Rippers Resurrected

GAME MASTER'S HANDBOOK

by Simon Lucas with Matthew Cutter, Clint Black, John Goff, and Shane Hensley

Based on the original Rippers by Chris Dolunt, Simon Lucas, Paul "Wiggy" Wade-Williams, Piotr Koryś, Clint Black, and Shane Hensley

Art Director: Aaron Acevedo

Graphic Design & Layout: Aaron Acevedo, Matthew Cutter, Alida Saxon, Thomas Shook

Editors: Jodi Black, Matthew Cutter, Piotr Koryś, Preston DuBose

Cover Illustration: Aaron Riley

Interior Illustrations: Bruno Balixa, Colin Boyer, Donald Crank. Dennis Darmody, James Denton, Sebastien Eccose, Irina Kovalova, Chris Malidore, Will Nunes. Claudio Pozas, Manfred Rohrer, Mike Wolmarans, Steve Wood

Cartography: Alida Saxon

To my little monsters, Dylan, Evelyn, and Angelina. And to Kirsty, for everything.

WWW.PEGINC.COM

CONTENTS

Fools! Soon the Dark One will rise and they will pray for their old foes.

The Cabal too shall kneel before the scaled God! He will slither across this world and crush all who stand in His way!

Gather the faithful, my brothers. It is time for Apep to RISE!!!

—MK

RIPPERS

ippers is a game of Victorian horror for the *Savage Worlds* roleplaying system. The *Rippers Resurrected Player's Guide* contains the essential information players need to know to play. This book contains additional information to help a GM create and run exciting *Rippers* stories.

In addition to some extra rules for rippertech and some secrets the players should not know, this book contains an adventure generator to help you quickly create countless tales for your players with just a few dice rolls. What's more, there are some ready-made Savage Tales and a full-fledged Plot Point Campaign that threatens the Rippers' very existence, if they cannot overcome an ancient evil. Finally, the last chapter contains monstrous foes to throw at your heroes, as well as a few minions who may be able to come to their aid.

It should be noted that *Rippers* is a game of Victorian horror and you want to make sure you capture the two aspects together. The setting is the Victoriana of our imagination, so it only needs to have the right feel or flavor. With that in mind, this chapter contains some advice to help cultivate a suitable tone for your games.

EVERYDAY LIFE

All you need are the broad strokes to set the tone. Steam trains and gas lamps, horse-drawn hansom cabs and fog-filled, cobbled streets capture it perfectly. Technology is making rapid advances, so there are always new wonders to witness, like moving pictures, electricity, and the automobile. The *Rippers Resurrected Player's Guide* has more information about the latest inventions.

Make sure the Extras in your world are polite to each other and to the heroes—at least until provoked. Victorian society thrives upon civility. Players not acting appropriately should be penalized with frequent Status losses. As their Status slips, they should also find themselves being treated with less respect. They are of course still expected to give it—especially to those in authority (and this is a time when it is perfectly acceptable for a policeman to give someone a firm slap for being "cheeky").

DEAD OF NIGHT

Rippers is also a horror game. This is the spooky, eerie horror of an old movie or a good ghost story rather than more modern tales of blood and guts (though there's some of that too!). Much of the horror should come from the realization that the heroes are facing powerful supernatural creatures and that the only hope of matching their foes is the use of rippertech—as unpleasant as that is.

The monsters of the Cabal frequently operate at night, either due to supernatural weaknesses or to keep their existence or lairs secret. This means the Rippers also exist in the twilight, giving ample opportunity for night-shrouded mysteries. The dark makes everything seem worse and this should be true for your heroes. Ordinary objects take on sinister shapes, and sounds are strangely amplified.

Then, of course—there are the actual things that go bump in the night. Try to be evocative and describe the creatures rather than naming them. "A crooked old man shuffles awkwardly toward you. Pale skin hangs limply on misshapen bones and the stale stench of soil and decay assaults your senses," sounds better than, "You see a zombie." It also gives your players some clues how to react, but keeps them in the dark as to what exactly they are facing.

A WORLD OF SHADOWS

In the *Rippers* world, monsters really are under beds, in closets, and hiding in the shadows. No one can ignore their primal response to such pervasive horror. At the Plot Point Campaign's start, with the Cabal broken, Fear checks suffer no penalty. The world is scary, but not especially so.

Once the Cabal leadership begins returning, the world's overall "Fright Level" rises. After Jack the Ripper's resurrection in the **Jack's Back** Plot Point, all Fear checks suffer a –1 penalty, increasing to –2 when Dracula returns. At the adventure's end, the Cabal returns and Fear Checks suffer a –4 penalty!

This allows Mina Harker to convince the Order of St. George and the Witch Hunters that the Rippers need the Rosicrucians. If the players bring the faction back into the fold during the Plot Point **Forbidden Knowledge**, it inspires Rippers around the world and reduces the Fear penalty to –3.

The next opportunity to modify the Fright Level occurs during **The Battle for Rome** Plot Point. If the heroes are victorious, the Cabal is demoralized and humanity's will is strengthened, reducing the penalty to –2. If the Cabal wins, the penalty increases to –4 as fear pervades the world.

The modifier does not change again unless the Rippers fail to stop Apep's ascension. If that occurs, the world becomes a land of death, and the penalty to Fear checks is –6!

STATUS

Using Status in Rippers should add to the atmosphere and lend a veneer of Victorian respectability rather than dictate the course of the game. The Status and favor rules allow you to easily simulate the Victorian social contract. Don't let Status get in the way, but use it to reinforce that society is different in Victorian times, and certain expectations should be met.

RIPPERTECH

Rippers can use more rippertech with fewer damaging results than before, due to improved science and ongoing refinement of the methods used to harvest and create implants. Of primary importance, though, was Johann Van Helsing going to the Rosicrucians for help, as told in the *Rippers Resurrected Player's Guide*.

As the players learn during the *Return of Evil* Plot Point Campaign, the "key to victory" wasn't to defeat the Cabal but to overcome rippertech's damning aspects. Johann was successful…but at a terrible cost. He became a martyr, taking the entirety of rippertech's curse upon himself. And his soul's burden soon proved too heavy for his body to bear. He took his secret to the grave.

In practical terms, this means using rippertech no longer damns one to Hell, nor do the forces of evil benefit from its use.

New Rippertech

Your players are bound to try to research new and improved rippertech. Here are some guidelines to help you balance the risks and rewards of rippertech and guide their studies.

Each time they research something new, decide if you want to use a Research Adventure to put obstacles in their way and encourage them to travel. Hints of wonderful facilities in foreign lodges or rare components in far-off lands can draw the heroes into further adventure and get them to experience more of the Rippers world.

Designing Enhancements

When your players want to devise new rippertech, they should prepare a design based on the way existing rippertech is set out. Work through their design and see if what they have in mind seems balanced.

Start with the rippertech's Benefits. Depending on how powerful the basic effect is, give the enhancement a rippertech modifier (this is the Reason cost of the enhancement and reflects how difficult it is to make). A penalty of –2 is roughly the equivalent of an advance, Edge, or Attribute increase. If the enhancement is more versatile and useful, the higher the penalty, or for a more specific or restrictive function, it may go as low as –1. No rippertech has a modifier better than –1.

Balance & Flavor

Work with the players to balance the cost and effect, and alter the modifier accordingly, but always consider the concept of the enhancement. For example, if it makes sense for the rippertech to be restricted to an implant or extract only, reduce the penalty by 1, but the player shouldn't choose to apply such a limit simply to decrease the cost. If it's logical for the rippertech to inflict a side effect, the cost could drop by one if troublesome or even 2 if particularly debilitating. Some minor side effects may be worth no reduction in the penalty, but add significant flavor to the rippertech (such a touch may be worth a bonus to one of the creation rolls).

Don't forget there are other ways to limit the effectiveness too. An implant may cause Fear if revealed or an extract could be foul or disgusting applying a –2 penalty to the Vigor roll, either worth a one point reduction. Extremely rare raw materials (something only available from Dracula) or those with a penalty to harvest may be worth a decrease as well. The Reason loss should also be weighed against usefulness. Unless the GM is running a sea-going campaign, breathing underwater isn't going to be as useful in a Rippers game.

The ultimate goal is to help the player create a cool new piece of rippertech not something game-breaking. Make sure everyone is happy with the design before the player commits her character's time and effort to the process.

CAPES & CYBORGS

Game Masters with the *Science Fiction Companion* and/or *Super Powers Companion* can use them to help design rippertech. The point costs for Racial Abilities, Cyberware, and Powers correlate to the Reason penalty for rippertech. Of course, setting and usefulness still need to be considered in the final modifier.

If using a Power from the *Super Powers Companion* as the basis for an enhancement, limit the power to no more than 5 points of effect (even if modifiers reduce the penalty to a lower value). The higher the base cost, the more likely the rippertech requires a special Research adventure to create.

RELICS

Relics are objects imbued with mystical powers. Rippers cannot simply make these items—they gain power from the great (or terrible) individuals who once possessed them, from veneration, and from the passage of time.

Blessed and Magical Items

If a character with a Reason less than 4 attempts to use a blessed item, or if any character with a Reason of 4 or higher attempts to use a cursed item, he must make a Spirit roll each round or take 2d6 damage. Magic items can be used by both the pure and the corrupt to equal effect.

Blessed/Cursed/Magic Vestments: These robes weigh no more than normal clothing and protect the torso, arms, and legs. Roll a d6: On a 1–2 the vestments are blessed, on a 3–4 they are cursed, and on a 5–6 they are magic. Blessed or cursed vestments provide Armor +3 against supernatural attacks (including magic and Fighting attacks from monsters). Magic vestments provide Armor +2 against any attack.

Flying Carpet: This decorative eastern rug is enchanted and allows up to five characters to *fly* at a Pace of 6 with Climb 0.

Hermetic Chest: This ornately carved chest is magically sealed. Anything placed into it is preserved until removed.

Holy Bible: Martyred priests carried these blessed bibles. Once per day, if the bearer is the target of a spell or arcane effect, he may use his Spirit die to resist the arcane skill roll. If successful, the effect is directed back at the caster (or negated if more inappropriate).

Cold Iron Flask: This is a cold iron cylinder with a lead stopper. When opened, any demon or ghost with a weakness to Cold Iron within a Small Burst Radius must make a Spirit roll or be pulled into the jar.

Lab Journal/ Prayer Book/Psychoanalytic Journal/Spellbook: This magical book contains the formula required to use a new power chosen by the GM. If a character with the appropriate Arcane Background (Weird Science for Lab Journal, Miracles for Holy Prayers, Psionics for Psychoanalytic Journal, Magic for Spellbook) spends 1d20 days reading and deciphering its secrets, the character learns to use the power.

Large Blessed/Cursed/Magic Weapon: Large weapons include swords, staves, and similar items.