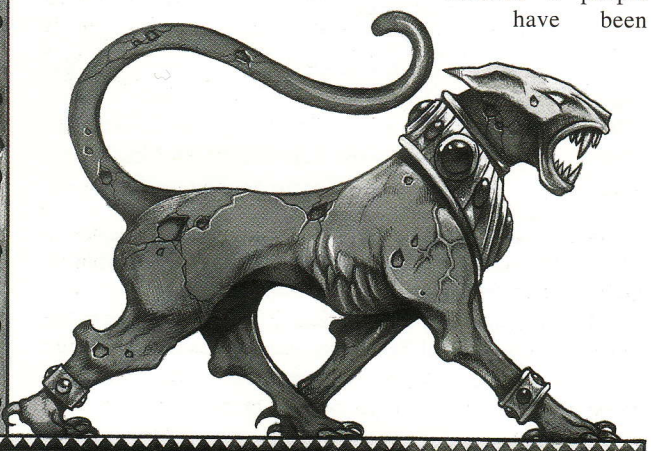
IT CAME FROM THE SUMP

BY "PAPA" STEVE ANASTASOFF

MORE TALES FROM THE UNDERHIVE

So juve, ya made it back then... where've ya been? I thought the Thing had got ya. What d'ya mean what thing? You had your head stuck in a gunk tank or somethin'? The Thing from the Sump. Stranger things may have happened in the Hive before, but not in my time. This blob just rose right up from the Sludge Sea an' started dissolvin' people away. And ain't nobody been able to stop it. But I've lived in this drain pipe for longer than I can remember, an' it's gonna take more than a walkin' slime bucket to move me. Hey kid, what're ya looking at, you've gone all pale... Where're you goin'? Why the rush? Was it somethin' I said... What d'you mean it's behind me? Uhhh, now you mention it, maybe it is time for a move. Never did like this scumsuckin' pipe anyhow. Wait for me kid... Papa Steve comin' through!

It's not often that I get as much feedback from an article as I did from last month's *Tales From the Sump*. Ever since I finished it people have been coming up to me with suggestions for all kinds of weird and wonderful new scenarios based around their own favourite B-movies. This all got me so enthused that I just couldn't resist carrying on the theme in this month's article!



You might remember that last month, I mentioned some scenarios that I'd been playing which had gangs being hunted down by a Lictor. Well, this got me thinking about what other sorts of horrific and terrifying creatures might inhabit the deepest, darkest corners of the Underhive. The bestiary section of the Outlanders book gives a whole host of Hive denizens, but I wanted something more – an horrific mutant monstrosity, independently capable of taking on a whole gang, or even several gangs at once. Something like the horror from the film *The Thing*, where the creature is shot, axed, burned, and even savaged by dogs – but still keeps on coming. After bouncing a few ideas around the rest of the White Dwarf crew, a suitably nightmarish plot began to form...

IT CAME FROM THE SUMP

The first thing to do would be to create the monster itself. This could perhaps be a giant arachnid, like the beast from *Tarantula*, a foul reptilian that lived and bred deep in the sludge of the Sump like the *Creature from the Black Lagoon*, or maybe a swarm of smaller creatures that existed as a single colony, a plague of insectoids that could strip the flesh from a living target in seconds, like *Them*. Eventually, however, I decided that the monster would be an amorphous, tentacled blob. This seemed to me to be just the sort of thing that might live in the depths of the Sump, carrying itself further Uphive in its constant search for food.

This time I wanted something more than just a one off scenario. I wanted something that would become more of an inherent part of the campaign. Again, after trying out a couple of ideas, and throwing some suggestions around the rest of the crew, I'd worked out how this was going to happen.

The Thing from the Sump is moving Uphive, and has started entering your players' territories. Each week, at the same time that you generate a random campaign event, roll randomly to see which gang's territory the Thing has moved into that week. You should also select one of their territories, which is the one that the Thing has turned up in. The gang cannot claim any

When playtesting this scenario, I used one of the Chaos Spawn models from the Studio Chaos army to represent the Thing. There are all sorts of bits and pieces that you can use to model your own creatures like tentacles from Beasts of Nurgle, parts from Great Unclean Ones, or almost anything from a Lictor!

income from this territory this week unless they manage to drive off the monster. If they fail to drive it off or kill it (using the special scenario rules given below) then it will destroy that territory completely – cross it off the gang's list! If they drive it off, they may keep the territory and use it normally from that point on. However, the Thing is still alive and still hungry, and in the next week it will move into another territory – or perhaps even back into the same one!

THE SCENARIO

The Thing from the Sump is a unique and extremely tough creature. Being largely made up of slime and gunk, it is completely immune to most normal weapons. The best you can hope for with a regular weapon is to drive it back slightly. The only way the gangs can think to destroy it is by submerging it in a particularly noxious toxichem pool. Fortunately for the gangs such pools are not uncommon amongst many parts of the Underhive. The only problem is how to push it in…

This scenario should be played whenever a gang tries to fight off the Thing from the Sump, with the Arbitrator setting up the table and controlling the Thing. When setting up for this scenario you should place something to represent the toxichem pool that the gang is trying to drive the Thing in to. This should have several gantries and walkways overhanging it for the Thing to be blasted off – it's not so stupid that it will just walk into the pool! The toxichem pool should be placed about in the middle of the gaming area. Anything falling into the toxichem is instantly killed, and any equipment is lost permanently!

Randomly select a table edge – the Thing will start in the middle of this edge. The gang may then set up anywhere within 8" of the opposite table edge. The gangers have two objectives. Ideally, they would like to destroy the creature, so that they can claim the bounty on it, and not have to worry about it attacking any more of their territories. However, if they cannot destroy it, they at least want to drive it off out of their territory. The Thing is destroyed if any hit forces it back so that it cannot avoid falling into the toxichem. It is driven off if any hit forces it off a table edge and out of the playing area. See the following section for rules on driving the Thing back with weapon hits. The gang must take bottle tests as normal when they have suffered 25% casualties, but must also test each time the Thing devours one of the gang.

The Thing just wants to eat as many gangers as possible. It always takes the first turn in this scenario.

THE THING FROM THE SUMP

A number of special rules apply to the Thing from the Sump, making it a unique adversary.

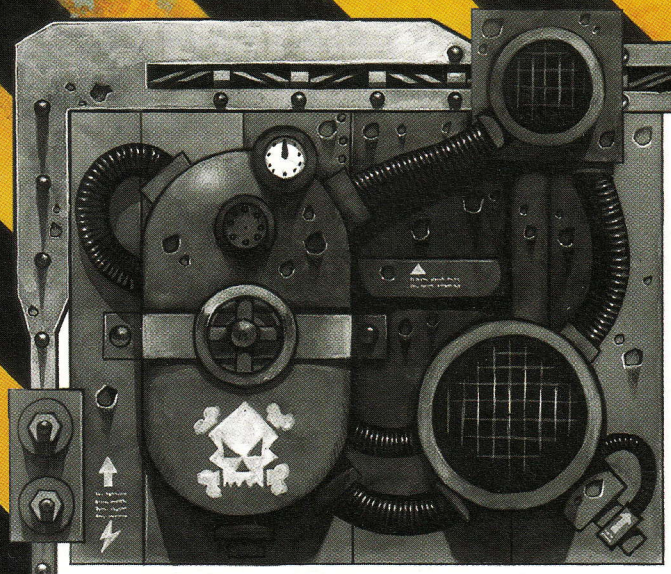
Wounds: The Thing from the Sump starts with six Wounds. In fact its entire profile starts at six. However, every time it suffers a Wound its entire profile gets reduced by one, so that the whole profile will always remain at the same level as the number of Wounds it has remaining.

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
The Thing	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6

Regeneration: The Thing from the Sump can regenerate Wounds (and the rest of its profile) during the recovery phase. During each if its recovery phases, roll a dice for each Wound that the Thing currently has missing. On a roll of 4, 5, or 6, the Wound is regenerated. Remember that the rest of the profile will also regenerate at the same time. The Thing from the Sump will continue to regenerate even if reduced to zero Wounds. The only way it can be killed is by submerging it in the toxichem.

Movement: The Thing from the Sump can neither run nor charge. It therefore always moves at its Movement characteristic speed. Note, however, that this will drop if the Thing suffers any wounds. The Thing may freely move over any obstacles without penalty, and may climb up or down walls as if they were ladders.

Pinning: The Thing from the Sump cannot be pinned. Nor can it be taken man down, man out, or suffer flesh wounds. The only way to stop, or damage, it is by the methods described above. Also, it need never take agility tests to avoid falling off heights if hit.



Shooting: The Thing from the Sump may lash out with one tentacle for each of its Attacks. Note that this means that as it suffers wounds it will be able to throw out fewer tentacles each turn. Each tentacle has a range of 12". Roll to hit as normal. For each hit, pull the target 1" closer to the Thing. If it is pulled into contact, then fight as normal in the hand-to-hand combat phase. These attacks can pull gang members off high levels. Any hit by a tentacle will cause that gang member to become pinned, even if it does not pull them into the Thing itself. The Thing has a 360° line of sight.

Hand-to-hand combat: The Thing from the Sump cannot charge. Instead, it automatically fights a round of hand-to-hand combat against anything that it is in contact with during the hand-to-hand combat phase. However, both the Thing and its hand-to-hand opponents may move off freely in their movement phases – they are not locked in combat. Any gang member unfortunate enough to be absorbed by the Thing is lost permanently, along with all his weapons and equipment!

Push-backs: Every time the Thing from the Sump suffers a hit (even if it can't damage it), from shooting or hand-to-hand combat, it is driven back 1". It is particularly susceptible to hits from flamer weapons, which drive it back 1D6" instead of just 1". Move the model of the Thing directly away from the attacker. If this pushes it over the edge of a high level, then it will fall to the ground and suffer damage as normal.

Feeding Frenzy: When the Thing from the Sump senses food nearby, it will sometimes go into an uncontrollable frenzy to get to it. Roll 1D6 at the start of each Thing turn. On a 1, 2, or 3, it is controllable and may be played as the Arbitrator wishes. However, on a roll of 4, 5, or 6, the Thing is affected by its Feeding Frenzy. It must move at full speed towards the nearest visible gang member, but will always select a target in the open over one in cover. The Thing will always lash with as many tentacles as possible at this one target. Note, however, that even when in a frenzy the Thing will not move into a toxichem pool voluntarily, and will try to move around it. The only way to force it into a toxichem pool is to blast it there!

Leadership: The Thing never bottles out and is immune to all psychology. It is assumed to automatically pass any Leadership test it is required to make, and so its Leadership value is never actually used.

The last three members of the gang are ambushed by the Thing, and those that can flee for their lives...

IF THEY SURVIVE

As the Thing stomps and slimes its way around the Hive, bounty on its metaphorical head gets bigger and bigger. Every time the Thing is involved in a battle which it survives (whether it gets driven off or not) its bounty increases by the roll of a dice times ten. This amount is added to the income of whichever gang eventually manages to kill it.

Experience is awarded to gang members fighting the Thing as follows:

+D6 Survives. Each surviving gang fighter earns D6 experience points. Even fighters who are taken man down or man out receive experience for taking part.

+D6 Driving off the Thing. If the Thing is driven off, each surviving gang member gets a further D6 experience points, on top of the D6 for surviving. This bonus is also awarded if the Thing is killed.

+10 Killing the Thing. If the Thing is killed, the gang member who blasted it into the toxichem pool gains 10 experience points.

MORE THINGS

During playtesting of this scenario one thing became clear – the Thing is tough! Most novice gangs got two or three gangers taken out without any chance of killing the Thing! For this reason you can allow more experienced gangs to come hunting for the creature. If a novice gang can find someone to fight the scenario for them, in exchange for cash or purely for the glory and bounty, then you may allow them to try and fight off the Thing instead of the appointed gang. Note that the territory under attack does not change, so if they fail to drive off or kill the Thing it is still the original gang that suffers the loss.

Also during playtesting we played around with a few other ideas that you might like to try. One of the most dangerous was having the Thing split into several smaller Things if it got hit by a particularly high Strength weapon, such as a lascannon. These would then quickly regenerate into full-sized Things, which could each go off and attack other territories! Another idea was to have the Thing grow larger and tougher every time it consumed a gang member, with its profile permanently increasing by one for each victim devoured. Note that both these abilities make the Thing even more deadly, so should only be considered if you have a lot of very experienced gangs in your campaign.

OTHER MONSTERS

Of course, there's no reason why you have to make your monster B-movie scenarios the same as mine. There are all sorts of other creatures that you could use instead, and all sorts of different ways of incorporating them into your Necromunda campaigns. Adrian had a whole host of ideas for having a more sinister, hidden creature hunting gang members over the course of a campaign, which he's outlined below. You can take any of these ideas as a starting point for your own campaigns – just let your imagination run wild. Necromunda is the perfect setting to capture that sense of dark foreboding that is such an essential component of any B-movie, so make the most of it!

ADRIAN'S MONSTER ON THE LOOSE SCENARIOS

Adrian: Steve and I were talking about the *It Came From The Sump* scenario and the conversation triggered off a whole load of ideas for alternative scenarios you could try based on other B-movies. My favourite idea was for a more sinister plot, with an unseen creature preying on gang members. The monster attack could be a random event, or organised by the Arbitrator. Every game there is an increasing chance of a single ganger being snatched and killed during any turn, with both gangs immediately bottling out when the killing happens. Perhaps the event is triggered when one of the gangs bottles out. The beast lashes out as the gang runs for it, enraged at the cowardice being displayed (how like a Khorne Bloodletter or a Spyrer to slay a coward, for example), cutting down a random gang member. Whichever way you do it, the beast's actions have no apparent pattern to them (at least to start with), in order to increase the tension. The creature doesn't have to be something you invent yourself – it could be a Genestealer, a Bloodletter, a Spyrer, a Psyker or even a mysterious plague of some kind!

The deaths could increase in regularity as the campaign continues and the gangs become subject to psychological effects such as *fear* or *frenzy*. Gangers are reduced to gibbering wrecks or transformed into blood-mad fiends desperate to uncover the beast responsible for the deaths. Suspicion is rife on all sides. Convinced that the other gangs are somehow involved in the attacks, full scale war breaks out between Houses. Fighting is fierce as gangers set upon gangers, but still the deaths go on. The level of fear amongst the gangs would become very real.

Yet another idea is for the Arbitrator to finally reveal the monster through clues left over the course of several games, or a single event during a normal game. A reward is posted for the death or capture of the beast, the gangs competing to track it down as quickly as possible. Maybe, as more and more games are played, gangs acquire clues, a glimpse of the beast, a footprint, anything that might give the gang an idea about the creature. The gang with the most clues earns the right to try to capture or kill the monster. In order to lure the creature out into the open a lone juve is used as bait, the rest of the gang either trapping it with web pistols or blasting it with a lascannon, dependant on how greedy they are or how desperate they are to see it dead!