Bullet Points
Monsters!
By James Wyatt

Welcome to the thirty-second installment of *Bullet Points.* I am not Charles Ryan. His new responsibilities as category manager for roleplaying games at Wizards of the Coast, Inc. have made it impossible for him to continue writing this column. That's where I come in. I'm James Wyatt, designer of a lot of **D&D** books and one **d20 Modern** book that's due out in 2005, but I can't tell you about that just yet. I've also been playing in Charles Ryan's lunchtime **d20 Modern** game for two years now, and that experience is probably my best credential for taking over this column from him.

So now it's my job to answer your questions about the game, offer advice on tricky issues, and give you a little peek into the minds of the designers -- insofar as I can pry their minds open to wrest insight from them. I'm planning to keep this column on the same regular schedule that you're used to.

I'll also be following the same format as the earlier installments of *Bullet Points.* Every two weeks I'll pick an issue that's provoked a lot of questions or comments, begin with a general discussion of the topic, and then answer specific questions related to it. (It might be a little while before I plunge into any general discussions, though. Give me a few weeks to get up to speed!) If there are any unrelated but pressing questions in my mailbox, I might tackle them at the end of the column, but only if there's room and they can't wait for an appropriately themed column.

Questions and Answers

Now without any further ado, let's tackle some questions about monsters -- a subject truly dear to my heart. We'll start off with a number of questions about vampires, then go on from there.

I've found something confusing -- at least for me, because I'm a D&D player. First, when a vampire kills someone with his energy drain ability, does the victim rise as a vampire, even if she was 1st level? In D&D, the victim becomes a vampire spawn, right? Secondly, I assume that a victim of the vampire's Constitution drain ability doesn't rise as a vampire in d20 Modern. Am I right?

Since the **d20 Modern** game has no vampire spawn creature, anyone killed by a vampire's energy drain attack rises as a full-fledged vampire. And you're correct in assuming that a character killed by blood drain does not rise as a vampire. But there's no reason you can't change that rule in your campaign if you want, so that any character killed by either energy drain or blood drain rises as a vampire.

Can a vampire be invited into someone's home through the internet or by phone? Or could he be falsely invited into someone's home through these means, via a "forged" email or other such subterfuge?

This is the kind of question that makes me love my job. Who else in the world gets to answer questions like this one?

A character can issue an invitation to enter her home over the phone or via email, instant messaging, or any other kind of internet communication. The invitation does have to be explicit, however. "Hey, why don't you come over to my house?" is not technically an invitation to enter, but "If I'm not there, let yourself in," would qualify as an explicit invitation. The invitation must originate from the rightful owner or tenant, so a "forged" email would not allow a vampire to enter the home.

If a Tough hero with a Constitution score of 34 (+12 modifier) and the fire resistance talent becomes a vampire, is she immune to the 2d6 points of damage a vampire takes from sunlight? Assuming she fails her Fortitude save, is the damage she takes for spending a full round in the light normal fire damage or holy damage?

It is not normal fire damage, so it is not negated by any resistance. Thus, even the toughest of Tough hero vampires can't walk around in broad daylight with impunity.

If a Tough hero with the remain conscious talent becomes a vampire, can he stay and fight until he reaches -10 hp, or does he still automatically turn gaseous and try to escape?

The character still turns gaseous at 0 hit points. A creature of the undead type doesn't fall unconscious at -1 hit point; typically, it's destroyed as soon as it hits 0 hit points. The vampire is an exception to that rule, but even the remain conscious talent can't keep a Tough hero vampire going past the point where most undead would be destroyed.

Is there such a thing as a vampire lord in the d20 Modern world, like there once was in D&D?

I'm trying to figure out what vampire lord in **D&D** you might be referring to. If you mean just a more powerful vampire, well, that's why vampire is a template in both games. In **d20 Modern,** you can apply the vampire template to a 1st-level ordinary or to a 20th-level Smart hero/Mage, who should then look a lot like a vampire lord. A vampire can certainly have vampire (and other) minions, thanks to his create spawn ability. If you mean the [vampire lord template](#) that appeared on this website a couple years back, you could certainly use it in **d20 Modern** with a little bit of modification.

The harriken, or headsnatcher, appears in the *d20 Modern Menace Manual,* but an important part of its description seems to be missing -- namely, where does its intelligence lie? The harriken can exist in two places at once -- its body can be in one spot while its head is somewhere else. The text says that its body has blindsight, but apparently only the head has darkvision, since the creature loses that quality when it doesn't have its own head. Its body is indestructible, but how smart is it without the head? The creature has telepathy with a 100-foot range, but does that mean 100 feet from the body or from the head?

The harriken is a complete creature in two parts, body and head. The head may be the seat of the creature's intelligence, but that fact doesn't matter too much, since the head can control the body flawlessly from any distance. The body can function just fine without any head attached at all. It has blindsight (as you noted), it can move around under the head's command, and it can even communicate by means of telepathy. (The harriken's telepathy allows it to communicate with any creature within 100 feet of either its head or its body.) The only thing it really can't do with no head attached -- besides see, hear, and smell -- is blend in.

Most of the time, a harriken prefers to have another head on its shoulders while keeping its own head

hidden away in a secret and safe location -- usually one that's guarded by fanatical cultists or very well-paid minions. That way, it can move freely among humans to spread fear and hatred, and its own life is protected.

In the *Urban Arcana Campaign Setting,* the description of the nuclear toxyderm states that if it is reduced to 0 or fewer hit points, it erupts in a chain reaction that deals 400 points of damage to everything within 400 feet (Reflex save for 200). Does this statement mean that a sufficiently lucky character with the evasion ability could get away without taking any damage from the chain reaction? It seems strange that an explosion that creates a crater a quarter of a mile in diameter could theoretically do no damage whatsoever to a character. Or does the save apply only if the character is more than 400 feet away from the toxyderm at the time, thus risking a maximum of only 100 points of damage?

Strange as it may seem, a character with evasion can indeed avoid taking any damage from the chain reaction. But avoiding the force of the blast is one thing, and avoiding the effects of radiation is another. Even if the character survives the chain reaction, she's still in the middle of that big radioactive crater and will likely get radiation sickness as a result.

The ghoul template was introduced in the *d20 Modern Menace Manual,* and one of my GM character spellcasters fell prey to necrotizing faciitis. He wants ghoul minions, but the create spawn ability creates only uncontrolled undead. So I was thinking about using the *create undead* incantation instead for creating ghouls, since it can animate other forms of templated undead. I'm just uncertain whether that incantation can be used in this way and what the Knowledge (arcane lore) DCs would be.

A character can absolutely use the *create undead* incantation to make ghouls or any other form of undead from the *d20 ModernMenace Manual.* Use these modifiers to the Knowledge (arcane lore) DC: bodak +10, charred one +0, doom hag +4, skin feaster -4, whisperer in the dark +12. To create a ghoul or a revenant, increase the DC of the Knowledge (arcane lore) check by an amount equal to the ghoul or revenant's Hit Dice +4.

But there's one caveat to this use: Whatever form of undead the character wants to create, he must use a corpse of the appropriate type that died under appropriate conditions. For example, he can't make a bodak unless he has the corpse of a fraal that was slain by a force of evil. Likewise, he can't make a charred one unless the skeleton he has at hand belonged to a person who was burned alive, or create a whisperer in the dark unless he has several skeletons.

Do you have a rules question about the d20 Modern Roleplaying Game? Send it to bulletpoints@wizards.com. For the quickest possible answer, please put the topic of your question in the subject line and keep the question as succinct as possible. If you have more than one question, feel free to send two or more emails -- but for best results please include only one question per email unless your questions are very closely related to one another. Please don't expect a direct answer by email. Check back here every other week for the latest batch of answers!

About the Author

James Wyatt is an RPG designer at Wizards of the Coast, Inc. His design credits include *The Speaker in Dreams, Defenders of the Faith, Oriental Adventures, Deities and Demigods, Fiend Folio, Draconomicon,* and the *Book of Exalted Deeds.* He wrote the Origins award-winning adventure *City of the Spider Queen* and is one of the designers of the new Eberron campaign setting, which is due out in June 2004. James lives in Kent, Washington with his wife Amy and son Carter.