

PYRAMID[®]

Issue 3/67 May '14

TOOLS OF THE TRADE: VILLAINS

YOU AND WHAT ARMY?

by Michele Armellini

HOW VERY TEMPTING

by Christopher R. Rice

TIGERPHOBIA

by Hans-Christian Vortisch

THE COMPLEAT JUMPSUIT

by Matt Riggsby

VILLAIN'S RESIDENCE

by David L. Pulver

DESIGNER'S NOTES:

GURPS ZOMBIES

by Sean Punch

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ABOUT GURPS 40

What's a villain without his wonderful accouterments? This month's *Pyramid* looks at tools of most use to villains, as it straps you to a table and threatens to zap you with its laser-like awesomeness. Do we expect you to talk? No; we expect you to roll dice!

If the fantasy heroes are smirking at your villains by asking them, "You and What Army?" now you have an answer, thanks to five pregenerated tactical forces described by **GURPS WWII: Grim Legions** author Michele Armellini. With battle tactics, ideas for roleplaying each army's leader, and full **GURPS Mass Combat** stats, you'll instantly have friends (fiends?) to help you conquer the world . . . or die trying. You also get a new **Mass Combat** troop feature!

Powerful beings eager to bestow your heart's desire? *How Very Tempting* . . . In return, they only want your soul! Now, you can have **GURPS** mechanics – including new character traits – for such spiritual transactions. You'll discover what your soul is worth, what you can get for it (the good, bad, and ugly), and what the buyer gets out of it. *Caveat venditor* – let the seller beware!

Bad guys always need a place to kick back, relax, and hatch their global plots. In this month's Eidetic Memory, David L. Pulver – author of **GURPS Reign of Steel** – has a *Villain's Residence* for you. This multistory mansion is complete with maps for each level, suitable for any modern gaming system, and ready to move in.

The *Panzerkampfwagen VI Ausführung E Tiger* (or Panzer Tiger for short) was so feared during World War II that soldiers began to see them everywhere, resulting in *Tigerphobia*. Hans-Christian Vortisch – co-author of **GURPS High-Tech** – reveals the secrets of the Nazi's most feared tank, including **GURPS** stats for the vehicle and its armaments, plus **Mass Combat** stats for the typical German Tiger company.

When you need to quickly assemble henchmen for building your latest world-dominating device – or simply to staff your various headquarters – turn to *The Compleat Jumpsuit*. You'll get **GURPS** templates for seven popular varieties of modern-day henchmen – plus new character traits – from Matt Riggsby, author of **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Adventure 1: Mirror of the Fire Demon**.

Are undead minions more to your liking? Then get new ideas for them with *Designer's Notes: GURPS Zombies* by Sean Punch. It includes insights into that popular supplement's creation, plus an original sample campaign and three new zombies.

The issue concludes with Random Thought Table, which discusses the perils and possibilities when *heroes* end up with villainous tools. Whether you're an established mastermind with a world-spanning headquarters or a fledgling villain with a soul and a dream, this issue is sure to have tools you can use!

Article Colors

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

- Pale Blue:* In This Issue
- Brown:* In Every Issue (humor, editorial, etc.)
- Green:* Columnist
- Dark Blue:* **GURPS** Features
- Purple:* Systemless Features

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FROM THE EDITOR

AN EVIL ISSUE OF *PYRAMID*?

This issue is another installment of our “tools of the trade” subtheme, which stretches all the way back to the first issue of the relaunched volume of *Pyramid*. It’s also the first issue specifically designed with the bad guys in mind. (Of course, we’re confident the heroes might be tempted by *some* of the goodies herein . . . see pp. 38-39 for more.)

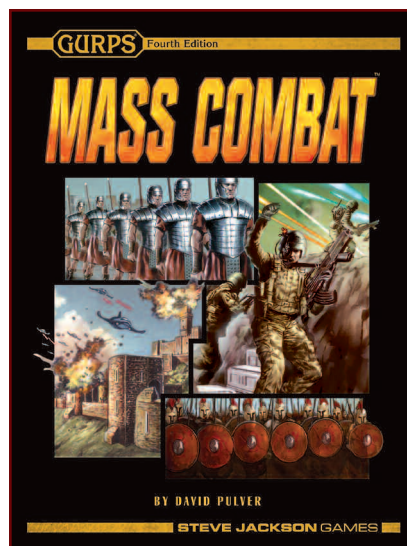
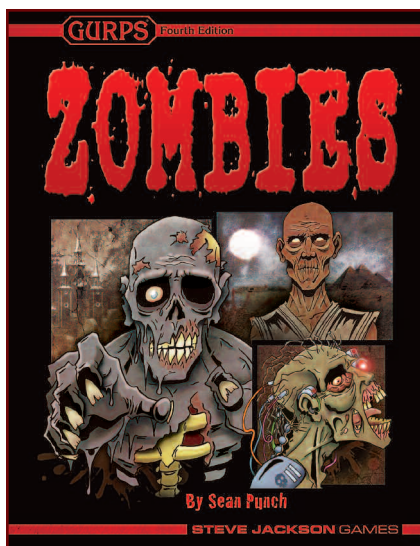
In assembling this issue, we realized that we could have gone even more focused than our basic villainous-acouterments theme, perhaps with “Tools of the Trade – Fantasy Villains” or “Tools of the Trade – Espionage Enemies.” However, in our nonstop quest to cram in as much fun as our own evil masterminds will allow, we decided to offer a smorgasbord of options that cover a variety of genres, from epic fantasy to battlefield-realistic to cinematic spies. It’s especially interesting how cross-genre many of these offerings are; what right-minded wrong-hearted villain *can’t* benefit from more insight into the walking dead or a Faustian bargain?

One of the most amazing aspects of *GURPS* is that it is a universal, multigenre system, and *Pyramid* has done what it can to support, expand, and enhance all corners of *GURPS* gamerdom. An issue that appeals to different types of gaming – while still being united by a theme – is just one more way we try to push the limits of what *Pyramid* is capable of. And with its awesome power, **WE WILL RULE THE WORLD!**

(Sorry . . . we got a bit too into the theme.)

WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW

Speaking of pushing the limits and taking over the world, how close did we get this month in our goal of global domination? Was it a fully armed and operational battle station? Or was it a teetering contraption one flung gear from exploding under its own weight? We’d love a report from all the evil geniuses who peruse these pages, either privately at pyramid@sjgames.com, or amid the evil legionnaires of doom at forums.sjgames.com.



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Quality: Poor equipment; Average troops.
Cost: \$1.8M to raise; \$360K to maintain.

These consist of 20 elements, for a total TS of 30.

This no-nonsense, nonmagical army gives you lots of horses and bows.

Tribal Levies

Light Infantry

These are light infantry levied auxiliaries. They are adequately trained, but poorly equipped and unenthusiastic.

TS: 0.5. *WT:* 1.

Classes: Rec. *Mobility:* Foot.

Quality: Poor equipment; Inferior troops.

Features: Levy.

Cost: \$340K to raise; \$25.5K to maintain (half the cost for being a Levy).

A large unit of 340 footmen makes up 34 elements, for a total TS of 17.

Vassals

Medium Infantry

These levies from recently subjugated peoples are better equipped, trained as medium infantry, but *extremely* reluctant.

TS: 1.5. *WT:* 1.

Classes: None. *Mobility:* Foot.

Quality: Basic equipment; Inferior troops.

Features: Disloyal, Levy, Sluggish (p. 10).

Cost: \$120K to raise; \$15K to maintain (half the cost for being a Levy).

There are just some 100 infantrymen in 10 elements and a total TS of 15.

War Machines

Light Artillery

City dwellers could once defy the barbarian cavalry from behind their walls. Now they have to fear these stone-throwers, which were a recent addition provided by a vanquished people.

TS: (1.5). *WT:* 1.

Classes: Art. *Mobility:* Foot.

Quality: Poor equipment; Average troops.

Features: Levy.

Cost: \$120K to raise; \$12K to maintain (half the cost for being a Levy).

There are enough machines and crewmen for four elements, with a total TS of (6).

STRATEGY

The strength of this force is obviously in its numerous mounted elements – even though an enemy general being told that he has to face a horse-riding barbarian host might well be surprised by the presence of artillery and infantry.

Since cavalry is expensive, this army can't field a lot of basic strength. It shouldn't try to win in a toe-to-toe match, but rather harass the enemy with arrows and carry out short charges after having weakened the opposition. The Raid strategy (*Mass Combat*, p. 35) seems tailored for Thangis. Skirmishing also looks appealing, but there's the catch of having an Impetuous unit.

An interesting, though tricky, option is to leave all foot elements behind. This reduces the total TS further, but gives a bonus in the initial reconnaissance on any army that is not entirely mounted (see *Mass Combat*, p. 29) and avoids problems with that Disloyal unit.

A wise general facing this army will exploit difficult terrain. If he has a large army and enough missile troops (or other kinds of special superiority), he might be content with defending, waiting for this smaller force to be depleted. Otherwise, he'll try to come to melee contact.

THE DEMONIC ARMY

Whenever demon worshippers open the gates to a hellish dimension, all sorts of infernal creatures come through. A demon who is . . . hell-bent on becoming a major villain will organize them into an army.

This force fields several fantastic elements (see *Mass Combat*, p. 18), magic and otherworldly beasts being important assets.

THE LEADERS

The demonic villain has appointed an elder demon, Hillehwuzorogdath, to lead this army. With Magery 3, he knows many Fire spells, and with centuries of experience, he's a good general, too (Strategy-14, Leadership-13); sometimes he gets carried away by his disadvantages (Paranoia and Sadism). When it comes to logistics and intelligence, he relies on the head of the demon worshippers, High Priest Balt

(Administration-12, Intelligence Analysis-10), who wrongly believes he is on a fast track to greater power. He leads the cultists with Magery 1, as well as Fanaticism and Intolerance.

THE TROOPS

Total elements: 99. Total cost: \$9.85M to raise, \$1.5468M to maintain.

Hillehwuzorogdath

Battle Mage

The elder demon counts as a squad of battle mages. Tough as nails, he's a Super-Soldier, too. He doesn't walk into battle, he rides a flying monster (p. 9). However, he lacks the Airborne feature (see *Mass Combat*, p. 8).

Finally, there is no specific time limit on flexible contracts; they're up when the seller runs out of soul points (see *The Ugly*, p. 17).

Loopholes

Loopholes usually occur because of failed rolls in the actual bargaining process (p. 16). The exact nature of a loophole is up to the GM. For example, the seller could keep all that he bargained for *and* his soul. Another possibility is that he bargained so well that he actually *enslaved* the buyer, making him the servant. Regardless of the form, the GM's decision is final.

WHAT THE SELLER GETS

Once all the details have been ironed out, the seller receives what it was that he bargained for. Unless the GM deems otherwise, the buyer can produce anything the seller could ask for.

The Good

Most of the time, the seller is going to want things that also have character point values. For instance, someone with Paraplegic (p. B141) that struck a deal to be able to walk again would give up 30 soul points to buy off the disadvantage.

The GM should keep in mind that some things might not necessarily have a direct correlative value to soul points. In such instances, he should use his best judgment. The GM might also want to create a chart for his campaign if many pacts are going to be made. The following are a few examples.

- Soul points can be converted into cash. Each point so spent is the equivalent of the campaign's Average Starting Wealth (p. B27). This is a better deal than *Trading Points for Money* (p. B26).
- Any disadvantage that the seller possesses can be bought off, reduced in level, have modifiers added or removed, or replaced with another disadvantage (or disadvantages) of equal cost. This costs soul points equal to the difference in values, minimum 1 point.
- Any advantage that the seller possesses can be improved by having modifiers added or removed, increasing its level, or replacing it with another advantage (or advantages) of equal cost. This costs soul points equal to the difference in values, minimum 1 point.
- Any new trait that could be purchased in the campaign can be acquired for soul points equal to its value.
- One soul point can be converted into a pool of 25 FP that can be spent on anything that a person could normally spend FP on (Extra Effort, powering supernatural abilities, etc.).

In campaigns using *GURPS Power-Ups 5: Impulse Buys*, the GM may allow soul points to be spent as if they were character points on any option he uses in his campaign. Logically, this extends to any other ways a GM permits character points to be used.

The Bad

The seller *also* gains levels of Damnation (pp. 18-19). Damnation represents how much of the character's soul is "gone" or "used up." If a buyer demands all of a seller's soul (and thus his

soul points), as happens most of the time, then the seller receives a Damnation level of 10 (the highest possible) and his soul is completely the property of his buyer.

In rare instances, only a portion of the soul is bargained away. First, divide the seller's total starting soul points by 10. Every time he spends that number of soul points, he gains one level of Damnation. For instance, if a character had 30 soul points to begin with, every 3 soul points he spent would earn him one level of Damnation.

The Ugly

Most deals include a time limit of some sort, which might be marked by the passage of months, the occurrence of an event, or the spending of all soul points. At the end of the limit, the buyer comes to collect the soul of the seller . . . and he dies or becomes soulless. This is represented by the Terminally Ill disadvantage (see p. B158), for contracts ending in death, or by gaining a restrictive Duty or a collection of disadvantages of equivalent value (see *It's a Gray Life*, below, for suggestions). See *What Happens If You Change Your Mind?* for some additional options.

Of course, the seller does not receive any points for Terminally Ill or other disadvantages gained while under contract.

It's a Gray Life

In some campaigns, it's possible to live without a soul – if you want to call that life. Maybe it's the standard operating procedure, or maybe it's a loophole introduced by the seller, but when the buyer comes calling, he leaves with a soul without having taken a life.

The effects of being soulless depend on the setting, but it usually results in apathy (Chronic Depression, Indecisive, Killjoy, etc.), lack of focus (Absent-Mindedness), lack of self control (Bad Temper, any Compulsive Behavior, Impulsiveness, Kleptomania, etc.), lack of empathy (Callous, Low Empathy, etc.), memory problems (Cannot Learn), and so on. On top of this, a soulless character cannot be resurrected, and might display Supernatural Features. The GM is the final arbiter on the effects, and he should be cruel. This replaces Terminally Ill for deals with time limits. See *Lost Souls (Urban Magics)*, p. 45 for more possibilities of living without a soul.

WHAT THE BUYER GETS

Once the buyer collects the seller's soul per the terms of the contract (either once the seller dies or once he spends his soul points), the contract controller gains a variety of benefits.

First, souls are *raw* power. They are literally a piece of creation itself. This makes them, in effect, a kind of battery that can be drawn off to fuel paranormal abilities. The GM can use one of a few different game mechanics to represent this. In any case, once spent, the points are gone for good.

- Each soul point that the buyer acquires is converted into a special pool similar to an Energy Reserve (*GURPS Powers*, p. 119), at a rate of 25 FP per soul point. Unlike a normal Energy Reserve, these points can be spent on *anything* that requires energy points or FP.

Wanderers

Wanderers are physically weak automatons driven by moldering brains. They begin unlife as cadavers – after the satellite, humans who die with largely intact brains reanimate in (4d - HT) minutes, minimum one minute. These walking dead cannot transmit their condition.

Wanderers aren't vicious or ghoulish – they simply stagger around for four to six weeks before collapsing abruptly. Until then, they seek the bustle of human movement, causing them to mill about in "herds." In the absence of the living or other wanderers, they're attracted to bright lights, and may do dangerous things like crawl out the window of a dim room or stumble toward the headlights of an onrushing car (eggheads call this the "self-euthanizing reflex"). Deaths caused by these creatures are usually the results of the ensuing collisions, though wanderers in hot zones carry disease.

Template: Wanderer

-348 points

Wanderers who've died of communicable disease – possibly *all* wanderers in hot zones – add Pestilent Presence [1].

Attribute Modifiers: ST-1 [-10]; DX-1 [-20]; IQ-4 [-80]; HT-2 [-20].

Secondary Characteristic Modifiers: HP+6 [12]; Per+4 [20]; Basic Speed-0.25 [-5]; Basic Move-2 [-10].

Advantages: Indomitable [15]; Intact Corpse [40]; Single-Minded [5]; Unfazeable [15].

Disadvantages: Cannot Learn [-30]; Hidebound [-5]; Low Empathy [-20]; Mute [-25]; No Sense of Humor [-10]; No Sense of Smell/Taste [-5]; No Unaging [-15]; Numb [-20]; Self-Destruct [-10]; Social Stigma (Minority

Group*) [-10]; Terminally Ill (1 month) [-100]; Vulnerability (Headshots x3) [-45]; Zombie Motivation (Seek people or light, whatever the cost) [-15].

Features: No Mental Skills.

* Since society has broken down, wanderers don't qualify for Dead – and they didn't cause the apocalypse, so they don't rate Monster, either. Survivors mostly have bigger problems, and avoid wanderers as "creepy" or "diseased."

Just the Stats: Wanderer

ST: 9	HP: 15	Speed: 4.00
DX: 9	Will: 6	Move: 2
IQ: 6	Per: 10	
HT: 8	FP: N/A	SM: 0
Dodge: 7	Parry: 7 (Unarmed)	DR: 0

Defensive Slap (9): 1d-3 crushing. Reach C.

Traits: Affected as Dead; Cannot Learn; Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; Fragile (Unnatural); Hidebound; High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Indomitable; Injury Tolerance (No Blood, Unliving); Low Empathy; Mute; No Sense of Humor; No Sense of Smell/Taste; Numb; Self-Destruct; Single-Minded; Social Stigma (Minority Group); Sterile; Supernatural Features (No Body Heat, No Pulse, Pallor); Temperature Tolerance 10; Terminally Ill (1 month); Unfazeable; Unhealing (Total); Vulnerability (Headshots x3); Zombie Motivation (Seek people or light, whatever the cost).

Notes: Nonaggressive. No mental skills. Some have Pestilent Presence.

How It All Started

Nobody really knows whose satellite it was. The Americans blamed the Chinese, the Chinese blamed the Americans, the Russians blamed them both, and everybody else just issued a statement – though Japan grumbled about the conspicuous absence of a North Korean denial, and North Korea responded by pointing out how many satellites the Japanese had launched. Given what happened next, the tinfoil-hat brigade likes to say it was nobody's bird, but a probe or a weapon chucked at us by space aliens.

And "what happened next" is that corpses started to get up and walk around. In fresh graves, morgues, the bloody killing fields of African ethnic conflict . . . where there were bodies, there were walking dead. All it took was a more-or-less intact brain and enough muscle still on the bone. Fortunately, these *things* – and back then, nobody but B-movie fans and the superstitious bothered with fancy names – just wandered aimlessly. The only danger they posed was to faith and composure, though in some areas they spread disease.

Consensus was that this was a problem to be cleaned up, a process that was handled locally and mostly efficiently. Wealthy countries charged national and regional services with the task. Police, military, and disaster-management personnel – and occasionally firemen, paramedics, and even dogcatchers

– systematically corralled the dead for cremation. Less-wealthy countries opted for shooting or chopping, followed by fire pits and mass graves. Everybody figured out that what we now call *wanderers* weren't the people they once were, and would stay down if the brain was destroyed. While religious folks sometimes objected, practicality won out.

The Q Vaccine

As I said, there was a problem with folks freaking out over the walking dead, even though wanderers didn't attack people, eat flesh, or otherwise act like zombies from bad movies. The whole affair was a vicious blow to a lot of religious beliefs, and even stone-cold atheists found it unpleasant. There were also the practical dangers posed by human-sized obstacles lurching into traffic and leaving their deathbeds to plunge 10 stories onto crowded sidewalks – they seemed attracted to people and light, so this happened a lot. In places with epidemic disease, walking carriers were an even bigger concern.

Cremation was simple enough, but lots of people of faith weren't willing to give up on intact burial. Also, plenty of folks died unexpectedly on the operating table or alone at home – and in conflict zones, fighters got killed when their buddies had bigger problems to deal with, like not getting shot.