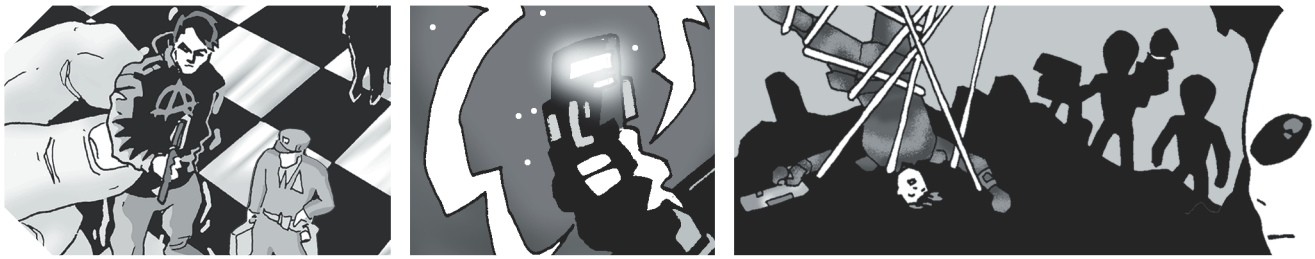
GURPS® Fourth Edition

# Monster Hunters 5™

# Applied Xenology™




## Written by JASON "PK" LEVINE
## Illustrated by ANGELA BOSTICK and DAN SMITH

### Additional Material by DAVID L. PULVER and CHRISTOPHER R. RICE



***GURPS*** System Design ▌STEVE JACKSON
***GURPS*** Line Editor ▌SEAN PUNCH
Assistant ***GURPS*** Line Editor ▌JASON "PK" LEVINE
***GURPS*** Project Manager ▌STEVEN MARSH
Production Artist and Indexer ▌NIKOLA VRTIS
***GURPS*** FAQ Maintainer ▌
VICKY "MOLOKH" KOLENKO

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Director of Sales ▌ROSS JEPSON
Page Design ▌PHIL REED and JUSTIN DE WITT
Art Direction and Prepress Checker ▌NIKKI VRTIS

*Playtesters:* Michele Armellini, S.A. Fisher, Robert "Rev. Bob" Hood, Vicky "Molokh" Kolenko, Christopher R. Rice, and Antoni Ten Monrós

*Special Thanks:* Chris and Ben Conrad, Robert Harrell, Sean Punch, Christopher R. Rice, and Melissa VanEyll



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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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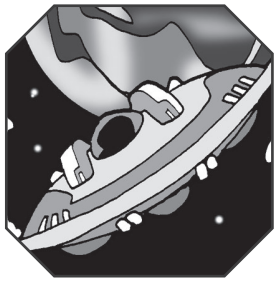
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# Introduction

*"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^ 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, 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).

## 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.

## 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.

***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].

## 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-alchemists 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 30× 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)×30 seconds before trying again! At which point, whomever took his toys had better be far, far away . . .

## *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, bloodthirsty, 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.

## *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.

# 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.

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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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