George Washington had managed to unseat the royal government, and most of what troops the British had in the colonies had been defeated or had retreated to Canada.

Later that month, the British army (under the command of General William Howe) landed in New York and was met by Washington and the Continental Army. By August, the British had driven Washington out of New York and then New Jersey shortly thereafter. With morale running low, Washington returned to New Jersey in December of 1776, achieving consecutive victories at Trenton and Princeton before slipping into a stalemate over the winter.

In August of 1777, Howe made his move on the rebel capital, Philadelphia. After landing his troops in Chesapeake Bay, Howe managed to outmaneuver Washington, drive off the city's defenders, and force the Continental Congress to evacuate. On September 26, 1777, British forces marched into Philadelphia, and claimed the former rebel capital for the crown.

Many assumed the capture of Philadelphia would mark the end of the Revolution, including General Howe. According to the military traditions of the time, the loss of an enemy capital signified their defeat. However, through the power of patriotic zeal, the American Revolution of Homeline would endure for another six years. In the *Nightreign* worldline, the few days after Philadelphia's fall would be the last days the

people of the former colonies laid eyes of the sun, until it set for the last time on September 30, 1777.

## THE FIRST NIGHT

October of 1777 marks the moment of divergence for the *Nightreign* worldline. The people of the young states and of the Indigenous tribes awoke the morning of October 1 to a troubling phenomenon: the sun had not risen. Instead of a brisk autumn morning, the people of America were greeted by a dim red glow in the sky. Amid the horror and confusion over the presently unnatural situation, things only got worse.

### *My Brother's Wife's Cousin's Neighbor . . .*

No one alive truly knows the origins of the *Nightreign* (the term used to describe the unending night; see *Eternal Night*, pp. 11-12). Despite this, many claim to know exactly how it began. The most commonly held theory is that the *Nightreign* marks the biblical apocalypse, and that humanity is living in the end times. Individuals that are more imaginative place the blame on any number of human perpetrators. The most common targets of these theories include angry witches, vengeful Indigenous peoples, misguided intellectuals, and the French. Exactly how or why any of these groups could manage to throw a large part of the world into eternal night and command an endless tide of monsters differs among theorists, with few ever coming to any sort of consensus on the matter.

## BLEAK RUNNERS

The term *Bleak runner* describes the subcommunity of mercenaries, scouts, theurgists, drivers, and sailors that make their living moving supplies across the Creeping Wall. Bleak runners rose to prominence shortly after the Great Pyre was extinguished and the darkness returned to the land. Knowing that those trapped in the Nightreign couldn't subsist off local natural resources, the military attempted to organize supply convoys between Boston and Québec City. With only a handful formal military personnel remaining, the army began offering silver and salt to anyone who could offer aid in the endeavor. In August of 1779, after many deaths and failed attempts, a single wagon managed to cross the Creeping Wall and return with valuable supplies. Several months later, the first nautical supply run took place out of St. Augustine, again crewed by freelancers from all lifestyles. Soon it became known that, for anyone willing to risk almost certain death, a comparatively lavish living could be made running supplies across the Wall. Communities of amateur and veteran Bleak runners began to grow up in and around major trade towns, especially Boston, Fort Detroit, and St. Augustine.

Bleak runners have had years to hone their craft – constantly tracking the shifting movements of the Creeping Wall and the monsters that patrol its edges. While the old major trade routes are the most direct, they are also the most dangerous. Many Bleak runners have their own ways of navigating the perilous wilds, which they keep secret to all but their own crew. Since Bleak running is as lucrative as it is dangerous, most Bleak runners live off the spoils from a single contract for a few weeks before the money and salt run out and they're forced to take a new job. Nautical Bleak runners (sometimes called "night mariners") are usually paid better than their overland counterparts due to the larger amounts of cargo they can move and the inherent risk of sea travel in the Nightreign. Unsurprisingly, they also have significantly lower survival rates.

Entering a city requires an extensive series of tests to determine whether a person is an enemy of humanity. Like everything else the Inquisition does, these tests are given little leeway, and any hesitation or suspicious results can lead to an impromptu imprisonment or execution. Inquisitors are also responsible for the upkeep of various magical defenses such as wards, or conditional spells that serve as alarms and traps.

In the absence of large military presence, most settlements employ their own militia (called minutemen) to see to mundane defense. Unlike Rangers, these troops are simple town-folk with muskets and tenacity. These individuals receive basic firearms training and mostly outdated small-unit tactics, with a dash of supernatural knowledge from those who can read or afford a copy of *Superno* (p. 35).

Rangers occasionally quarter in towns for brief periods but are largely based out of forts scattered around the countryside. Nearly all settlements are armed with cannons from the revolution, but they serve primarily as a show of force against human raiders rather than as effective weapons against the forces of darkness.

Indigenous settlements rely heavily on their relationship with local spirits, strengthened through traditions. Since the spirits of the earth are still subject to the Bleak's corrupting effects, and the Bleak doesn't seem to worsen in areas populated with large numbers of humans, the spirits willingly drive off intruders in exchange for being allowed to exist near them. However, spirits are still fickle and self-concerned beings, and require tribute before providing any extra assistance. This has the additional, yet beneficial side effect of making tribal lands a nightmare for outsiders to navigate, as hosts of spirits menace those they believe intrude upon *their* lands, regardless of whether the visitors are humans or monsters.

### *Climate*

An absence of sunlight keeps the weather all around colder than they once were. Just as the moon and stars maintain their regular cycles, seasonal climate changes still occur, albeit more extreme. Winter brings large snowstorms and biting temperatures, transitioning to a torrid spring frequented by violent storms. Summers are mild in temperature but very humid. A short, cool autumn follows, typically doused with heavy rainfall.

## ENEMIES OF HUMANITY

Commonly referred to as "the Night Hordes," "armies of darkness," or simply "monsters," humanity's enemies are great and varied. The earliest classifications of these creatures can be found in Jefferson's *Superno* (p. 35), pieced together from eyewitness accounts and ancient mythology.

### *The Dead*

*Nightreign* is a world where the dead do not remain so for long. Early into Washington's counterattack, many were horrified to find that lost friends and loved ones had become walking corpses. It soon became understood that any deceased who did not receive a proper burial would return as one of these revenants, the armies of night replenishing their numbers simply because their victims are left to rot. Once reanimated, the creatures tend to remain largely aimless, only moving to pursue whatever triggers a sensory response. For whatever reason, the dead appear drawn to the living, and will react violently to whom-ever happens across them.

Shambling corpses are not the only dead to plague humanity. Old homes and objects occasionally manifest ghosts of their previous owners. Most of the time, these apparitions are unaware of their current state and are simply desperate for help. At the very least, these shades can be a nuisance, pestering their victims into assisting them with a task. Now and then, these wraiths grow angry and vengeful, wildly lashing out at anyone they come in contact with. Powerful specters can form a semi-solid body, and they are fully aware of their current situation and are intent on destruction.

For game information, see p. 49.

### *The Bestial*

As the dark energies of the Nightreign spread through the wild, the natural world has become steadily more unnatural.



# CHAPTER THREE

# CHARACTERS

Surviving in the Nightreign is no easy prospect. A certain amount of grit comes with the Bleak-infested territory, and becoming anything close to heroic is only for the truly

exceptional. The following presents options to consider when building characters expected to endure significant periods within the Nightreign.

## HISTORICAL CONDITIONS

Individuals are shaped by and must adapt to their surroundings. Keep the following information in mind when building Nightreign residents or visitors.



### TECH LEVEL

The worldline is set in TL5, though many iconic technologies of the Industrial Revolution – such as serviceable steam engines, mechanical sewing machines, and caplock firearms – have not yet been invented. In North America, weaponry has kept pace and agriculture has diverged somewhat, while the innovation of sundries, consumer goods, and luxuries has stagnated due to a shortage of labor, lack of demand, and the ever-present threat of danger. The Low TL disadvantage or skills from earlier TLs are uncommon.

More interestingly, some skills and sciences that saw infrequent use in Homeline's early U.S. period have become more common, though not necessarily more advanced, and generally only as they relate to warfare, defense, agriculture, or the occult. Astronomy, Chemistry, Metallurgy, and Physics have become favored subjects of Jefferson's inquisitors

and Eventide philosophers as they seek new ways to incorporate black powder, silver alloys, astrological occurrences, and sacred geometry into their repertoire of material and thaumaturgical armaments. This alternate prioritization of knowledge also means that outtimers with significant experience in TL5 skills may find themselves at a loss when they are handed a personal flamethrower by a worldline native and are expected to use it effectively.

### CULTURAL FAMILIARITY

Having diverged relatively recently, most of the cultures present on the alternate have changed little from their historical ones. Outtimers with suitable 18th-century Cultural Familiarities do not suffer an unfamiliarity penalty when interacting within a similar culture in the Nightreign worldline. In North America, the most common familiarities are Western (for European settlers and visitors) and Mississippian (for the major Indigenous tribes in the area). West African can be useful in certain locations, especially the sanctuary city of New Orleans. The GM should pick suitably broad familiarities for other regions that characters might visit or be from.

### SOCIAL STATUS

Jockeying for position and status is much less common in the Nightreign than it is in other regions. Though wealthy or well-respected individuals may have a level or two of implicit Status, most of the social structure is determined by positions held within the government or military. The system masquerades as a classless meritocracy, with small towns holding elections for constable, mayor, and county delegate positions, but operates more like a fascist dictatorship. Jefferson rules the young country as the head of state and commander-in-chief (Administrative Rank and Status 7). Status above 2 is largely reserved for members of his administration.

Most forms of Rank coexist with Status, granting additional Status at no extra cost (+1 to Status at Rank 2-4, +2 Status at Rank 5-7, etc.). Administrative Rank (Federal) and Military Rank *replace* Status, costing 10 points per level and giving their usual benefits plus a level of Status. Wealth also affects Status, granting +1 Status at Wealthy or better, +2 Status at Multimillionaire 1, and +3 Status at Multimillionaire 2+.

If Anointment is the gift of a benevolent force for acting accordingly, then a Mark can be seen as a gift from the Bleak as reward for spreading its corruption. Just as Anointment is bestowed on a person for displaying traditionally good qualities, a Mark is placed on an individual who exhibits particularly selfish or malicious personality traits. From what researchers can tell, the negativity produced by acting on these base desires combined with the pervasive nature of the Bleak causes a pocket of vile fluid to manifest on a person's body, creating a visible Mark. The pool of Corruption stored within a Mark becomes a breeding ground for the Bleak, which feeds on the same negativity that created it. However, just as mages can harness the power of the Bleak through magic, the concentration of malign energy grants the afflicted a supernatural boon associated with the same emotions that birthed it.

### *New Quirk: Marked*

Somewhere on your body, a Mark – a supernatural signifier of misdeeds – has formed. Typical Marks manifest as bruises or discolored skin. However, a Mark does not behave in the same way as an ordinary bruise or tumor. Puncturing the Mark draws not blood, but rather sickly black ooze. Those who touch or see it feel a sense of unease around you. The malign energies that make up the Mark are also reflected in your aura. You cause those who can sense or read auras, those who touch the Mark directly, and superstitious individuals who see the Mark at all to react to you at -1/level, and receive +1/level on any rolls to recall you, to a maximum of five levels (regardless of the number of levels that you actually have).

This quirk is essentially a leveled-quirk version of the Supernatural Features disadvantage. It cannot be bought off with character points; instead, see *Managing Marks*, p. 32.

### *Becoming Marked*

The Nightreign has a corruptive influence on individuals who exhibit negative traits *not* reflected by their listed disadvantages. For example, an investigator acts solely motivated by money but does not have the Greed or Miserliness disadvantage, or another party member consistently doubts the intentions of every NPC, but the character doesn't have Paranoia. When this happens, the GM should track any Corruption gained as a result of this behavior (see *Grievous Sins*, p. 39) separately from the character's other Corruption totals. Once the person has accumulated 25 points of Corruption (enough for a single negative character point) due to these incongruous actions, the GM may choose to Mark the character; see *Designing Marks*, below.

Adventurers may also deliberately obtain Marks through roleplaying. This is usually the result of a fundamental change in morals after a significant, often traumatic experience. Examples include an innocent farmhand who, after experiencing horror after horror, becomes cynical and paranoid,

or a cleric who begins to lose faith after witnessing repeated tragedies. The circumstances surrounding the dynamic shift can vary, but the resulting abrupt change can be enough to earn a Mark. Like the standard method for acquiring a Mark, the GM decides when, where, and what kind of Mark begins to form, but in this case, the actions are a deliberate decision by the player.

Players may not give their adventurers Marks at character creation. However, a player can plan for the character to obtain a Mark in play by including a disadvantage that could be associated with a Mark at character creation and applying the Corrupting modifier (*GURPS Horror*, p. 22) to the disadvantage. The adventurer receives no extra character points for this disadvantage, regardless of the starting point total, as they will be gaining an ability with equal value in the future. During gameplay, exhibiting the disadvantage earns the person Corruption as normal until the GM designates that the Corruption goes into a separate pool, which can happen as soon as the second time the person exhibits the behavior in question. After earning 25 points of Corruption this way, the adventurer can spend the earned negative character point on the Marked quirk (above) associated with the Mark, which also gives them access to the abilities that are part of the desired Mark.

### *Designing Marks*

Marks are comprised of the manifested disadvantage (modified by the Corrupting, +20% enhancement; *Horror*, p. 22), and one or more advantages (also with the Corrupting modifier, but as a -20% limitation) with a total value equal to the disadvantage value. Additionally, the adventurer gains the Marked quirk (above), bringing the total for the entire lens to a net -1 character point.

Like Anointments, the powers granted by Marks are usually subtle in nature, granting limited versions of Mind Reading, Detect, Precognition, etc. Marks rarely grant abilities that cause damage directly, but may provide Afflictions or advantages that can boost damage, such as Striking ST (Accessibility, Only while Berserk, -20%). Similarly, the disadvantages gained should require either a self-control roll or some kind of active choice.

### *Growing Marks*

The more a person relies on the Mark, the more dark energies held within them fester and spread, causing the Mark to grow. Using the power granted by the Mark earns Corruption normally and adds to the adventurer's main Corruption pool. However, succumbing to the Mark's disadvantage (including by failing self-control rolls) adds to a separate tally that tracks the Mark's growth. After earning 25 points of Corruption in the separate pool, the Mark grows. The 25 points of Corruption are converted into one negative character point, which is spent to increase the level of the Marked quirk by 1; see the boxed text for the effects.

The traits granted by the Mark increase in strength as well. The disadvantage has the self-control number lowered, additional levels bestowed, or enhancements added to increase its magnitude. The associated advantages gain enhancements, remove limitations, or add levels that increase their point value to match the final value of the disadvantage.



# CHAPTER SIX

# CAMPAIGNS

Running a game in *Nightreign* is much like running a game in any other horror setting. That said, there are a number of features unique to the setting that serve to amp up the terror and existential dread. The first and most obvious is the element of eternal night. By keeping the most interesting part of the setting wreathed in darkness, the forces of night play with a home field advantage. In other settings, a group of adventurers tasked with dispatching a vampire lord may wait for daylight to break into his lair and drive a stake through his heart. In *Nightreign*, that singular edge is lost; if the adventurers choose to take on the vampire, they do so at their own peril.

The second setting aspect designed to increase tension is the time period. *Nightreign* takes place in a dangerous

historic interlude, between the advent of firearms as the primary weapons of war and the development of effective battlefield medicine. Playing a group of revolutionary soldiers is nerve-wracking enough even without the presence of monstrous horrors, and the only readily available firearms are (by modern standards) awful. A musket may have the damage potential to execute most monsters in the *Nightreign*, but one had better hope the first shot does the job because it will take another 30 to 60 seconds before the next one can be fired.

But these innate setting features are just two of many terrifying aspects of the worldline. There are plenty of ways to inspire fear, be they narrative or mechanical.

## TELLING STORIES IN *NIGHTREIGN*

When designing campaigns for *Nightreign*, it's important to remember two things: nothing is free, and everything is terrifying. Magic causes slow but certain madness, selfish behaviors earn you malignant growths, and straying off the beaten path is bound to get you eaten or worse. If there's one thing players should feel, it's the struggle to get by. No choice should be an obvious one, no path should be without difficulty, and no plan should go off without a hitch.

For the GM planning on delving into the deep, dark depths of *Nightreign* for their latest campaign setting, here are a few things to keep in mind when planning how to challenge the players.

### TONE

A story set in the *Nightreign* should be, above all else, horrific. This is less about populating the story with scary creatures or unsettling imagery, and more about injecting horror into every aspect of the story's beats. Every development, twist, encounter, and decision should seek to terrify or disturb the participants. A typical *Nightreign* story is less likely to end with defenders returning to their beds as triumphant heroes, and more likely to end in a hollow victory that leaves the heroes plagued with doubt and just a little closer to insanity.

### Uncertainty

Like most other horror games, the key element for any *Nightreign* campaign is maintaining the overall

dread. An endless parade of vile creatures waiting to be put down just turns the game into a slog. Rather than lean too heavily on the monsters that populate the world, have these enemies be a vehicle for horrific scenarios. A vampire that kidnaps people and drinks their blood? That's just a vampire; stake it in the heart and move on. But a vampire that only feeds on people with green eyes? And all their victims' bodies were found under the same oak tree, their hearts replaced with sacks of grave dirt? That's weird and possibly sinister! Besides, the party mage has green eyes . . .

Keeping players on their toes can elevate the tension necessary to maintain a scary atmosphere. Almost everyone in the *Nightreign* is on edge about something, whether it's salt rations or the Inquisition's random spot checks. That same tension should apply to players. A party that feels in control is less likely to feel on edge, so consider throwing a wrench into their plans to keep them off balance. The inquisitors who have been hounding the adventurers might return to town early, just as the necromantic ritual begins, or the old woman they suspect of poisoning the town well drops by to deliver

a pie just as the party thinks they have evidence against her. Take care when invoking these kinds of scenes, as too much GM intervention can remove the players' sense of agency, making it seem like they'll be wrong regardless of what path they choose. Rather than using these moments to directly thwart a party's current plan, use them to reintroduce tension in otherwise calm moments.

*We have just begun  
to navigate a strange region;  
we must expect to encounter  
strange adventures, strange  
perils.*

– Arthur Machen,  
*The Terror*

## THE DEAD

One of the Night Hordes' advantages in their conflict with humanity is their ability to restock their number with ease. The Bleak reanimates corpses, bringing them back as zombies. All who die within the Nightreign eventually return as enemy troops, which has led to the institution of cremation whenever possible. Tragic or violent deaths can sometimes lead to the creation of desperate and malevolent specters.

While many varieties of undead may suit a *Nightreign* campaign, the apparition (*GURPS Horror*, p. 78), eidolon (*Horror*, p. 79), genius loci (*Horror*, p. 79), ghost (*Horror*, p. 78), ghoulish (*Horror*, p. 60), phantasm (*Horror*, p. 79), poltergeist (*Horror*, p. 79), shade (*Horror*, p. 79), and slow zombie (*Horror*, p. 91) are all particularly appropriate. In addition, *GURPS Zombies* provides a plethora of variants to diversify hordes of ambulatory corpses.

### Sample Monster: Mouri Lespri

When a forest or swamp becomes inundated with the Bleak, so, too, do the plants, animals, and spirits that make their homes there. The Withered Spirit, or *Mouri Lespri* as the Creole peoples of Louisiana call them, is the final result of the Bleak's corruption of the natural world, the perversion of the very soul of nature.

Spirits (as opposed to the many varieties of ghosts) are the metaphysical embodiments of the environs they inhabit – they *are* the land, not merely representatives of it. When the river, forest, or mountain the spirit represents becomes corrupted, so does the spirit. This process is slow; the spirits are powerful beings, ancient and proud, and not quick to change. While many spirits bear some mark of taint from the Bleak, few have become *Mouri Lespri*. This generally occurs when the locale the spirit is tied to suffers an extreme change, such as a river drying up or a forest being set ablaze. Weakened and in flux, the Bleak guides their transformation into an unliving parody of their former self.

The forms and powers of the *Mouri Lespri* are as diverse in strength and variety as the spirits they once were, though they always appear desiccated and sickly. Most exert control over their local environment, strangling interlopers with tree roots or burying them in landslides. All bear a seething hatred for humanity, particularly non-Indigenous peoples. Bound to their geographical locations, they are less an active threat to humanity and more part of an ever-growing list of uninhabitable places.

*Mouri Lespri* are dependent upon the areas they embody. Leaving their home results in injury and eventual destruction (followed by revival). Every minute outside their environment results in the loss of 1 HP. Should one be killed by this or any other damage, they reform at a site of great significance to them (the source of their river, their forest's oldest tree, etc.) the following day.

As for dealing with these tortured beings, intercession by a shaman is frequently the best (or only) way of rebuking them. Permanently destroying them is more difficult, requiring that the location be sanctified to prevent the spirits return.

**ST:** 0                      **HP:** 20                      **Speed:** 6.00  
**DX:** 14                    **Will:** 16                    **Move:** 6

**IQ:** 12                      **Per:** 16                      **Weight:** N/A  
**HT:** 10                    **FP:** 12                      **SM:** 0  
**Dodge:** 9                    **Parry:** 10                    **DR:** 0

**Bleak Rating:** 3 to 6                    **Fright Check:** -5

**Touch (16):** 1d-1 Corruption (pp. 38-40). Reach C.

**Traits:** Appearance (Hideous; Universal); Control 10 (Embodied location; Based on Will, Own Roll; Ranged; Malediction, *Size and Speed/Range Table*, p. B550); Dependency (Embodied location; 1 HP/minute); Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Insubstantiality (Affect Substantial; Difficult Materialization); Invisibility (Substantial Only; Switchable); Unaging; Unkillable 3 (Achilles' Heel, Sanctified location); Warp (Cosmic, No die roll required; Accessibility, Only within embodied location).

**Notes:** This stat block only includes traits shared by *all* *Mouri Lespri*. Individuals have one or more alternate forms of attack with Affliction, Binding, or Innate Attack. A *Mouri Lespri* has skill level 16 in any skills required to effectively utilize their attacks (Brawling, Innate Attack, etc.).

### Tailor the Scares

When designing encounters, pick creatures that can provide the party with the right amount of challenge. A lone feral vampire can spell imminent danger for those built on very low point totals, while a single mature vampire will be a horrifying challenge to a group of low-level worldline residents. Meanwhile, extremely powerful PCs may become difficult to keep frightened, especially with commonly known monsters. A group of 300-point outtimers can easily brush off vampires. Should adventurers easily defeat the usual powerful monsters of the Nightreign, the GM should create previously unknown creatures to terrorize the party. See *Power Levels*, p. 47, for some guidelines.

## THE BESTIAL

Sometimes the result of happenstance, other times of direct manipulation by hags or warlocks, ordinary plants and animals can be befouled so completely that they become something wholly new. While not generally as intelligent as their more human peers, these beasts are usually created to excel at specialized tasks.

In addition to any creatures the GM wishes to design, the swamp monster (*GURPS Horror*, p. 64) is also appropriate.

### Sample Monster: Phasmid

Created via sorcerous workings by hags early in the conflict, phasmids are the ultimate expression of how something harmless and inane can be twisted into something truly hideous. This massive, vaguely humanoid stick bug is actually a (drastically) mutated *Diaperomera femorata*, or "northern walkingstick" of Louisiana. Now a distinct species, phasmids live in moist wildernesses, including swamps, rain forests, and other wetlands. There, they reproduce asexually, laying clutches of eggs in shallow water.

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    . . . these corrupted lands, they are yours now,  
    and you are bound to them.  
    – Narrator, in *Darkest Dungeon*



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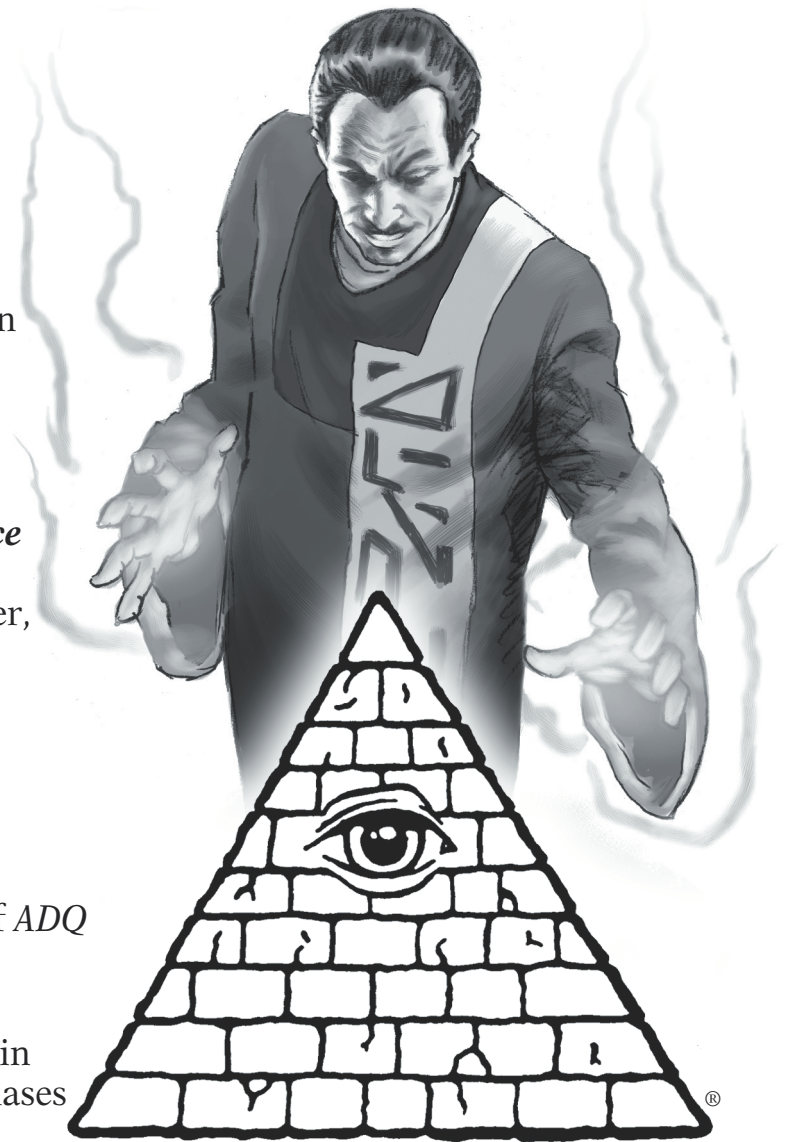


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