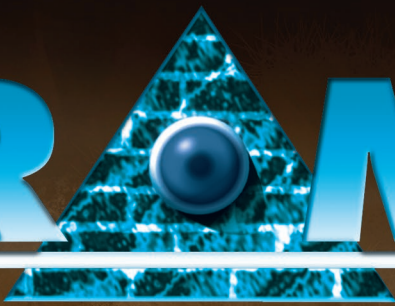


PYRAMID[®]



Issue 3/82 August '15

MAGICAL CREATIONS



DUNGEON BREWMASTERS
by Jason "PK" Levine

EIGHT ARTIFACTS
by David L. Pulver

THE SORCERER
by Antoni Ten Monrós

THE HUNTER'S RELIQUARY
by Christopher R. Rice

INSTRUMENTS OF ENCHANTMENT
by Jon Black

MORE CHARMS
by Antoni Ten Monrós

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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This issue of *Pyramid* may seem unassuming . . . but it has secrets and mysteries, tricks and enticements. Behold – it is a *magical creation!* And its contents are sure to delight and amaze you.

Our magic show begins with Jason "PK" Levine's guide to *Dungeon Brewmasters*. With these rules, your *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* heroes can prepare powerful potions. Create a master of elixirs with the new alchemist lens and power-ups, expand into the realm of herbs and poisons, and more!

Or perhaps you're an experimental sort and want to use the latest *GURPS* creation – *GURPS Thaumatology: Sorcery* – with your *Dungeon Fantasy* campaign. If so, become *The Sorcerer* you yearn to be, with frequent *Pyramid* contributor Antoni Ten Monrós' new sorcerer template and power-ups. It also offers two new *Sorcery* spells, suitable for zapping adversaries.

You need more magical items crafted by a master? No problem! *GURPS Psi-Tech* author David L. Pulver proudly presents *Eight Artifacts*, an assortment of objects (and a potion) that were part of his *GURPS Fantasy* campaign. Do you dare open the Bottle of White Death, or quaff Jared's Potion of Immortality?

For the champions of *GURPS Monster Hunters*, any edge can prove invaluable when fighting The Enemy. When a magical boost means the difference between life and death, you need *The Hunter's Reliquary*. This mini-supplement from prolific *Pyramid* penman Christopher R. Rice defines what a relic is in *Monster Hunters* and gives a half-dozen sample relics, from the Grand Grimoire to the Eternal Peacemaker.

If you're looking to enhance your aural repertoire, *Instruments of Enchantment* will be music to your ears. Building off information from the *GURPS Low-Tech* series and incorporating *GURPS Thaumatology* ideas of affinities and enchantment, this guide to musical instruments includes six magical music-makers!

For those who need an extra edge while adventuring underground, we present to you *More Charms*, a short-and-sweet *Dungeon Fantasy* Appendix Z. Spend your hard-earned gold on new goodies to keep you alive for another delve . . .

This issue also provides a Random Thought Table that transforms *ideas* into magic items, and an Odds and Ends that offers other goodies that couldn't fit elsewhere *plus* a behind-the-scenes look at Brandon Moore's new beautiful cover. All of this and more awaits you in this masterfully created *Pyramid*. How do we cram so much goodness in here? It's *magic*.

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

COVER AND INTERIOR ART
Brandon Moore

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FROM THE EDITOR

Niche protection is important in most roleplaying games. Having something that your hero can do better – or at least in a cool and different way – prevents being overshadowed.

Magical creations are a great way to carve out niche protection. Two fighters who are otherwise identical stat-wise can be differentiated if one has a cool magic sword and the other has awesome magic armor. (The 1983 *Dungeons & Dragons* cartoon took this to an amazing degree, with each of the main cast wielding a unique magic item.)

Magical creations are also a quick way to tweak balance and niche protection in play. While spending character points in a suboptimal fashion might result in a hero who can't quite keep up with his adventuring compatriots, a magic item that fills in a character-concept hole or shores up some uniqueness can work like . . . well, *magical*.

This issue is devoted to magical creations of all sorts. They can form the basis of an adventure, a neat reward, or a way to differentiate heroes. Or perhaps the magical creations come from the *heroes*; bringing magical ideas to life is at least as much fun for players as it is for the GM! Regardless of where

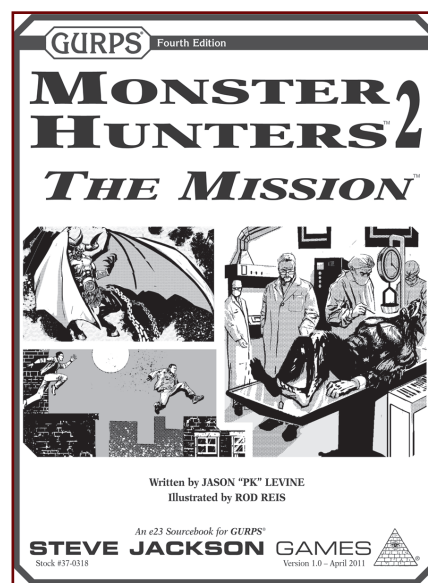
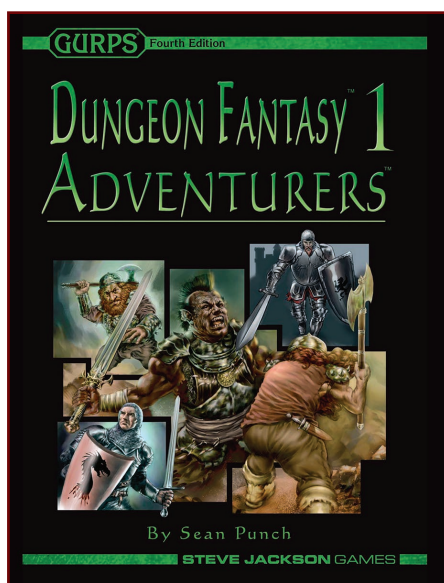
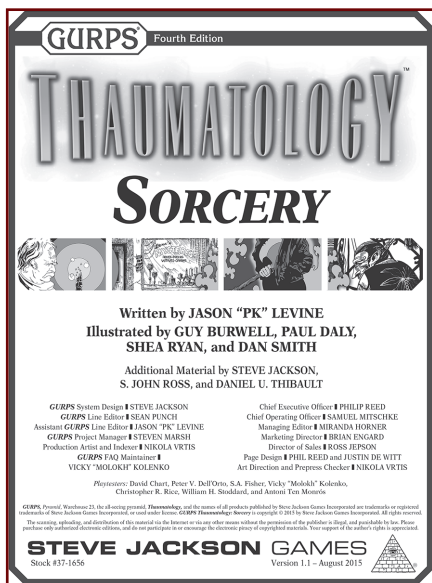
or how you use this material, there's certain to be something useful herein.

OTHER CONJURATIONS

In addition to offering a new use for the fresh-off-the-virtual-presses *GURPS Thaumatology: Sorcery* (see pp. 9-13), this issue also has a fresh new cover from artist Brandon Moore. Check out Odds and Ends on p. 35 for a sneak peek at how it came to be (along with something else *magical*).

WRITE NOW, RIGHT NOW

So how extraordinary were our creations this month? Was it a *hat trick* of awesomeness, or did some of the magic need a bit more spark? (And how phenomenal is that cover?!) Although we can read your mind, it's easier – and more fun – if you let us know yourself what you're thinking, via private feedback to pyramid@sjgames.com, or amid the mystical community at forums.sjgames.com.



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DUNGEON BREWMASTERS

BY JASON “PK” LEVINE

GURPS Dungeon Fantasy has traditionally left crafting to the NPCs, because “I take four months of downtime to enchant this item” is a great way to kill the pacing of a dungeon crawl. *Concoctions* – the chemicals, natural preparations, poisons, and potions that so many delvers rely upon – are an exception to this rule. *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 16: Wilderness Adventures* covers using Herb Lore and Poisons to create natural balms and toxins. But to date, the only rules for brewing *alchemical* elixirs require both Quick Gadgeteer and Gizmos (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 4: Sages*, p. 4)!

The following guidelines allow non-artificers to use *Alchemy* for more than just identifying potions – and “power up” the artificers with even *more* options. Now it’s easy to add “potioncraft” to the list of things a delver can be awesome at. Whether it’s a hero’s entire shtick (as for the alchemist, pp. 6-7) or just something he does on the side, supplying the party with potent drafts is a great way to keep them alive in the face of danger.

CREATING CONCOCTIONS

Alchemy allows the delver to brew any *chemical* or *potion*. For examples of both, see pp. 28-29 of *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 1: Adventurers*. Either can be classified as one of the following:

- **Stable.** This will keep forever if treated properly. Prices found in *Dungeon Fantasy* books assume stable concoctions created by NPC crafters using huge, expensive, dedicated workshops. In contrast, anything brewed by a PC using these rules is a “field-expedient” creation; it may last as long and work as well as a “proper” potion, but it’s cloudy instead of clear, it fizzes and smokes a bit, it separates and must be shaken before use, and so on. Because of this, the PC cannot resell it for more than 10% of list price.

- **Unstable.** Anything brewed on the spot with Quick Gadgeteer is even *more* obviously jury-rigged and loses its potency after just 24 hours. Basically, it’s designed to be used *now* and cannot be resold, as the potential buyer can see the concoction slowly breaking down before his very eyes!

Stable creations require *Off-Camera Brewing* (p. 6) or *Standard Brewing* (below) – the only options available for most delvers. A Quick Gadgeteer may choose to make an unstable concoction instead, using *Fast Brewing* (p. 5) if he has a few minutes to set up a lab or *Instant Brewing* (p. 5) to

do so instantly by expending a Gizmo. For everything except off-camera brewing, the brewer’s *Alchemy* skill is modified for the type of lab (p. 5) used, from -10 for no proper equipment to 0 for a full workshop.

When attempting standard brewing – or fast brewing if both participants are Quick Gadgeteers – the crafter may be assisted by someone else who knows *Alchemy*. The assistant rolls first, against *unmodified* skill; don’t apply bonuses or penalties for the concoction, gear, haste, etc. (*Personal* modifiers, such as from fatigue, still apply.) His result modifies the brewer’s *Alchemy* roll using the standard rules for a complementary skill: -2 for critical failure, -1 for failure, +1 for success, and +2 for critical success.

Standard Brewing

Anyone with *Alchemy* skill can attempt to brew a stable chemical or potion. This requires exotic ingredients, different for each recipe, that cost 20% of the product’s normal sale value. For example, an agility potion (\$700 retail) requires \$140 worth of “agility potion ingredients.” Ingredients weigh 1 lb. per \$100. The GM may allow harvested monster parts, rare plants, etc., to count toward some or all of this requirement; for advice here, see *Naturally Occurring Loot (Wilderness Adventures*, p. 44) or *The Material Difference* (in *Pyramid* #3/66: *The Laws of Magic*).

Brewing takes a full day, either in Town or camped out on the road. Anyone can produce a *chemical* in just four hours for an extra -5 to skill, but only a Quick Gadgeteer can similarly rush a *potion*. If the delver is willing to spend multiple days working on the project, he gets +1 for two days of work, +2 for four days, +3 for one week, +4 for two weeks, and +5 for four weeks. (Though the +5 is rarely worth the \$600 required to board in Town for that long!)

At the end of this time, roll against *Alchemy*, modified for lab quality and at -1 for every \$100 (or fraction thereof) of the retail price (e.g., -7 for that agility potion). Then consult *Results* (p. 6).

Eh, Close Enough

If the brewer has ingredients for a *different* potion, he may treat them as half value for the purpose of making *this* potion. For example, a brewer with \$140 of agility potion ingredients who uses them to make a flight potion can treat them as \$70 worth of flight potion ingredients.

If, after pooling together his collection of ingredients, the delver *still* doesn't have enough, he may take an hour and attempt a Scrounging roll to "fill in the blanks" with useful components. (He may substitute a *Per*-based Naturalist roll, if better, when outside.) Success allows unpenalized creation of the concoction; critical success finds something amazing that gives +2 to the subsequent Alchemy roll. Failure ruins all existing ingredients and produces nothing; critical failure is as under *Results* (p. 6)!

Modifiers: 0 in Town; -5 in a dungeon; (1d-7) in the arctic, desert, or mountains; (2d-7) in any *other* outdoor setting. -1 for every *full* 5% of ingredients that you're missing (e.g., if you need \$140 for the agility potion, every \$7 you're missing inflicts -1) to as low as -20 for a completely improvised concoction. -5 to spend only 30 minutes searching; you may not take extra time for a bonus.

Simplified Ingredients

As an optional rule, the GM may declare that all alchemical ingredients are interchangeable; e.g., a brewer buys "\$140 of exotic ingredients," not "\$140 of agility potion ingredients." If so, each concoction requires 30% of its value in these ingredients instead of 20%.

Fast Brewing

A Quick Gadgeteer may brew an unstable chemical or potion in just 1d×5 minutes, regardless of value. At the end of this time, he rolls against Alchemy at -1 for every \$250 (or fraction thereof) of the retail price, modified for lab quality and dwindling ingredients (see below). Then consult *Results* (p. 6).

Technically, the brewing does require ingredients, but it's assumed that the gadgeteer is improvising with whatever he's stuffed into the backpack with his lab. As these unspecified ingredients run out, it becomes harder to create things: add a cumulative -1 to all brewing rolls for every *two* brewing attempts (succeed or fail) until he has a chance to restock his bag.

Restocking requires access to a fairly large area (the wilderness, a *large* cave system, or the area in and around Town); either a lack of serious threats *or* enough bodyguards to protect you completely while you work; and a successful *Per*-based Naturalist or Scrounging roll. Success eliminates -1 of the "low ingredients" penalty, plus another -1 for every two full points of success.

Modifiers: 0 around Town; -5 in a dungeon; (1d-7) in the arctic, desert, or mountains; (2d-7) in any *other* outdoor setting. -10 for an instant roll ("Why, here are the exact minerals I needed!"); -5 if you spend 30 minutes restocking; 0 for an hour; +1 for two hours; +2 for four hours; +3 for eight hours; +4 for the entire day, sunup to sundown. Alternatively, a use of Serendipity allows one instant roll with no haste penalty.

Other party members can assist. Roll against each person's best skill, *unmodified* except for personal modifiers (e.g., fatigue) and -2 unless he knows either Alchemy or Thaumatology. This adds -2 to the *brewer's* roll for each critical failure, -1 for each failure, +1 for

each success, and +2 for each critical success; however, the total bonus cannot exceed +4.

Instant Brewing

A brewer with Quick Gadgeteer *and* Gizmos may use a Gizmo to mix a concoction on the spot. He still needs some sort of lab, but unlike the two options above, he doesn't need to have it out and unpacked, just on him. Assume he simply reaches in, regardless of where it's hanging on his body, and grabs exactly what he needs.

This takes a single Ready maneuver – or a free action, with a successful Fast-Draw (Gadget *or* Potion) roll – and requires a roll against Alchemy, modified for lab quality and at -1 for every \$250 (or fraction thereof) of retail price. Then consult *Results* (p. 6).

Instant mixing does *not* take a penalty for dwindling ingredients (*Fast Brewing*, above), nor does it worsen any such penalty. The "use" of a Gizmo replaces the need to track ingredients.

NEW EQUIPMENT

For the weapons below, grenade elixirs go off on any successful hit, but poisons, drinkable potions, etc. take effect only if damage penetrates DR.

Bolas, Breakable. A bolas with one weighted end and one end designed to attach to a small bottle. When successfully thrown around a foe, the bottle breaks against the weighted end and releases the elixir. If thrown with a missing or empty bottle, treat as a bola perdida (*GURPS Low-Tech*, pp. 72, 76), which uses Sling skill. Cost and weight include one small bottle (below), which must be replaced each time. \$30, 2 lbs.

Bolt, Syringe. A crossbow bolt with an oversized glass tip which can hold a dose of elixir. Damage is -2 and piercing instead of impaling. Not reusable. \$5, 0.1 lb.

Bottle, Small (Adventurers, p. 24). This bottle can be thrown (with Throwing) or used with Sling skill at no penalty (treat it as a sling stone with a (0.2) armor divisor). \$2, 0.5 lb.

Labs

The backpack lab and workshop can be made fine (+1 to skill for all purposes) for +4 CF or very fine (+2 to skill) for +19 CF. Without *at least* the basic kit, Alchemy is at -10 for brewing or -5 for any other use.

Backpack Alchemy Lab (Adventurers, p. 26). Small beakers, vials, droppers full of strange substances, and more. Allows brewing with Alchemy at -2. Other uses, such as identifying potions, are at no penalty. \$1,000, 10 lbs.

Basic Alchemy Kit. A two-part beaker and combination stirrer/dropper. Better than nothing! Allows brewing with Alchemy at -5 or other uses at -2. \$50, 0.5 lb.

Full Alchemy Workshop. Massive collection of gear, usually left in a room in Town. It *can* be carried and set up on a stationary wagon, but it takes 10 hours to set up *or* pack back up, and will break if the vehicle moves while it's set up. Allows brewing at no penalty; gives +1 to any other use of Alchemy. \$2,000, 200 lbs.

Results

Critical Success: For a stable concoction, *two* doses are created instead of one. For an unstable concoction, it lasts 2d days (instead of just 24 hours).

Success: The chemical or potion is created as expected.

Failure: The ingredients are used up, but nothing is created.

Critical Failure: As for failure, plus *either* the brewer and any assistant are subjected to the elixir's effects (if harmful – or reverse the effects of a helpful potion) *or* it explodes beautifully for 3d crushing explosive damage (they may dodge for cover or distance) and attracts a lot of attention. The GM decides which.

Off-Camera Brewing

Delvers in Town can acquire “ready-to-use mixes” at 20% under list price. However, putting the mix together requires an Alchemy roll; don't apply *any* external modifiers, even for lab quality! Success produces the chemical or potion, but failure requires obtaining further ingredients to fix the problem; these add 30% to the concoction cost, for a net 110% of normal price. (This is simply the rule from p. 3 of *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons.*)

Other Types of Brews

While Quick Gadgeteer shares the most synergy with Alchemy, it can also speed up the use of Herb Lore and Poisons. See “Boil and Bubble” and *Poisons* in *Wilderness Adventures*, pp. 44-45, for game mechanics.

Standard Brewing (Herb Lore or Poisons): A brewer with Quick Gadgeteer can speed up either one, taking -5 to skill to create a healing potion in four hours *or* a poison in 30 minutes.

Fast Brewing (Herb Lore): A Quick Gadgeteer may create unstable healing potions in just 1d×5 minutes, otherwise using the standard “Boil and Bubble” rules. This option is *not* available for natural preparations (including healing kits), as there is no such thing as an “unstable natural preparation.”

Fast Brewing (Poisons): Quick Gadgeteer allows unstable poisons to be created via fast brewing. This takes 1d×5 minutes. If an alchemy lab is available, the brewer may decide whether to apply the foraging modifier *or* scrounge from his lab and accept the “dwindling ingredient” penalty. Otherwise, follow the standard poison-crafting rules.

Instant Brewing (Herb Lore or Poisons): Quick Gadgeteer plus Gizmos allows the *instant* creation of an unstable poison or healing potion – *or* a *one-time* use of a natural preparation (e.g., an herbal bouquet which acts as a druidic healer's kit) which must be utilized immediately. Use the standard creation rules, but ignore any foraging penalty (as the “use” of the Gizmo replaces the need to gather); any foraging *bonus* still applies.

ALCHEMIST

0 points

This is a lens for the artificer (*Sages*, p. 5). It trades engineering ability for alchemical specialization.

Pick the brewing method that best suits your equipment, ingredients, and time.

Advantages: Replace the first list of mandatory advantages with Dungeon Artificer 4 [20]; Equipment Bond (Backpack Alchemy Lab) [1]; Gizmos 3 (Accessibility, Concoctions, -20%) [12]; Quick Gadgeteer (Specialized, Concoctions, -50%) [25] *and* Signature Gear (Backpack Alchemy Lab) [2]. • Add an *extra* 15 points chosen from among Acute Smell/Taste [2/level], Alcohol Tolerance [1], Fearlessness [2/level], Formulary (any; see p. 7) [1/level], or more Gizmos (Accessibility, Concoctions, -20%) [4/gizmo]. • In the 40-point list of advantages, add Danger Sense [15] and replace Gizmos with Gizmos (Accessibility, Concoctions, -20%) [4/gizmo].

Disadvantages: Remove Compulsive Inventing. • Raise the required points in the first disadvantage list from -20 to -25, and add Magic Susceptibility [-3/level], Missing Digit [-2 or -5], One Eye [-15], and Weirdness Magnet [-15] to the choices.

Primary Skills: Raise Alchemy to Alchemy (VH) IQ+5 [12]-18*. • Replace Engineer (Gadgets) with Hazardous Materials (Magical) (A) IQ [2]-13.

Secondary Skills: Replace this entire section with the following: Poisons (H) IQ-1 [2]-12; Research (A) IQ-1 [1]-12; Traps (A) IQ+3 [1]-16*; and Thaumatology (VH) IQ-1 [4]-12.

• *Either* Staff (A) DX+1 [4]-14 *or* both Shield (Buckler) (E) DX+1 [2]-14 and *one* of Broadsword, Rapier, Shortsword, or Smallsword, all (A) DX [2]-13. • *One* of Bolas (A) DX+1 [4]-14; Crossbow (E) DX+2 [4]-15; or Sling (H) DX [4]-13.

• *Either* Throwing (A) DX+2 [8]-15 *or* both Throwing (A) DX+1 [4]-14 *and* a second ranged-weapon choice from the previous list.

Background Skills: Remove Hazardous Materials (Magical).

• Add the following choices: Brawling (E) DX [1]-13; Gesture (E) IQ [1]-13; Herb Lore† (VH) IQ-3 [1]-10; Naturalist (H) IQ-2 [1]-11; Pharmacy (Herbal)† (H) IQ-2 [1]-11; spend 1 point for +1 to any background skill; *or* trade *two* background skills to raise Poisons to (H) IQ [4]-13.

* Includes +4 for Dungeon Artificer.

† Requires Naturalist prerequisite.

Customization Notes

Much like the bard, the alchemist is a good choice for the player who wants to act in a support role for the party. This character is strongest from the back, where he can lob (or shoot, sling, etc.) grenades into the melee ahead and administer healing potions to the wounded. Gizmos keep this character combat-capable, but don't neglect general brewmastery; pick one or two key concoctions to specialize in via Formulary (p. 7). Alchemists who forgo Wealth should trade in some of the points from their quirks for cash to buy decent armor as well as spare small bottles and crystal vials; any leftover points can go toward improving skills. Remember that Fast-Draw (Gadget) covers concoctions as well.

Alchemist Lens

+50 points

This variant of the artificer lens (*Sages*, p. 7) is more reasonably priced, fitting the standard 50-point mold. If any skills overlap with existing ones, combine points when possible (e.g., if you already have Throwing (A) DX [2], the 2 points from this lens will raise it another level). Any leftover points can be spent on secondary skills from the general alchemist lens above.

Advantages: Dungeon Artificer 2* [10]; Equipment Bond (Backpack Alchemy Lab) [1]; Gizmos 1 (Accessibility, Concoctions, -20%) [4]; Quick Gadgeteer (Specialized, Concoctions, -50%) [25]; Signature Gear (Backpack Alchemy Lab) [2].

Skills: Alchemy (VH) IQ-1 [4]; Fast-Draw (Gadget) (E) DX [1]; Scrounging (E) Per [1]; Throwing (A) DX [2].

* Gives +2 to Alchemy, Armoury, Engineer (Gadgets), Fast-Draw (Gadget), Scrounging, and Traps.

ALCHEMIST POWER-UPS

The alchemist has access to the following power-ups.

- Up to three Formulary perks (below). In addition, the alchemist may “trade in” points spent on these to help offset the cost of raising Alchemy. For example, an alchemist with three Formulary perks could lower each by one level, recouping three points, and then spend those plus one earned character point to raise Alchemy one level. (With Toxicity Training, p. 8, he may do the same for Poisons.)

- Dungeon Artificer [5/level] up to 6.
- Gizmos (Accessibility, Concoctions, -20%) [4/gizmo] with *no* upper limit.

- Resistant to Poison (+3) [5] *or* (+8) [7].
- Ridiculous Luck [60].
- Serendipity [15/level] with *no* upper limit.
- The artificer power-ups Improvisation, Potion Implant, and Spellsmith; see *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 11: Power-Ups*. Adding Spellsmith results in a Quick Gadgeteer who can work with concoctions *and* magical items, but not normal gear.

- The assassin power-up perks Bane Brewer, Combat Poisoner, Poison Mixer, and Practical Poisoner; see *Power-Ups for Assassins* (from *Pyramid* #3/50: *Dungeon Fantasy II*).

- The Retroactive Poisoning perk; see *More Power to Dungeon Warriors* (from *Pyramid* #3/61: *Way of the Warrior*).

In addition, the following power-ups are unique to alchemists, though the GM *may* allow them to other alchemically trained delvers such as wizards or other artificers.

Brewer's Eye

12 points

You can recognize almost any concoction after studying it for a minute and then rolling against the *higher* of IQ or the brewing skill for that concoction (if any). Success means you figure out exactly what it is and what it does, even if you've never heard of it before now. Failure just tells you the basics (e.g., “it's a contact poison”). Critical failure does the same, but you also get some on yourself (if bad) or drop it; GM's call.

This isn't as fast as tasting the brew (*Dungeons*, p. 14), but it's *much* safer!

Advantages: Detect (Concoctions; Analysis Only, -50%; Analyzing, +100%; Immediate Preparation Required, 1 minute, -30%) [12].

ALCHEMICAL TRAITS

Dedicated brewers (like the alchemist, pp. 6-7) rely on Quick Gadgeteer and Gizmos, often with the limitations below. And *anyone* using Alchemy should consider buying a Formulary for a few favored (or most difficult) concoctions.

Quick Gadgeteer

Specialized: Your Quick Gadgeteer applies only when you're creating gadgets *or* concoctions; choose which when taking this limitation. -50%.

Gizmos

Accessibility, Concoctions: You can use your Gizmos only for instant brewing (p. 5) and *Other Types of Brews*, p. 6) or to specify that you're carrying an existing potion, poison, etc. -20%.

Formulary

This is an leveled perk which must be specialized in a single, specific chemical or potion. Each level (maximum 10) gives +1 to Alchemy for analyzing, creating, or handling that concoction, but *only* for the purpose of offsetting penalties; it cannot raise the final roll above your base skill. For example, Formulary 6 (Agility Potion) [6] would negate up to -6 in penalties to Alchemy (from the potion itself, poor gear, working quickly, etc.) when analyzing or creating an agility potion.

Never take more than three of these; with four or more, you're better off just raising Alchemy skill.

Draught of Power

22 points/level

Prerequisite: Alchemy at IQ+1.

Similar to Gizmo, once per session per level of this advantage, you can take a Ready maneuver (which Fast-Draw (Gadgets) may obviate) to produce and quaff a special potion that imbues you with wizardly power. Immediately after drinking it, you can cast *any* one wizardly spell, ignoring all prerequisites! For example, you could cast Wither Limb (p. B244) having no Magery and no knowledge of Paralyze Limb. The potion only works for you, not others.

Use your IQ as the spell level – plus Magery, *if* you happen to have it. You must pay the spell's standard energy cost, reduced as usual for an effective spell level of 15+. The potion grants you the *ability* to cast the spell; it doesn't power it! It also doesn't grant you Magery, even temporarily, which makes most Missile spells useless; e.g., with no Magery, you can cast only a 0d Fireball.

Your Draught of Power level is limited to half of your relative Alchemy level, rounded up. That is, Alchemy at IQ+1 or IQ+2 allows Draught of Power 1, Alchemy at IQ+3 or IQ+4 allows Draught of Power 2, and so on.

Advantages: Wild Talent (Accessibility, Wizardly spells, -10%; Focused, Magical, -20%; No Advantage Requirements, +50%; Requires Ready, -10%) [22/level].

Charms? Homunculi?

For balance reasons, PC delvers should not be able to make alchemical amulets or talismans (*GURPS Magic*, p. 220), as this crosses into the line of “making permanent enchanted items” and is thus restricted to NPCs only. And everything under *Exotic Preparations* (p. 37 and *GURPS Magic*, pp. 220-221) is intended to be rare and special, which precludes any rules appearing *here* – knowledge of such things is a fitting reward for the end of a challenging story arc, at which point the GM can set its difficulty.

Litmus Test

11 points

When using Alchemy to identify a magical item (*Dungeons*, p. 14), you can do so *instantly*, by simply pulling out some pretreated swabs and seeing what colors they turn when you hold them to (or near) the item. This incurs no penalty past the usual -2.

Perks: Efficient (Alchemy) [1]; Unique Technique (Speed Analysis) [1].

Techniques: Speed Analysis (H) Alchemy-2 [9].

Mixology

Variable

Most alchemists focus on potions and elixirs, but you’ve spread out into herbs, poisons, or both! Choose one of the following:

- *Mixology (Herb Lore)* adds your Dungeon Artificer level to your Herb Lore skill. Its cost in character points equals your Dungeon Artificer level.

- *Mixology (Poisons)* adds your Dungeon Artificer level to your Poisons skill. Its cost in character points equals your Dungeon Artificer level.

- *Mixology (Herb Lore and Poisons)* adds your Dungeon Artificer level to your Herb Lore *and* Poisons skills. Its cost in character points equals *twice* your Dungeon Artificer level.

Example: Missavan has Dungeon Artificer 3 [15] and wants to be great at all three brewing skills, so she takes *Mixology (Herb Lore and*

Poisons) [6]. Now *Dungeon Artificer* gives its +3 to her Herb Lore and Poisons skill as well as its usual skill list.

You may always upgrade from either single-skill *Mixology* to the dual-skill version by paying the difference. If you later raise your *Dungeon Artificer* level, you must also pay for the corresponding increase in *Mixology*’s cost.

Advantages: *Dungeon Artificer* adds Herb Lore and/or Poisons to its list of skills, using the rules for alternative Talent costs from *GURPS Power-Ups 3: Talents*, for a net +1/level (or +2/level for both) to its cost.

Toxicity Training

1 point

This perk represents formal alchemical training in making poisons. You may learn *Formulary* perks (p. 7) for poisons. You may also use your alchemy lab to create them; this gives +1 to skill when using a backpack alchemy lab or +2 when using a full alchemy workshop (plus any bonus for high quality), but you must use the *lower* of Alchemy or Poisons. For more on crafting poisons, see *Other Types of Brews* (p. 6).

The lack of a corresponding Herb Lore perk is *intentional*. Herbal brews do not benefit from formal training!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Reverend Jason “PK” Levine mastered the Philosopher’s Stone many years ago, which is why he looks so young . . . so please ignore those rumors about him bathing in infant blood every new moon. As the Assistant *GURPS* Line Editor, he has crafted many a bizarre concoction, including *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 5: Allies* and part of *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 10: Taverns* (with Loren K. Wiseman). His current magical brewery is in Chattanooga, where he defies the laws of reality with his wonderful wife and annoying cats. He’d like to thank Sean “Dr. Kromm” Punch for advice in the creation of this article.

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THE SORCERER

BY ANTONI TEN MONRÓS

The *GURPS* magic systems (as presented in *GURPS Magic* and *GURPS Thaumatology*) mainly concern themselves with *learned* magic. Even if it requires some degree of inborn capability (normally represented as the Magery advantage) these systems mostly rely on knowledge gained study (normally represented as special skills). The Sorcery system turns this around, presenting a magic system that is inborn, where the practitioners are limited, not by their knowledge, but by their raw power. It first appeared in *The Power of Sorcery* from *Pyramid* #3/63: *Infinite Worlds II*, and was further refined in *GURPS Thaumatology: Sorcery*.

These guidelines adapt Sorcery to *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*, offering a number of rules tweaks and recommended optional mechanics, plus a template to introduce sorcerers into your *kill-them-and-take-their-stuff* games. The rules presented here assume that the reader has access to *Sorcery*, but those with access only to the original *Pyramid* article can use the rules presented there instead. Having both will expand your spell options; see *Fire Spells From The Power of Sorcery* (p. 13).

Now you can add *innate* magic to your *Dungeon Fantasy* campaign!

THE SORCERER

250 points

Magic is in your blood. Others might be born with a little bit of magic in them, and so must struggle with long study of moldy books to manifest it, but to you, it's as natural as breathing. Maybe you were born on a particularly auspicious day, or maybe one of your ancestors was something *other* – who knows? Other spellcasters might look at you with a mix of suspicion and envy, either believing that you are a loose cannon who has not worked hard enough for the power he wields, or something to be dissected and studied.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 12 [40]; IQ 12 [40]; HT 12 [20].

Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 12 [0]; Per 12 [0]; FP 12 [0]; Basic Speed 6.00 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0].

Advantages: Sorcerous Empowerment 6 [70] and Sorcery Talent 3 [30]. • 25 points in sorcery spells; put leftovers into other advantages. • A further 40 points chosen from additional sorcery spells or DX +1 or +2 [20 or 40], IQ +1 or +2 [20 or 40], HT +1 to +4 [10/level], Per +1 to +5 [5/level], Will +1 to +5 [5/level], Eidetic Memory [5]

or Photographic Memory [10], Empathy [15], Gizmos 1 or 2 [5 or 10], Language Talent [10], Languages (any) [2-6/language], Luck [15] or Extraordinary Luck [30], Mind Shield [4/level], Signature Gear [Varies], Sorcery Talent 4-6 [10/level], Spirit Empathy [10], Voice [10], or Wealth (Comfortable or Wealthy) [10 or 20].

Disadvantages: -30 points chosen from among Bad Temper [-10*], Disturbing Voice [-10], Frightens Animals [-10], Megalomania [-10]; Obsession (Any related to magic or to the discovery of lineage) [-5* or -10*], Overconfidence [-5*], Overweight [-1] or Fat [-3] or Skinny [-5], Paranoia [-10]; Pyromania [-5*], Secret (A particularly horrible magical lineage)† [-5] or Social Stigma (Excommunicated)‡ [-10], Unfit [-5] or Very Unfit [-15], Unnatural Features 1-5 [-1/level], or Weirdness Magnet [-15]. • Another -20 points chosen from among the previous traits or Absent-Mindedness [-15], Curious [-5*], Clueless [-10], Combat Paralysis [-15], Cowardice [-10*], Loner [-5*], Low Pain Threshold [-10], Oblivious [-5], Post-Combat Shakes [-5*], Phantom Voices [-5 to -15]; Sense of Duty (Adventuring companions) [-5], Stubbornness [-5] or Trickster [-15*].

Primary Skills: Innate Attack (any) (E) DX+4 [12]-16. • One of Brawling (E) DX+4 [12]-16; Shield (Buckler) (E) DX+2 [4]-14 and Smallsword (A) DX+2 [8]-14; or Staff (A) DX+3 [12]-15.

Secondary Skills: Hidden Lore (any magical) (A) IQ [2]-12 and Thaumatology (VH) IQ-2 [2]-10.

Background Skills: Seven of Crossbow or Thrown Weapon (Dart), both (E) DX [1]-12; Climbing or Stealth (A), both DX-1 [1]-11; Acrobatics (H) DX-2 [1]-10; Savoir-Faire (High Society), First Aid, or Gesture, all (E) IQ [1]-12; Animal Handling (any), Fast Talk, or Hazardous Materials (Magic), all (A) IQ-1 [1]-11; Diplomacy (H) IQ-2 [1]-10; Hiking (A) HT-1 [1]-11; Scrounging (E) Per [1]-12; or Observation or Search, both (A) Per-1 [1]-11.

* Multiplied for self-control number, see p. B120.

† The taint in your blood that grants you Sorcerous Empowerment is so reviled that if it becomes known, even the gods will turn their backs to you. Becomes Social Stigma (Excommunicated) when revealed; roll once every time you visit town.

‡ Means that helpful clerical spells (such as healing) work at -3 on you. Harmful ones *aren't* affected!

Customization Notes

You are in a category of your own, not counting yourself as either a “learned” or a “fit” delver. Sorcerous spells rival other delvers’ most powerful abilities and don’t even cost FP if you’re free to talk and gesture. They need to be powerful, because you can’t do much else.

Your choice of learned spells will be what defines your role in the party, since you won't have a large repertoire of flashy stunts. The key aspect that makes you different from the wizard (who can basically do the same tricks as you and has a much greater variety) is that you have a much greater endurance. Wizards tend to get winded fast after a big spell or two, while you can keep going. You should thus pick at least one Missile or Jet damaging spell to use as your standard attack.

The current selection of spells makes it tricky to be anything other than a fire mage or an unfocused generalist, but this is easy to fix. Any spell from **GURPS Magic** can serve as inspiration for a sorcerous spell, but remember that the GM is free to tweak any such builds to match his tastes.

However, don't be afraid to be a generalist. Since you don't have to deal with prerequisites, you can cherry-pick whatever effects you want to have. Finally, remember that *Improvised Magic* (**Sorcery**, pp. 6-8) will let you cast on the fly a wide range of spells, so you're never truly out of options.

Magical Lineage (below) can be a character defining power-up, with some lineages offering limited access to nonsorcerous mystical powers. They're definitively worth considering, as they let you cover the gaps left by the rather expensive sorcerous spells.

you may jump between spells as quickly as if you were casting them repeatedly. For most spells, this means a single Concentrate (or attack-enabling) maneuver; for those with longer casting times, you always use the shorter (e.g., 10 seconds for Create Object).

Advantage: Compartmentalized Mind (Only to switch the active sorcerous spell, -60%; No Mental Separation, -20%) [10].

Inextinguishable Power

5 points

Prerequisite: Sorcerous Empowerment 1+.

As the wizard power-up (**GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 11: Power-Ups**, pp. 36-37).

Magical Bolt

Variable

Prerequisite: Varies.

As the wizard power-up (**Dungeon Fantasy 11**, p. 37), but this is a sorcerous spell, and is subject to the *Alternative Rituals* rules (**Sorcery**, p. 7). Treat the caster's Sorcery Talent as Magery for prerequisites.

Magical Lineage

1 point

All sorcerers gain their power from the circumstances of their birth or from their ancestors. Usually, the exact origin is unknown. In your case, it's not. This power-up lets you buy traits that are normally off limits to you, at their usual costs. Depending on the precise traits that you develop, you might end up looking as inhuman as your ancestors. At the GM's option, sorcerers whose

appearance diverges greatly from their racial norm due to these traits can swap existing disadvantages for lowered appearance, Social Stigma (Monster) for Dragon-Touched and Social Stigma (Infernal) for Demon-Touched.

You can only have one magical lineage. Nonhuman sorcerers may not pick a Magical Lineage that matches their actual race.

Air-Touched

Your ascendants had an affair with air elementals.

Potential Advantages: DR 1-5 (Limited, Air and Weather, -40%; Mana Sensitive, -10%) [2.5 points/level]; Filter Lungs [5]; Flight (Lighter than Air, -10%; Mana Sensitive, -10%) [32]; Resistant to Metabolic Hazards (+3), (+8), or Immunity [10, 15, or 30]; Walk on Air (Lighter than Air, -10%; Mana Sensitive, -10%) [16].

Angel-Touched

One of your ancestors had a flirtation with a member of the celestial host.

BECOMING A SORCERER

Anybody can discover hidden power in his blood, but mastering that power is not easy. This lens represents the first step in such a quest towards self discovery.

Lens: Sorcerer

50 points

Advantages: Sorcerous Empowerment 2 [30]. • Spend 20 points on sorcery spells, Sorcery Talent or additional Sorcerous Empowerment.

SORCERER POWER-UPS

Sorcerers tend to spend most of their points on more Sorcerous Empowerment and sorcerous spells. They also can buy anything on their template, plus the following options:

- Additional Sorcery Talent [10/level] with *no* upper limit.
- Energy Reserve (Magical) 1-20 [3/level].
- Extra Attack 1 [25 points].
- Magic Resistance (Improved, +150%) [5/level] with *no* upper limit.
- Mana Enhancer 1 [50].
- Sorcerers, like wizards and other spellcasters, can acquire familiars. Those that let most casters purchase single-college Magery instead let *you* buy single-college Sorcery Talent (Granted by Familiar, -40%) [3/level].

Accelerated Casting

10 points

You have learned to quickly prepare your spells. It does *not* take you an extra second to switch to a new spell;

Potential Advantages: Divine Knack* [1]; Holy Blood† [1]; Resistant to Evil Supernatural Powers (+3) or (+8) [5 or 7]; Resistant to Metabolic Hazards (+3), (+8), or Immunity [10, 15, or 30]; Flight (Winged, -25%) [30]; See Invisible (Magical; Mana Sensitive, -10%; True Sight, +50%) [21]; Walk on Liquid [15].

* *Divine Knack:* This perk lets the angel-touched sorcerer learn and cast one particular clerical spell, ignoring Power Investiture prerequisites. If the character ever acquires Power Investiture, it provides its usual bonus. No angel-touched sorcerer can have more than three Divine Knacks.

† *Holy Blood:* Your undiluted blood, requiring at least 1 point of injury, damages creatures with vulnerability to holy water. It only deals 1 point of damage instead of 1d, and any creature injured by it suffers no damage from actual holy water until the weakness-exposure period has passed.

Demon-Touched

Your blood carries the taint of hell. You prefer not thinking on how it got there.

Potential Advantages: Blood Sorcery* [1]; Claws (Hooves, Sharp, or Talons) [3, 5, or 8]; DR 1-2 (Tough Skin, -40%) [3/level]; Flight (Winged, -25%) [30]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Night Vision 1-5 [1/level]; Resistant to Good Supernatural Powers (+3) or (+8) [5 or 7]; Resistant to Metabolic Hazards (+3), (+8), or Immunity [10, 15, or 30]; Striker (Horns; Impaling) [8]; Teeth (Sharp or Fangs) [1 or 2].

* *Blood Sorcery:* You can use HP instead of FP to fuel your sorcery. When you do so, you don't need to perform gestures or chant.

Dragon-Touched

A dragon, probably shapeshifted into human form, mingled with your forerunners, or maybe he experimented with them.

Potential Advantages: Breath Sorcery* [1]; Claws (Sharp) [5]; DR 1-4 (Tough Skin, -40%) [3/level]; Flight (Winged, -25%) [30]; Nictitating Membrane 1-5 [1/level]; Night Vision 1-5 [1/level]; Striker (Tail; Crushing) [5].

* *Breath Sorcery:* You can use Innate Attack (Breath) instead of Innate Attack (Beam) or Innate Attack (Projectile) to aim your Sorcery spells.

Earth-Touched

Your forefathers were enchanted by earth elementals.

Potential Advantages: DR 1-5 (Limited, Earth and Stone, -40%; Mana Sensitive, -10%) [2.5 points/level]; Permeation (Earth; Expanded, Stone, +20%; Mana Sensitive, -10%) [32]; Perfect Balance (Environmental, Earth and Rock, -40%) [9]; Resistant to Metabolic Hazards (+3), (+8), or Immunity [10, 15, or 30].

CANTRIPS

The following perks from *GURPS Power-Ups 2: Perks* and *Thaumatology: Magical Styles* are available as "cantrips" for anyone with Sorcerous Empowerment 1 or more to improvise. If purchased as learned spells, they are still subject to the normal rules for Sorcery, but any Sorcery user can maintain them indefinitely for free without needing to cancel other active sorcery effects.

Air: Air Jet* and Eye of the Storm†.

Body Control: Alcohol Tolerance* and Sanitized Metabolism*.

Communication and Empathy: Avatar† and Deep Sleeper*.

Earth: Burrower* and Striking Surface*.

Fire: Blistering Touch‡ and Puff of Smoke‡.

Food: Gut of the Dragon† and One Task Wonder (Housekeeping to cook)*.

Illusion and Creation: Accessory* (any small hand-held tool) and Intuitive Illusionist†.

Knowledge: Focused* and Magical Analysis†.

Light and Darkness: Illumination* and Periscope*.

Making and Breaking: Equipment Bond* and Reinforce†.

Mind Control: Controllable Disadvantage (any mental disadvantage)* and Patience of Job*.

Movement: Climbing Line* and Mystic Gesture†.

Necromantic: Brotherhood of Ghouls* and Corpse Smart†.

Protection and Warning: Spell Hardiness† and Spell Resistance†.

Sound: Extended Hearing* and Penetrating Voice*.

Water: Rinse* and Sure-Footed (Ice, Slippery, Snow, or Water)*.

* Found in *GURPS Power-Ups 2: Perks*.

† Found in *GURPS Thaumatology: Magical Styles*.

‡ New perk, detailed below.

New Perks

Blistering Touch: Your skin grows hot enough to discomfort and burn, yet it doesn't damage your gear. When you touch items or creatures, you may choose to deal 1 point of burning damage as a follow-up to the touch.

Puff of Smoke: You can exhale a one-yard radius puff of smoke with a loud belch. The puff lingers around you, and imposes -1 to hit you with melee and ranged attacks. It does not penalize your attacks, but it makes you obvious, giving opponents +1 to Vision rolls to notice you.

Elder-Touched

Your ancestors communed with the Things Man Was Not Meant To Know and survived long enough to sire descendants.

Potential Advantages: Injury Tolerance (No Blood, No Brain, No Neck and/or No Vitals) [Varies]; Resistant to Psionics [2/level]; Unusual Background (Psionic) [10]. You can also purchase Psionic abilities as described in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 14: Psi* but you can't purchase Psi Talent, making any abilities that require it off limits to you.

Elf-Touched

Your ancestors cavorted with the elves. While their blood is too thin in you to make you anything but your dominant race, it still gives you some of their grace and senses.

Potential Advantages: Acute Vision 1-5 [2/level]; Forest Guardian 1 [5]; Magery 0 [5]; Perfect Balance [15]; Telescopic Vision 1 or 2 [5 or 10]. You can learn wizardly spells as long as they require no more than Magery 0.

Fae-Touched

Your forebears frolicked with the fair folk, and their wild essence flows through your veins.

Potential Advantages: Animal Empathy [5]; Charisma 1-3 [5/level]; Elastic Skin (Glamour, Resisted by Will-5, -5%) [19]; Flight (Winged, -25%) [30] or (Mana-Sensitive, -10%; Small Wings, -10%) [32]; Ridiculous Luck [60].

Fate-Touched

You (or one of your ancestors) was born at a particularly auspicious moment, you are the seventh son of a seventh son . . . Whatever the details, Lady Luck has taken a liking to you.

Potential Advantages: Danger Sense [15]; Destiny* [Varies]; Higher Purpose (Any) [5]; Intuition [15]; Ridiculous Luck [60]; Serendipity [15].

* The GM with access to *GURPS Power-Ups 5: Impulse Buys* might want to use the *Destiny Points* variant described there instead of, or in addition to, the standard version.

Fire-Touched

One of your ancestors was not speaking figuratively when he spoke of an old flame.

Potential Advantages: DR 1-5 (Limited, Fire and Heat, -40%; Mana Sensitive, -10%) [2.5 points/level]; Filter Lungs [5]; Infravision [10]; Resistant to Metabolic Hazards (+3), (+8) or Immunity [10, 15, or 30] Scanning Sense (Active IR) [20]; Temperature Tolerance (Heat) 1-10 [1/level].

Water-Touched

Your primogenitors wallowed with the water elementals.

Potential Advantages: Amphibious [10]; DR 1-5 (Limited, Dehydration and Water, -40%; Mana Sensitive, -10%) [2.5 points/level]; Doesn't Breathe (Gills, Oxygen Absorption, or Oxygen Storage) [Varies]; Enhanced Move 1 (Water) [20]; Pressure Support [5, 10, or 15]; Slippery 1-5 [2/level]; Sonar [20].

SORCERY IN *DUNGEON FANTASY*

Sorcery is designed to mimic *GURPS Magic* in capability. In fact, most Sorcery spells are closely patterned around existing *GURPS Magic* spells. Wizards, as the main spellcasters in *Dungeon Fantasy*, have a number of limitations imposed on their magic in order to replicate the feel of source material that inspired it (see *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 1: Adventurers*, p. 20). It is only fair that sorcerers are subject to the same limitations.

This means that spells belonging to the Animal, Enchantment, Healing, Plant, and Weather colleges, plus any spells that permit teleportation or time manipulation are off limits to them. Additionally, *Dungeon Fantasy* assumes a mix of TL 3 and 4, meaning that some technology spells either don't exist or are less useful. This following spells from *Sorcery* are not available to sorcerers: Animal Control, Awaken Computer, Blight, Body of Wood, Enchant, Minor Healing, Predict Weather, Relieve Madness, Repel Animal, and Suspend Time. However, Cool (as an Air spell), Penetrating Weapon (as a short duration Making and Breaking spell), Planar Visit (as a Necromantic spell) and Preserve Fuel (subject to the limitations for low TL) are available normally.

Sorcery Power Modifier

In *Dungeon Fantasy*, the Sorcery power modifier makes abilities wizardly, subject to the same limitations as wizardly magic and wizardly abilities. They are affected by mana (see *Mana, Sorcery*, p. 23) and by countermeasures against wizardly magic (such as Dispel Magic). Additionally, *Alternative Rituals (Sorcery)*, p. 7) apply to all sorcerous spells, allowing sorcerers to avoid FP costs as long as they can perform physical gestures and chant arcane incantations.

Damage

Sorcery can deal large amounts of damage with negligible FP costs, making it a very attractive way to rain eldritch pain on your foes. The level of damaging spells is limited to the caster's Sorcery Talent and to 1d+1 damage per level.

Secret Teleportation Spell

28 points

Prerequisite: Sorcerous Empowerment costing at least 90 points.

As the wizard power-up (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 11: Power-Ups*, p. 37), but you must buy the Unusual Background (A-ha! I can teleport!) [10] separately, after which you may learn this as a sorcerous spell with a full cost of 90 points.

Sorcerous Mastery

Variable

You've reached such a mastery of the raw magic in you that you can focus on two spells prepared at once. This lets you maintain a spell while casting a different one. The cost of this power-up is the difference between the amount of points required to buy your most expensive sorcerous spell at full cost, and the amount you paid for it as an alternate ability. See *Simultaneous Spells (Sorcery)*, p. 8) for more details.

MORE SORCERY SPELLS

GURPS Thaumatology: *Sorcery* only includes two spells per college, and some of them are not suitable for *Dungeon Fantasy* sorcerers due to the limitations imposed on wizardly magic. *The Power of Sorcery* includes 20 more fire spells (see *Fire Spells From The Power of Sorcery* for notes on these). Pending further publications, this still leaves the sorcerer with a notably limited list of premade options. It is, however, simple for the enterprising GM to create new sorcerous spells, using the guidelines under *Inventing New Spells (Sorcery)*, p. 13).

In order to maintain the feel of *Dungeon Fantasy*, such spells should closely mimic wizardly spells. See *Sorcery in Dungeon Fantasy* (p. 12) for additional guidelines.

Since you can never have too many examples, here are two more sorcerous spells.

Lightning

Keywords: Missile, Obvious.

Full Cost: 11.5 points/level*.

Casting Roll: None. Use Innate Attack (Beam) to hit.

Range: 100 yards.

Duration: Instantaneous.

You fire a coruscating discharge of electricity that does 1d burning surge damage per level. Metallic armor counts as DR 1 against this attack, but nonmetallic armor protects normally. Targets struck by this attack must make an HT roll, at -1 per 2 points of penetrating damage, or be physically stunned. On subsequent turns, they can roll HT to recover. Lightning behaves unpredictably around conductors; see *Lightning (GURPS Magic, p. 196)* for more details.

Statistics: Burning Attack 1d (Nuisance Effect, Behaves erratically around conductors, -5%; Sorcery, -15%; Surge, Arcing, +100%; Side Effect, Stunning, +50%) [11.5/level].

* Calculate the total cost and then round up.

Mental Stun

Keywords: Resisted (Will).

Full Cost: 26 points.

Casting Roll: Will.

Range: Unlimited.

Duration: Instantaneous.

You project psychic white noise at your target, stunning him. Roll a Quick Contest between of Will between the sorcerer and his target, penalized by the range between them. Mind Shield adds to resistance against this spell. If the sorcerer wins, the target suffers mental stun. On subsequent

turns, he can recover normally by making an unpenalized IQ roll.

Statistics: Affliction 1 (Will; Based on Will, +20%; Malediction 2, +150%; Sorcery, -15%) [26].

FIRE SPELLS FROM THE POWER OF SORCERY

A few changes have occurred between the system presented in *The Power of Sorcery* and *Sorcery*, which require some slight modifications to the some of the Fire spells introduced in the former.

Cold, Create Fire, Explosive Fireball, Extinguish Fire, Fireball, Fireproof, Flame Jet, Heat, Phantom Flame, Rain of Fire, Seek Fire, Shape Fire, Slow Fire, and Smoke need no adjustment beyond replacing Magical, -10% and Costs Fatigue, 1 FP, -5% with Sorcery, -15%.

Deflect Energy, Resist Cold, Resist Fire, and Warmth need some adjustment to conform to the new Buffs rules. Buffs now must take Increased 1/2D, 10x, +15% and No Signature, +20%. This increases the full cost of each by 3 points.

Ignite Fire changed slightly when reprinted in *Sorcery*. Use the updated version in that supplement.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

From the hot lands of Valencia, Spain, Antoni Ten Monrós researches the arcane ways of obtaining a magical cooling device, also known as an air conditioner. This is the third time he has filled the pages of *Pyramid* with a *Dungeon Fantasy* template that adapts a new system of supernatural abilities to fantasy murder-hobboing. Getting here would not have been possible without the aid of his loyal team of proofreaders, notably Christopher R. "Ghostdancer" Rice, Emily "Bruno" Smirle, Colin "Panton41" Ritter, and Andrew "Pseudo" Fenton.

For another magic-filled article by Antoni Ten, see *More Charms* (p. 37).

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EIDETIC MEMORY

EIGHT ARTIFACTS

BY DAVID L. PULVER

I've always believed every magic item has its own story, and that uncovering the legend can provide plenty of opportunity for adventures – especially if people connected with the artifact's past come looking for it!

The following artifacts (and potion) originated in my fantasy campaign, but they are equally applicable for *GURPS Fantasy*, *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*, or *GURPS Banestorm* settings.

*What had I said?
What had I done when
I wore this crown? All I know
is, I never saw Betty again.*
– *Simon Petrikov/Ice King,
in Adventure Time*
#3.12

GRYPHON'S SHAFT

This is an arrow tipped with ivory carved into the likeness of the head of an eagle. It has a typical wooden shaft of good workmanship, but is fletched with griffin feathers; a Biology or Naturalist roll may be required to discern their origin.

This magical weapon was created by the elven enchanter Orothorn, who bound the spirit of his dying gryphon mount to create a magical weapon. It was lost after Orothorn was slain battling a dragon, and it may have ended up in the monster's treasure hoard.

If fired at a target closer than 20 yards distant, the arrow inflicts cutting rather than impaling damage, due to its shape. If fired in anger at a target at least 20 yards away, it transforms as it approaches the target, becoming a flying gryphon (p. B461)! Assume it transforms into the griffin form halfway

to the target. The creature will fly toward the foe normally on subsequent turns, assailing that foe and anyone who tries to stop the beast.

The gryphon's stats are normal except its attack roll is equal to the archer's Bow skill! Thus, if fired by an archer with Bow-17, the gryphon attacks as if it had Brawling-17.

The gryphon continues to fight until its foe is incapacitated, surrenders, or dies. Then it watches over the defeated enemy (or the body). It can turn back to an arrow if touched by its shooter or if knocked out during an engagement; if killed, the arrow breaks. Otherwise, the beast turns back into an arrow one minute after the fight ends.

It recovers 1 HP per hour when in arrow form.

REAPER

This is a long-handled scythe with a rune-carved blade. The blade and its wooden haft are carved with the words for death, life, and revenge in 13 different languages.

Reaper was created by the witch Lydia Soulbane for use as a weapon of vengeance in her crusade against several members of her own coven, who had betrayed her and murdered her mother. Its wooden haft was cut from a hangman's tree on which Lydia's mother was killed. Later on, after the weapon broke in an early battle, it was reforged and quenched in the blood of Lydia's own cousin, one of those who had turned against her. Lydia used the weapon's dark magic to animate each coven-member she slew and force them to fight by her side, which she considered justified against oath-breakers.

Following her blood-soaked rampage, Lydia put aside the deadly scythe and retired to a seaside home to start a family with the one she loved. Later in life, she took up Reaper once more, when a band of pirates attacked her coastal villa. She slew most of the sea-reavers, raising their corpses one by one to assist her in the battle – until, at the end of the battle, the blade turned in her hand, accidentally cutting down her betrothed. Her triumph turned to ashes, the despairing Lydia tossed the cursed blade off a cliff into the ocean and threw herself after it. But that was not the end of the story. Decades later, Reaper turned up, recovered from the belly of a sea monster, miraculously intact!

Reaper is a fine-quality scythe that was enchanted with Puissance and Accuracy spells to provide +2 to hit and damage rolls. Its shaft is magically treated and immune to rot or decay, and its blade will never rust. In addition, each time Reaper kills a sapient being, the wielder senses the blade's desire to release its magic, and if he so wishes, can raise the corpse as a zombie under his control. Doing this does not require a maneuver, but immediately costs 1 FP. However, unlike normal zombies, those made by Reaper do not last. They decay into puddles of goo within an hour after their creation.

Forged by death, blood, and betrayal, Reaper is also cursed. If the user critically fails an attack roll and a kinsman or friend is within the weapon's reach, the scythe instead hits that person! He can defend normally (but may be at -2 or worse due to surprise).

*It would stick to your weapons
... you must fight using your levels
only, with no magic items.*

– “Gummi Golem,”
**Munchkin 3 –
Clerical Errors**

LOVELY ORB OF TYMOA

This eyeball is 6" in diameter with a blue iris, sealed within a glass ball. It resembles a human eyeball but is far larger. The glass ball weighs 0.25 lbs. and, as a curiosity, would be worth \$1,000 to any collector. But those who are aware of its true story would find it an artifact of greater value!

Centuries ago, Tymoa was a cyclops who lived in the wilderness. She was in love with a handsome frost giant named Gulbrand. After several years of pining, Tymoa got up the courage to propose to Gulbrand and visited his cave. But when she arrived, she found him slain, killed by marauding adventurers. Grief-stricken, she carried him several miles to the Temple of Seven Gods to ask the high priest Ilarian to resurrect him. As was his way, especially when dealing with monsters, Ilarian demanded a steep price for this miracle: Gulbrand's weight in silver! Tymoa tried to acquire the requisite treasure in time, but fell short of the total haul. As a result, the high priest instead demanded something else: her eye. Tymoa accepted, and her love was successfully resurrected, but at the cost of never seeing his handsome face again. They lived happily ever after.

As for the eye, Ilarian presented it as an offering to the temple's gods, who in turn infused it with divine power, creating the relic known today as the Orb of Tymoa. This has the cosmic power to track down any being with whom the user is in love. The user need only speak the loved one's name while holding the orb and fixing the beloved's image in his mind, and then pay 2 FP for the orb to activate. It will then fly at a speed of 10 mph (Move 5) toward the loved one, or the loved one's body, should he be deceased. (The globe will maneuver around obstacles that get in its way, or hover in place if

trapped until a door or the like is opened; it will fly over water barriers.) Once the orb reaches a loved one, it scans its face and then attempts to fly into his grasp or land next to him if he doesn't have a hand free.

The Orb of Tymoa was kept within the Temple of Seven Gods for many years, occasionally being used by the priests to help locate missing loved ones. On the last of these quests, the priest failed to return from his mission, and the orb was lost. The temple's other clergy would pay well to retrieve it and discover their missing priest's fate.

THE SOUL DRUM OF NIKLOS THUNDERHAND

This item is a small drum of the sort used by some orcs and other tribal folk for signaling. Thus, it is a "talking drum" usually held under one arm and struck with the other hand, played with Musical Instrument (Tuned Drum) skill and audible on an ordinary Hearing roll at 32 yards. It weighs 4 lbs. and appears well-made but worth only about \$40. However, a careful Smell roll reveals a strange whiff of ozone about it. Close examination of the drumhead shows that it is made of human skin.

The drum is in fact a magical artifact of orcish construction, created by dark necromancy in the troubled borderlands during one of many wars fought between orcs and humans. One force that distinguished itself in combat against the orc tribes were the Lightning Lords, a contingent of hard-riding mercenary cavalry led by a holy warrior called Niklos Thunderhand, a paladin in service of a raging storm god. After winning several victories against the orcs, the Lightning Lords were finally lured into an ambush and destroyed by coalition of orc tribes brought together by the half-orc shaman Bavagorma Amberskull, a powerful necromancer. Niklos survived the battle, but, badly wounded, he was captured and dragged before the orc's leader. Niklos defiantly spat in the necromancer's eye rather than beg for mercy.

Amberskull decided there was much mana in his spirit. She had him skinned alive and used his skin to make the drum head. During the ritual of enchantment, she called down the divine spirit of the storm that had come to claim the worshiper's soul. Using her magics, she trapped the soul and the spirit and forced them into the drum, creating a mighty instrument of power.

The shaman used the enchanted drum for several years before giving it to one of her lieutenants, Dhazbog the Screamer, who then wielded it until he was slain during a struggle for control of a dungeon. The drum may still be somewhere in the dungeon's depths . . .

The drum's sound is always a deep bass that seems to reverberate within the souls of everyone who hears it. It can be used two ways.

- Beating on the drum in a disordered fashion causes mental pain to the soul of Niklos, bound within the drum, and allows the drummer to draw up to 13 energy from it to power any spells; that is, it functions as a 13-point Powerstone. The only hitch is the user must be hitting the drum with a free hand to draw the energy, preventing silent spell-casting. This was Amberskull's way of causing her old enemy an eternity of pain.

- The drum's player can use the trapped thunder spirit bound into it to cast Shape Air, Predict Weather, or Lightning spells as if he knew them at Power 15 or his skill in Musical Instrument (Tuned Drum), whichever is less. The user must use both hands to play the drum while casting the spell. The drummer can use his own energy or draw from the drum's 13 energy.

If the drum is ever destroyed, it will release the spirit of Niklos (to go to his reward) and the bound storm spirit. Treat the spirit as a medium-sized air elemental (see *GURPS Magic*, p. 28 for a starting point) with a grudge against any orcs who happen to be in the vicinity at the time; it may be willing to do one service for someone who frees it. Priests of the same storm god Niklos worshiped would consider the drum an unholy relic worth a quest to capture and destroy. Naturally, they would also react badly toward anyone they encountered who was using the item!

A BOTTLE OF WHITE DEATH

Another of several highly potent magic items created by the half-orc necromancer Bavagorma Amberskull, this is a glass potion bottle with a skull-shaped stopper carved from obsidian and attached to the bottle by a silver chain. The stopper has two tiny ruby eyes. The bottle is worth \$1,200 as an art object. It appears to be full of a cloudy, milk-colored liquid that seems to shift and swirl around inside the bottle on its own accord.

If the bottle is opened, the liquid slowly evaporates and comes out in a white fog, which coalesces quickly into the White Death, an exceptionally powerful skull-spirit (*GURPS Magic*, p. 151). Its touch is not merely chilling, but also causes anything living that it brushes against it to instantly putrefy, inflicting 1d+1 toxic damage (and ignoring all DR). The White Death will continue to attack until a foe is dead.

It will attack and attempt to kill everyone within 100 yards of the bottle other than the person who released it, starting with nearest person or creature, and proceeding to the next closest. It cannot voluntarily move farther than 100 yards from the bottle; if the bottle itself is moved beyond this distance, it will attempt to return to it.

The holder of the bottle can suck it back inside with an effort of will (treat as a Regular spell with skill 16 resisted by the skull-spirit's IQ; sucking it back costs 4 energy and takes two seconds). If so, sealing the bottle will return it to quiescence.

Should someone – even the opener – make the mistake of *drinking* the liquid before it can coalesce into its skull-spirit form, the spirit will take form inside the imbiber's body. He then takes 3d+3 toxic injury each second until he is dead, after which the skull-spirit's smoky form emerges from multiple holes in the corpse and continues to attack. About the only thing that can save the user is to have someone use the bottle to suck it back before he rots from the inside out.

The White Death, if injured and returned to its home, heals 1 HP/hour while in the bottle. If the bottle is destroyed, the spirit is uncontrollable and will attack anyone it can reach, including whoever freed it. If the skull-spirit is destroyed, the bottle shatters, but the ruby eyes and obsidian skull of the stopper remain intact, and are worth \$800 to a jeweler or collector.

White Death

ST: 0	HP: 40	Speed: 6
DX: 14	Will: 13	Move: 6
IQ: 8	Per: 11	Weight: 0.2 lbs.
HT: 12	FP: 12	SM: -5
Dodge: 9	Parry: N/A	DR: 1

Touch (17): 1d+1 toxic damage (Irresistible, Reach C).

Traits: Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Injury Tolerance (Diffuse); Toxic Attack; Unaging.

Skills: Brawling-17.

THE DRYAD'S SPEAR

This is a wooden spear with a leaf-shaped blade that, if examined closely, turns out not to be metal, but rather a sharp thorn that emerges from its tip. It is also known in some quarters as "the thornblade." The spear was crafted from the limb of a dryad's tree, given willingly, it is said, to a beloved druid to help protect him during a dangerous quest. That was centuries ago, and since then, the spear has passed through several users, most of them sylvan folk – druids, rangers, outlaws, wood elves, and the like. It might also be found in the lair of some sort of forest monster who defeated a prior owner.

The spear is of fine quality. The thorny blade is not as solid as metal, and so has a (0.5) armor divisor, but it also has a Puissance enchantment adding +2 to damage. Moreover, when thrust to impale, its damage completely *ignores* the DR of living wood or other vegetation (but also will not damage it)! As such (for example) the user could throw the spear through a tree to hit someone who had taken cover on the other side. Similarly, leaves, etc. do not impair it, so there would no cover modifier. However, this means the weapon couldn't be used to impale a tree-monster, animated plant, etc.

The spear is also designed to protect the user. If the spear's staff is planted at least 1' into fertile soil, it begins to lengthen, thicken, and sprout leaves. In only a minute, it grows from a sapling into a 50'-high tree! In any season but winter, the tree will shortly bear 2d fruits. If tasted, they are sweet and thirst-quenching, and heal 2 FP and 1 HP when eaten. An hour after bearing fruit, the tree loses its leaves. An hour later, it reverts to its staff form. It can transform in this fashion no more often than once a month, and will not do so during winter seasons.

JARED'S POTION OF IMMORTALITY

The venerable alchemist Ebenezer Crotomass was rumored to know many elixirs, including the secret of eternal youth. However, he was also close-mouthed and refused to teach his greater secrets to his apprentices, sharing only better-known alchemical formulas, such as elixirs of healing, health, or love. When pressed by his apprentices as to this reluctance, Ebenezer claimed his greater arts had been taught him by a dark spirit encountered during a misspent youth, and that with the wisdom of age, he knew better than to pass along such tainted knowledge, especially to today's younger generation.

Nonetheless, stories of his rumored abilities leaked out into the world.

When Lady Prezmira, a powerful but vain local noblewoman, felt age creeping up upon her, she sought for ways to stave it off. Hearing whispers of Ebenezer's alleged prowess, she implored him to create a potion to stave off her eventual decrepitude. When his philosophical objections were brushed aside, he pointed out that ingredients were expensive. The noblewoman archly indicated that was what peasants were for; she could always raise taxes. However, when Ebenezer still stubbornly refused to assist her, Prezmira instead ordered the old alchemist imprisoned, finding a witness to trump up charges of his trafficking with demons, and casting him into her dungeons as a diabolist.

After enduring weeks of torture, Ebenezer finally revealed the complex formula for an immortality potion in exchange for an end his torment. It was too late to save his life, but his jailers hurriedly transcribed it. The interrogators included a minor mage; just before the alchemist passed away, a Truthsayer spell confirmed it granted immortality.

With Ebenezer dead, Lady Prezmira instead ordered one of Ebenezer's apprentices, Jared, to make the potion in exchange for a rich reward should he succeed. Jared eagerly agreed, for he had lusted after his master's secrets, and had in fact been the one who had born false witness against him. Jared faithfully copied his former master's recipe and produced a dose of the potion for Prezmira. The noblewoman considered ordering a second dose to test on a serving maid, but the time and daunting list of rare ingredients she had needed proved sufficiently costly that even she could barely afford a single vial of the potion. After warning Jared that his life was forfeit if he tried to poison her, she drank it and then went to bed, believing she would awaken an immortal. Next morning, she realized that the old Ebenezer had told the truth . . . and had his revenge.

The elixir did indeed offer immortality, as her truthsayer's spell had confirmed, but with an ironic twist: It changed the imbiber into a living porcelain doll!

Over a period of eight hours, whoever drinks it falls into a deep sleep. When he awakens, he will have gained the Unaging advantage, but at a terrible price: His body has transformed into an animated porcelain doll. The imbiber shrinks to 1/4 size (-4 SM). His ST is quartered (though HP remain the same). He gains the traits Doesn't Eat or Drink, Doesn't Breathe, Fragile (Brittle), Immunity to Metabolic Hazards, Injury Tolerance (Homogenous), and Unnatural Features 3 (Doll-like appearance).

The rest of the story is recorded in local legends: The faithless Jared was executed after failing to find a cure. The cursed Prezmira attempted to keep her horrid state a secret, while paying a succession of wizards to try and reverse it, only to eventually beggar herself. After her estate fell into penury, it was seized by other relatives, and she herself, no longer considered a person, was sold off to pay its debts, ending up as a curiosity in a traveling circus (living in a wagon built to resemble a dollhouse). The formula was supposedly destroyed, but copies had been made by Jared before his death, and it resurfaces occasionally in books of arcane lore, often transcribed under its deceptive title as "Jared's Potion of Immortality" – a final betrayal of his master's legacy!

Duration: Permanent

Form: Potion.

Cost: \$15,000.

Recipe: \$12,000; 20 weeks; defaults to Alchemy-5.

*They got one of these
artifacts for everything!*

– Hayes, R.I.P.D.

FIRE WITCH'S UMBRELLA

This lady's parasol, seemingly made of bone and flame-red silk, was created by the fire witch Lady Zarafronia Flamebringer, daughter of a human mage and a fire elemental. She dwelt in a tower deep within the elemental plane of fire, but occasionally visited the mortal realm, an exciting but terrible place where lethal drops of water were known to fall at random from the deadly blue skies above!

Her umbrella was crafted from red-dragon wing membranes, and the shaft was of dragon bone, with a retractable iron spike that a stud on the umbrella's base could release. Due to its otherworldly construction, the umbrella not only can shield its wielder from conventional rainstorms, it also acts, if necessary, as a medium shield with an additional DR 20 vs. any fire. It is useful against the rains of lava that occasionally occur on the borders between the planes of earth and fire.

The umbrella weighs 2 lbs. and takes a Ready action to open or close. When closed, it can be wielded as a light club; if the spike is extended, its thrust damage becomes impaling. Its fine-quality dragonbone construction gives +1 damage, even for crushing. When opened, it functions as a spiked medium shield, with the extra DR vs. fire noted above.

During one of her visits (in disguise) to the mortal realm to experience human culture, the Fire Witch misplaced the umbrella, perhaps in a shop she was visiting. By the time she remembered, the weather had changed, and she had nothing to protect her from a rainy day. She was forced to retreat post-haste back to her own dimension.

ABOUT THE COLUMNIST

David L. Pulver is a Canadian freelance author. An avid science-fiction fan, he began roleplaying in junior high with the newly released *Basic Dungeons & Dragons*. Upon graduating from university, he decided to become a game designer. Since then, David has written over 70 roleplaying game books, and he has worked as a staff writer, editor, and line developer for Steve Jackson Games and Guardians of Order. He is best known for creating *Transhuman Space*, co-authoring the *Big Eyes, Small Mouth* anime RPG, and writing countless *GURPS* books, including the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition*, *GURPS Ultra-Tech*, and the *GURPS Spaceships* series.

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THE HUNTER'S RELIQUARY

BY CHRISTOPHER R. RICE

Most of the fictional sources inspiring *GURPS Monster Hunters* draw on worlds that are not rampant with magical doodads. But the occasional bit of mystical gear can make an interesting MacGuffin or (with the proper balance of benefits and drawbacks) a challenging tool in the champions' arsenal. This article details a new form of equipment – “relics” – and

what role they play in a *Monster Hunters* game. It draws much inspiration from *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 6: Artifacts*, but that book is not required to use the information here. Those looking for ideas for new relics might wish to check out Stefan Jones' *GURPS Alphabet Arcane*, *GURPS Alphabet Arcane: Lost Serifs*, and *GURPS MacGuffin Alphabet*.

WHAT IS A RELIC?

Relics are items of immense power sought after by both champions and The Enemy. They are usually items of great ages, associated with lost empires, mythical figures, or legendary sages. You *cannot* make a relic or duplicate one. They usually must be found – a process that likely involves arduous travel and great peril. They often have powerful guardians, such as a supernatural monster or a cult of secretive fanatics. Some relics might help to banish evil back to the darkness, while others might magnify evil's power. Many act as “enhancers” to those who already possess supernatural powers, while others allow *anyone* to wield such powers.

I did warn you: all magic comes at a price. Looks like someone has just paid.
– Rumpelstiltskin,
in *Once Upon A Time* #1.4

HOW TO READ RELIC ENTRIES

Each relic has a basic description (what it looks like, where it could be from, etc.), which can be changed by the GM if need be.

Power Pool

Each item has a reservoir of Fatigue Points (FP), which the possessor may use to fuel his own supernatural traits. These may include anything from Mysticism abilities to the innate paranormal powers of a ghost. Unless otherwise noted, any wielder can use these FP to fuel their supernatural abilities.

The pool recharges 1 FP per day. Some recharge faster, which is noted in their descriptions. Some gear does not have

a power pool; this is listed as “N/A.” Ritual Path casters can convert these FP to spell energy (1 FP equals 5 energy) freely.

Possible Origins

Relics may have any sort of origin, but each one comes with a possible list for the source of its power:

Cosmic: A godly artifact, stolen by (or, rarely, *given* to) mortals. Desecrated areas do not have any impact it. Only forces and abilities of “cosmic” origin can affect such a relic.

Magical: The item was created via magic, likely of an esoteric sort associated with ancient times or blasphemous, forbidden lore. Its effects can be discerned or (temporarily) dispelled using magic. It also gains a bonus to its ability's rolls (if any) in a place of power (see *Sacred Places* in *GURPS Monster Hunters 2: The Mission*, p. 26) and is penalized in desecrated areas. Additionally, its power pool may be refilled with Path of Magic like a mana reserve and recovers FP faster in places of power (add 1 point regained per +1 of the place of power).

Material: The item is extraordinary because of its constituent parts and nothing else. Perhaps it's made of weird alloys, the skin of a monster, or some form of advanced technology. It might also come with some inherent flaw related to its nature. For example, Nemean lion hide armor could be resistant to damage from all sources except Nemean claws.

Mystical: The item is a gift from the spirits, loa, or (small-G) gods. Or perhaps it is the vessel for such a being. Wielded against such forces (or their agents), all rolls are at an additional -3.

Racial: This item is the product of a race whose abilities or technology far outweigh our own. (Or could be a piece of the race itself if appropriate.) This could be anything from Atlantean technology to strange extraterrestrial gadgetry found in Area 51.

Weird: The item is just plain *strange*. Maybe it's some mad scientist's invention, maybe it came into being by itself. Whatever the origin, it doesn't belong to our universe and probably breaks every known law of science. There's no manual, so in addition to any other effect, the GM might require those who don't understand how it works to roll on the *Enigmatic Device Table* (p. B478). Reroll any result that causes the destruction of the device.

*Artie: It's a museum,
anything there could be
an artifact. You can't let
him touch anything.*

*Myka: Artie, it's Pete;
it's a win when he doesn't
lick anything.*

– *Warehouse 13* #2.6

Qualities

Each item has one or more interesting or useful capabilities, which come with the relevant game rules or references to where further information on them can be found. Qualities include things such as advantages that the target gains while

the item is in someone's possession, strange abilities that do things normal equipment or advantages cannot, and so on. The weight is based on form and qualities; some relics may be lighter or heavier due to their creation or innate capabilities. HP and DR may differ from a normal item of its type or the item may be indestructible and will be noted as such.

The GM can alter these qualities as desired, including borrowing abilities from other relics. Each quality has its own entry, and multiple items might have the same designation. Just note similar abilities with a reference. For example, if an item gives the benefits of Heaven's Blessing, write it as "Purification, as on Angel's Feather." Additionally, some items can only be used once and are useless afterward.

The Price

Most items have a *price*. This can take the form of a disadvantage (usually a mental disadvantage, though other types are possible) that plagues the person as long as he possesses the relic, but any sort of downside is possible. *Weird* artifacts might invoke *Weirdness Magnet*; the iron boots of a dark lord might cause *Megalomania*; the Soul Stick of the ancient Byul'ka could cause *Delusions*. *Compulsive Behavior*, *Paranoia*, and *Phobias* are also appropriate. Rarely, an item has *no Price*, and omits this entry.

Potential Variations

Items have notes on how to switch things up to better suit the campaign, or give options on their stats or form. These might be vague, be precise yet stat-free ("a rifle instead of a pistol"), or offer considerably more detail. For example, the Angel's Feather (below) might be a "Demon's Horn" instead and give access to the powers of Hell instead of Heaven. This section also contains the point cost to own the relic (see p. 21).

EXAMPLE RELICS

The following relics are only examples of what could be possible using the guidelines from this article. The GM is encouraged to create his own for his campaign.

ANGEL'S FEATHER

Power Pool: 8 FP

Possible Origins: Mystical or Racial.

This is an angel's primary feather, containing a measure of the divine creature's power. Approximately 12" long, it can be any color, but is typically white.

Qualities

Aura of Heaven: While worn, the possessor gains DR 3 (Force Field), Less Sleep 4, Reduced Consumption 2, Regeneration (Regular), Resistant to Metabolic Hazards (+3), and Terror (Visual).

Flaming Sword: When held, it can be used to summon a fiery blade (which also counts as a holy attack). There is no minimum ST – the weight of the feather is negligible.

It is used with Broadsword or Rapier skill. Damage thrust+4 impaling *plus* follow-up 1d burning *and* holy effects, or swing+3 cutting *plus* follow-up 1d burning *and* holy effects; Reach 1-2; Parry 0F.

Purification: The feather purifies what it touches. The wielder must make a Will roll; treat this as the Healing advantage (p. B59) for diseases, wounds, etc. Blessing or purifying water (sewer water, ocean water, etc.) requires a Will roll. Success means up to a gallon of water is now drinkable *and* counts as holy water (*GURPS Monster Hunters 1: Champions*, p. 57). You can purify larger amounts, but each gallon after the first incurs -1 to the roll. The effects of purification on other substances is left up to the GM.

Weight: neg.

Price

Being able to channel the fires of Heaven takes a toll on the mind. After using the feather once, the bearer must make a Will roll with the following penalties: -1 for carrying it around or wearing it, -2 if the sword aspect is used, or -1 per 4 FP expended on purification or healing.

Failure means the person acquires Code of Honor (Angelic) (see *Monster Hunters 1*, p. 51 for details) for days equal to his margin of failure. Critical failure means he gains this trait *and* the Delusion (“I am an Angel of the Lord”) [-15] *permanently*. In addition, the GM rolls 3d every month, adding the penalties from above to the roll. On 4 or less, *demons* (**GURPS *Monster Hunters 3: The Enemy***, p. 17) appear to hassle the feather bearer. To get the number of demons, take the absolute value of the penalty and convert it to dice using *Modifying Dice + Adds* (p. B268) and roll that many dice. If a natural 18 is *ever* rolled, an angel (***Monster Hunters 3***, p. 16) appears instead! All of these rolls get +2 if the bearer has *any* Mysticism abilities.

Variations

One obvious variation is the “demon’s horn.” Instead of purifying water, it fouls it; instead of healing damage or diseases, it causes them. It can inflict up to 1d toxic damage per FP spent and can inflict diseases equal to the FP spent (use the values for the Healing advantage). However, it lacks both the Flaming Sword or Aura of Heaven abilities. Instead, while carried it gives 1d-1 (minimum of 1) abilities from the *Demonic Variety* table (***Monster Hunters 3***, p. 19).

If using the optional rules in the boxed text below, it costs 39 points to start out with the Angel’s Feather.

ETERNAL PEACEMAKER

Power Pool: 18 FP

Possible Origins: Cosmic, Magical, Materials, or Mystical.

This old six-shooter (treat as a .36 revolver, p. B278) has a bone handle and a dull black finish. Rumored to be made of metal from the Grim Reaper’s scythe, bullets fired from it can cause great harm to any being, *especially* supernatural ones.

Qualities

R.I.P.: Bullets fired from the Peacemaker do an extra 3d of damage that *ignores* DR – take off HP *directly*, just as if it were injury! Furthermore, bullets ignore the usual effects granted by Injury Tolerance or count as a noxious substance that the target is vulnerable to – bearer’s choice. Anyone killed by this attack cannot come back from the dead, rise again thanks to Unkillable, etc. They’re dead for *good*.

One Last Bullet: Even when the cylinder is empty, the Peacemaker can create a bullet in the chamber allowing it to be fired. Each shot costs 2 FP (which can be drawn from the Power Pool) and only inflicts the extra damage from *R.I.P.* If the user is out of FP, he may alternatively use HP . . .

Gun Quality: Treat the Peacemaker as a very fine (accurate) and very fine (reliable) weapon. It is considered *indestructible* versus anything except cosmic damage sources or relics. It never requires maintenance and cannot be made to malfunction.

Weight: 3 lbs.

Price

Powerful supernatural beings *hate* the Eternal Peacemaker, but have yet to find a way to destroy it. Because of this, whenever the GM decides The Enemy is going to attack the PCs, the bearer of this item gets the brunt of it. For example, if vampires plan on attacking the hotel the PCs are at, then the bearer’s room would get attacked first.

If the GM rolls randomly to determine how monsters react, the user always gets the worst possible result. If neither apply, then roll 3d, on a 6 or less, treat him as if he had Enemy (Monster of the week) (see ***Monster Hunters 1***, p. 7). If he already has that disadvantage, increase the frequency by one step.

Furthermore, only *living human beings* can wield this relic. No inhumans, please! To non-living human beings, the Peacemaker is just an ordinary (if indestructible) firearm.

IF YOU HAVE TO ASK, YOU CAN’T AFFORD IT

All relics omit currency prices because relics are meant to be *unique* items. For example, the Eternal Peacemaker is one of a kind. If it wasn’t, it wouldn’t be so sought after! Expensible relics might have been mass-produced, but the method is long since gone; champions should *find* relics, not buy them. Nevertheless, if the GM desires, *Gadgets Require an Unusual Background* (p. B477) provide guidelines for characters starting with priceless treasures. An item’s *best* ability determines the base point cost of Unusual Background (Relic) – equivalent to Unusual Background (Invention) – as follows:

- *Qualities no better than that of mundane gear (ordinary armor, weapon, first aid kit, etc.):* 5 points.
- *Qualities no better than that of exceptional nonmagical gear (fine-quality items, high holy symbol, titanium or holy weapons, etc.):* 15 points.
- *Qualities no better than what a techie or witch could simulate through technology or magic:* 30 points.
- *Qualities well beyond anything in **Monster Hunters**, or cosmic:* 50 points.

If the item has several distinct qualities, start with the best and add 1/5 the value of the others. One-use items divide final cost by 1/5. If the GM allows, players may pay an additional 5 character points to have a relic considered Signature Gear (p. B85).

For instance, a cosmic item (50 points) with three 15-point distinct qualities would cost $50 + (3 \times 15/5) = 59$ points. Final cost shouldn’t exceed the cost to buy equivalent benefits as innate abilities. This requires GM judgment. If *everyone* has weapons that give a bonus to damage, they probably shouldn’t cost more than 5 points each.

Evaluating a fair cash value is typically an exercise in futility, but the GM might use the following: Each point that it would cost as an Unusual Background translates to \$10,000. They might go for *10 times* this amount on the open market, but champions probably have their own “swap shops” that contain such goodies.

Variations

The GM with access to *GURPS High-Tech* or *GURPS High-Tech: Adventure Guns* may use any TL5 revolver pistol he likes as the basis for this relic, even a rifle or a shotgun ("Death's Leg"). He could remove the humans-only limitation (though this may make the relic even more attractive to other-worldly forces!) or simply decree that each day of use causes 2 points of damage that can only be healed naturally and only if the Peacemaker wasn't used that day.

If relying on the optional rules on p. 21, it costs 57 points to start out with this relic.

NEW MOTIVATIONAL LENS: RELIC-BEARER

15 points

You didn't get involved in the battle between dark and light on your own, you inherited your burden the day you took custodianship of a relic. Similar to the Chosen One, Fate has marked you as a champion to humanity.

Advantages: Spend 5 points in Unusual Background (Relic) [Varies]. • Spend another 25 points in increasing Unusual Background (Relic) or any of the following: Prophetic Dreams (*Monster Hunters I*, p. 23), Reputation +2, +3, or +4 (Relic-Bearer; Other hunters) [5, 7, or 10], Weapon or Equipment Bond (chosen relic) [1], Weapon Master (*specific* weapon) [15*]. • Add any traits not chosen here to your template's advantage options.

Disadvantages: One of Divine Curse (Monster Magnet), Enemies (Relic Hunters; 9 or less; Unknown) [-15], or Weirdness Magnet [-15]. • You must take Vow (Protect Relic) [-5] as one of your template disadvantages.

* This only applies to one *particular* weapon chosen at creation (just like Weapon Bond). If the weapon is lost, this advantage is lost as well.

FIZZOO WARD™ MAGIC BUBBLES

Power Pool: N/A

Possible Origins: Magical, Materials, or Weird.

The Fizzoo Ward™ toy company was beloved by children the world over, but after a large batch of their special brand opaque-colored Magic Bubbles poisoned several children, their reputation suffered. This was compounded when several more children went missing, thanks to the so-called Bubble Trader, a serial kidnapper who took children and left a bottle of the bubbles behind in their place.

Rumors that the bubbles *were* magic quickly got around to the supernatural community, and Fizzoo Ward concoctions became a valuable commodity. Their exact effect depends on the color of the bottle.

Qualities

Each bottle contains a wand for blowing bubbles and enough liquid to form 1d×5 bubbles, which have effects

depending on their color. Those with Doesn't Breathe cannot use this item if they have no means of biologically exhaling (that is, they have no mouth, nose, or equivalent). For example, a vampire could use them because he's undead, but an ooze demon with no mouth could not.

The size of the bubble blown depends on the blower's HT. It takes one second to blow a bubble with a SM equal to the user's HT-9, and an additional 1d seconds to increase this by 1 (up to the target's HT+1). The blower may roll against HT to speed up each increment (-1 second per two points of success or fraction thereof), but failure means the bubble pops!

The bubbles made by the solution are *tough*, with DR 2, HP equal to their SM, and HT 12. They last until popped or 2d minutes have passed (whichever comes first).

Bubble makers may optionally try to aim it at a target or to form a bubble *around* a subject. To aim a bubble at a target, simply make a HT roll with normal range penalties (p. B550). Bubbles move on their own at one yard per second and use the *Scatter* rules (p. B414) to determine where they go each round. Alternatively, the bubbles move at a rate of HT×0.25 (round up) if someone spends an entire round blowing them in one particular direction. Breath Control can be substituted for HT, if better.

To envelop a subject, the user must either have time to blow a bubble that can encompass the target or make a HT or Breath Control roll at -10 for instant use described in *Time Spent* (p. B346). (See above for how it takes to make a bubble of a certain size.) This "attack" may be dodged normally but cannot be parried or blocked. Enveloped subjects cannot resist the effects of touching a bubble and remain enveloped until the bubble takes enough damage to pop.

Anyone holding the bubble wand is immune to the effects of *that* bubble's type.

Bubble-guns and other machines cannot utilize this item. It requires the breath of a being with at least an IQ of 1 to use, though the GM may allow techies or witches to improvise something.

Each bubble has Accuracy 0; Range HT×0.5/HT; RoF 1; Shots 1(3); Bulk -1.

Weight: 1 lbs.

Bubble Effects

Burning (Red): As for the poison sphere (p. 23), but does burning damage. Damage caused by this bubble treats the flammability class of the subject as one-step higher than it actually is. See *Making Things Burn* (p. B433) for more information.

Gate (Green): Before blown, the user must picture a specific place, time, or dimension in his mind and then make an IQ roll. Use the penalties listed for *Warp* (p. B97) for going to another place. Add -5 to go to another dimension. For other times, use the *Long-Distance Modifiers* (p. B241), but read distance as years. Once blown, the bubble creates a gate that anyone with a Size Modifier equal to its SM+1 or less can enter.

Accidentally touching it requires a Will-5 roll to avoid being sucked in.

Gravity-Well (Blue): Once blown, anyone within 10 yards of the bubble must make a ST roll vs. (20 + bubble's SM). Failure results in being dragged one yard per point of failure toward the bubble. This roll must be made once per round until the subject reaches the bubble, at which point he can make a ST-5 roll every round to escape its grasp. Failure means he does thrust-1 damage to the bubble; success means he's pried himself away but must make another roll next round. If the bubble pops, everyone within two yards takes (0.5 × SM)d crushing double knockback damage, but treat any knockback as going toward the bubble, not away from it.

Levitation (Violet): The bubble can support an amount of weight equal to (11+ bubble's SM) × 200 lbs. without needing to make a HT roll. If its load exceeds this, the GM must roll against its HT every second to see if it pops. Popped violet bubbles have no other effects.

Poison (Yellow): Once it's blown, anyone who touches the bubble takes points of toxic damage equal to (11+ bubble's SM). If popped, it does 10 times this amount in toxic explosive damage to everything within two yards.

Scintillating (Orange): Once blown, this bubble glitters and sparkles drawing onlookers' attention. Even a quick glance requires anyone seeing it to make a Will roll vs. (20 + bubble's SM) to avoid being dazed (p. B428) for minutes equal to their margin of failure (minimum one minute). Alternatively, the GM might require those who fail this roll to make a Confusion Check per **GURPS Powers**, p. 85.

Wild! (Prismatic): The bubble does all of the above! Roll 1d every round to see what effect it has: 1 – red; 2 – orange; 3 – yellow; 4 – green; 5 – blue; 6 – violet. If this mimics a green bubble, its location is always random!

Price

The bearer becomes obsessed with bubbles and bubble-making. For example, he might spend five minutes playing with hand-soap foam in a restroom instead of keeping an eye on the cultist he was shadowing. Treat this as a Compulsive Behavior with a self-control roll of 9.

Variations

See *Spheres of Weirdness* in **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 6: 40 Artifacts**, p. 21, for inspiration on further bubble types. If using the optional rules on p. 21, it costs 6 points to start out with this relic.

HOLY GRAIL

Power Pool: 10 FP

Possible Origins: Cosmic, Magical, or Mystical.

This bejeweled golden chalice heals those who drink from it. Though it's probably not *the* Grail, it is a holy vessel with powerful benefits.

Qualities

Healing Waters: Water poured into the cup becomes blessed (**Monster Hunters 1**, p. 57) and inflicts double the normal amount of damage it would normally do to a vulnerable target.

It also eliminates impurities in the water. If imbibed, it heals wounds, cures diseases, and acts as an antidote to poisons, etc. If the user drinks:

- *A sip*, he immediately makes a HT+5 roll to regain any lost HP (see *Natural Recovery*, p.B424) or shake off the effects of disease or poison, preventing further cycles. This takes a Ready maneuver.

- *Several mouthfuls*, he immediately regains 3d HP and automatically ends further cycles from disease or poison. This takes 1d Ready maneuvers.

- *It all*, he regains all lost HP, automatically ending further cycles brought on by diseases or poisons and removes any lingering effects of such ailments. This takes a minute.

At the GM's option, Continuous use of the grail might bestow long life, reverse the effects of aging, or bring back the dead.

Weight: 3 lbs.

Variations

The GM might decide to tone the healing effect down to 2d or even 1d, or to allow both "greater" and "lesser" versions to exist. Such "healing" objects are common in most mythologies and the above stats can be used for any such device. For example, the Caduceus might allow anyone it touches a HT+5 roll to regain HP, anyone that kisses it might gain 3d HP, and anyone that cradles it in his arms for over a minute regains all lost HP.

To add a price to this relic, considering make it so that those who drink too often from the Grail lose their ability to heal naturally! After more than three uses in a day, roll HT (at -1 for a sip, -3 for several mouthfuls, or -5 for all of it). Failure means the character permanently gains Unhealing (Partial; Grail Water) [-20].

If using the optional rules on p. 21, it costs 30 points to start out with this relic.

"For the sake of one soul. For one loved one. For one life." I called power into my blasting rod, and its tip glowed incandescent white.

–Jim Butcher, *Grave Peril*

GRAND GRIMOIRE

Power Pool: See below

Possible Origins: Magical.

The Grimoire of grimoires, the Book of books, the Tome of tomes – the Grand Grimoire is a much sought-after tome that contains notations on every possible spell. Its pages are loaded with diagrams and notes written in a bizarre language that, if properly decoded, makes its bearer a master of magic.

Qualities

Mana Reserve: Casters can tap into the book's mana reserve of 150 as if it were their own, but must be holding the book to do so.

LASER FOCUS FOR MY LASER SPELL

Casters looking for magical tools should definitely look into *GURPS Thaumatology: Ritual Path Magic* for details on enchanted objects, but those rules might be too complicated for *Monster Hunters*. Optionally, casters might have objects that enhance the magic for a specific ritual, effect, type, or Path. These “Path focusers” can take any form, and they enable the caster holding them to “tune” into specific energies that allow him to focus magical energies better.

Focusers come in three types. *Skill focusers* gives a bonus to Path skill rolls, the second allows the wielder to use the adept times, and the third gives *both*. Skill focusers give a bonus to a specific Path, group of rituals, and so on. *Adept focusers* permit a wielder to use the adept times when casting a specific ritual, using a particular Path skill, etc. *Dual focusers* do both but are very costly.

Skill focusers give +1 to their affected rituals. For higher bonuses, use the following: +4 CF for +2; +19 CF for +3; and +99 CF for +4. Bonuses higher than +4 are not

possible. These costs are in addition to the cost for the item itself (which are added to the focuser’s cost).

Optionally, the GM may allow his players’ characters to create focusers by requiring them to make whatever their focus’ base object is and roll against Path of Magic every 25 work days. If successful, they gain \$2,500 to go toward their focuser’s cost. If they fail, the time was wasted, but they can continue trying. When they reach the focuser’s final cost, it’s complete!

Example: Murphy’s character is a witch named Harold who has a penchant for fire magic. He wants to purchase a focuser to give him better control over his spells. Harold’s player decides to purchase a skill focuser. The GM decides that all fire magic falls into a moderate category, therefore the base cost is \$40,000. Murphy wants this to give +2 to Harold’s fire rituals, so final cost is \$200,000. Murphy decides his focus will be a baton (a “rod”), which costs an additional \$20, total cost is \$200,020 and can be used as a baton (p. B273) in combat.

Focuser Table

Skill Focuser Cost*	Adept Focuser Cost*	Dual Focuser Cost*†	Focuser Type‡
\$10,000	\$40,000	\$80,000	Specific ritual; see <i>Defining Rituals</i> (<i>Monster Hunters 1</i> , p. 3).
\$20,000	\$80,000	\$160,000	Spells which you have Ritual Mastery for or a specific combination of Path and effect (e.g., Control Energy).
\$35,000	\$140,000	\$280,000	Specific Path or Effect (e.g., Path of Energy, any Control effect).
\$37,500	\$150,000	\$300,000	Narrow group (e.g., Divination, Warding).
\$40,000	\$160,000	\$320,000	Moderate group (e.g., any ritual that gets a bonus from Higher Purpose (Druid)).
\$42,500	\$170,000	\$340,000	Broad group (e.g., self-defense, elemental magic).
\$50,000	\$250,000	\$400,000	All rituals.

* The cost assumes an object that is around SM -5, if it isn’t, add a cost multiplier to the base cost: SM 0 or larger, $\times 0.5$; SM -1, $\times 0.6$; SM -2, $\times 0.7$; SM -3, $\times 0.8$; SM -4, $\times 0.9$; SM -5, $\times 1$; SM -6, $\times 1.3$; SM -7, $\times 1.6$; SM -8, $\times 1.9$; SM -9, $\times 2.2$; SM -10, $\times 2.5$; and SM -11 or less, $\times 2.8$.

† If the wielder gets either the skill bonus or can use the adept times for any one ritual, multiply base cost by $\times 0.85$.

‡ When using *Decanic Trappings* (*Ritual Path Magic*, p. 36), classify the bonuses a specific decan gives as equivalent to a moderate group to create “decanic focusers.”

Ultimate Grimoire: The Grand Grimoire can be used as a normal grimoire (*Monster Hunters 1*, p. 39), but gives +10 to any ritual and doesn’t double casting times. Additionally, for those without Ritual Adept, it allows the adept times to be used as long as the caster is using the book to cast the spell.

Weight: 20 lbs.

Price

Written in a lost language and encrypted (*Monster Hunters 1*, p. 39), the grimoire requires time and patience to gain use of its full effects. This language is unique to the

book itself and cannot be learned anywhere else. Deciphering it is extremely difficult and resists *all* attempts to use supernatural abilities to do so. When someone handles the book, make a Per-4 roll (or Per-based Linguistics, if better). Success means the person notices that the cover contains symbols and ideograms along with letters from a language he speaks. Extracting this information lets the bearer decode the book, but takes a Thaumatology roll and (12d - margin of success) work days, minimum one day. At the end of this period, the user may spend character points to learn the Grimoire’s language, unlocking its secrets. No other way exists to utilize this relic other than knowing how to read it.

Variations

The GM who finds the tome's blanket bonus to Path skills too powerful might instead create Grand Grimoires for each Path or for two close Paths (for example, Matter and Energy), or reduce the bonus it grants. He could even decide that *that's* too much and narrow it down to a specific ritual effect. He might also change the language it's written in to one particular to his campaign as long as it's suitably obscure and hard to learn.

He could also require a roll against the better of Linguistics or Thaumatology to gain the bonus for spells. Each point of success grants +1 to Path rolls to cast a spell.

If using the optional rules on p. 21, it costs 36 points to start out with this relic.

X-RAY SPECS

Power Pool: 7 FP

Possible Origins: Magical, Mystical, or Weird.

This pair of paper-frame glasses for viewing 3D movies are much more than they appear to be.

Qualities

Spectral Vision: The wearer can see through supernatural befuddlement of all kinds (including illusions) as well into other nearby planes of existence. There is no roll for this.

X-Ray Vision: The wearer can see through up to 2" of solid material; see *Penetrating Vision*, p. B74.

Weight: neg.

Price

While worn, the user suffers from Colorblindness as everything turns shades of blue and red. He also takes -3 to Visual Fright Checks while wearing the specs (it's in 3D!). After using them for more than a continuous minute, the GM should roll 3d. On a 6 or less the person suffers from the equivalent of Crippling Flashbacks as everything around him becomes movie-like (the GM decides what the "genre" is).

Variations

X-Ray Specs are a combination of 3D movie glasses and the old X-Ray specs from the novelty-items ads that filled the back pages of magazines. The GM may decide these are two separate

items; if they are, then the Spectral Vision and X-Ray Vision qualities go to "3D Glasses" and "X-Ray Specs" respectively.

If using the optional rules on p. 21, it costs 16 points to start out with this relic.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christopher R. Rice once bought some X-Ray specs from the back of a magazine – they still don't work as advertised. From Portsmouth, Virginia, he dreams of writing full time, or at least eking out a living doing it. He wishes to thank L.A., his own personal muse, as well as the rest of his gaming group; Antoni Ten Monrós; Beth "Archangel" McCoy, the "Sith Editrix"; and Tim "Humabot" Ponce for being most excellent sounding boards.

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INSTRUMENTS OF ENCHANTMENT

BY JON BLACK

From Biblical stories of the Trumpets of Jericho to tales of the Pied Piper of Hamelin, medieval peoples believed in the magical power of music. Strongly influenced by classical Europe, fantasy literature and roleplaying incorporated that belief as part of their flavor. Bards and magical musical instruments are omnipresent in fantasy gaming. Yet, magical instruments seldom receive the same level of love and attention as swords, armor, or fell necromantic artifacts.

For those interested in creating enchanted instruments possessing greater depth and detail or giving musical magic a greater focus in their campaign, *GURPS* provides several useful starting points. Especially helpful are *GURPS Thaumatology* – particularly *Law of Sympathy* (pp. 14, 85-86, 243-245) and parts of *Material Magic* (pp. 95-99, 110-120) – and *GURPS Low-Tech* and its *Companions*. This article provides ways for putting those pieces together and expanding from there.

... musical notes, with all their power to fire the blood and melt the heart, cannot be mere empty sounds and nothing more; no, they have escaped from some higher sphere ...

– Sir James Frazer,
The Golden Bough

MEDIEVAL INSTRUMENTS

Before discussing musical instruments as magic items, it is useful to briefly examine them as musical instruments. The medieval era was a period of rapid evolution for musical technology and theory. The direct, if distant, ancestors of many modern instruments appeared. Written musical notation emerged in Europe at the beginning of the period and developed into the precursor of modern notation by the 1300s. That century also saw a well-developed system of musical notation introduced in the Middle East. While professional musicians appeared at TL1, there was a remarkable increase of such individuals at TL3. From Scandinavian skalds and French

troubadours to German minnesingers and Arabian poets, this era was when the bard truly came into his own.

Information on some period instruments is available in *GURPS Low-Tech* (p. 49), while *GURPS Low-Tech Companion 1: Philosophers and Kings* (pp. 17-19) provides a comprehensive taxonomy of low-tech instruments. As in the latter sourcebook, this article uses a modified Hornbostel-Sachs system, categorizing instruments based on how sound is produced: aerophones (blown air), chordophones (vibrating strings), idiophones (non-drum percussion), keyboards, and membranophones (drums).

Building on *GURPS Low-Tech* sources, additional information about instruments that are particularly appropriate for medieval or fantasy settings is provided below. Descriptions begin by listing the appropriate Musical Instrument specialty for each instrument in parentheses. Specialties are (IQ/H) unless noted.

Drum (Untuned Drum) (IQ/A): Medieval drums came in all sizes and materials. Of particular note are the *tabor* (a small drum that accompanied a pipe played by the same person) and the *tabla* (a popular goblet-shaped drum from Arabia that spread to much of the world).

Fiddle (Fiddle): TL3 fiddles were rudimentary compared to later instruments of the same name. Sizing was so haphazard that some were arm-cradled like modern fiddles, while others were held between the knees like violas.

Flute (Flute): Similar in size, shape, and layout to the modern instrument but made of wood and lacking keys. Holes were covered directly by the musician's fingers.

Hichiriki (Double Reed): A Japanese double reed flute used to perform imperial court music and Shinto religious music. It was challenging to play and had a haunting, ethereal tone.

Horn (Horn): One of the earliest instruments, horns still thrived at TL3. Made from animal horn and lacking melody holes, they had a limited range of sounds but excellent strength and clarity of tone.

Lute (Lute): This stringed instrument, with a distinctive bent neck, fretted fingerboard, and tear-shaped soundboard was ubiquitous at courts, fairs and taverns.

Organ (Keyboard): Portable (even hand-carried) organs such as the *portative* and the larger *positive* were widespread by the mid-1200s. Massive church organs date from the second half of the 14th century.

Oud (Lute): This Arabian instrument with a sharply bent neck and bulbous soundboard was popular from Marrakesh to Mumbai.

Pipa (Lute): This fretted, four-stringed instrument was played by plucking. The pipa, and its smaller cousin, the *liuqin*, were among the most popular TL3 Chinese instruments.

Pipe (Recorder). Pipes, including such variations as the *recorder* and *tabor flute*, were hollow sticks with as few as three holes. A favorite of amateur musicians, they were seldom treated as “respectable.”

Shawm (Double Reed): This downward-pointing double reed instrument with a bell-shaped bottom was a precursor to the oboe. The shawm was noted for its strong sound, so much so that a large version was known as a *bombard*.

Trumpet (Horn): Common for fanfare, pageantry, signaling and warfare, medieval trumpets lacked the valves of their descendants. This resulted in a small musical range and large bulk, limiting their musical potential.

Vielle (Guitar): One of the most popular medieval instruments for troubadours and minstrels, this five-stringed distant ancestor of the violin was notable for its leaf-shaped pegbox and boxy body.

Fantasy campaigns often borrow technology from the Renaissance. The GM interested in using TL4 instruments can add the *cittern/gittern* and *viol*, close ancestors of the guitar and violin, respectively. Other options include the *hautboy* (an early oboe) and the unforgettably named *sackbut* (a trombone progenitor). More delicate keyboard instruments such as *clavichords* and *harpsichords* also emerged at this time.

A caveat: standardized terminology for musical instruments is a TL4 concept. Even for a music historian, TL3 instrumental nomenclature can be bewildering. The above commentary is intended to simplify as much as possible while remaining accurate.

PUTTING THE MAGIC IN MUSIC

The Law of Sympathy, that “like affects like,” is one of the key rules of magic discussed in *GURPS Thaumatology*, p. 14. It is invaluable for magical instruments. Both an instrument’s shape and its material composition provide opportunities for enchanters to utilize the Law of Sympathy. For the GM, it adds color and detail to existing magical instruments while providing a fertile source of plot hooks and adventure ideas.

Instruments come in a staggering range of shapes, many of which naturally suggest magical sympathies. Horns lend themselves to spells of strength and virility. Flutes and recorders incline to amorous or charming magic. The round shape of many drums, which can signify an unbroken circle, invokes the power of the seasons, time, and even life and death itself.

The composition of instruments offers even greater potential to invoke the Law of Sympathy, as well as inherent magic (see *GURPS Thaumatology*, p. 96), the idea that materials have innate magical energy that can be tapped. For wooden instruments, the information on tree magic (*Thaumatology*, pp. 43-47) and Celtic tree talismans (*Thaumatology*, p. 97) is useful for determining what magical properties are associated with particular arboreal plants. If a tree has a specific magical affinity or innate power, its wood retains that affinity when

incorporated into an instrument. Similarly, the suggested Metal college (*Thaumatology*, p. 47) gives affinity ideas for instruments made of metal.

Many instruments also contain animal products. Skin or hide is used to cover drums while intestines (“gut”) provides the strings for many chordophones. Bone can be substituted for wood in a flute or pipe or, more elaborately, for the neck or soundboard of a chordophone. Using parts from exotic, magical, or dangerous animals may create a magical affinity based on the animal’s characteristics. In the hands of a capable necromancer, the use of “animal” products in instruments offers terrifying possibilities.

Instruments are frequently constructed using more than one material. Fiddles, lutes, and vielles, among others, have gut strings attached to a wooden body. Drums combine a wooden or metal shell and an animal-hide drum head. Medieval metal instruments are commonly sheathed in leather for the instrument’s protection and user’s comfort. Instruments may feature multiple materials from one category. Many chordophones and aerophones utilize two or more woods. Metal instruments can be alloys, each component metal bringing its own magical affinities. Additionally, many instruments require lacquer, polish, grease, or oil.

Instrumental Affinities

Myth and folklore suggest certain types of instruments have intrinsic affinities for specific forms of magic. Horns flatten walls and structures or signal the end of the world. Pipes summon and charm rats, snakes . . . or children. A plethora of cultures connect drums with the spirit world, while bells excel at protection and purification. This is another manifestation of the Law of Sympathy. Although every instrument or spell needs not have such an affinity, and the GM is encouraged to create his own connections, some possibilities include:

Animal College. Aerophones (especially pipes and other recorders as well as shawms and other double reeds) and instruments made of animal parts.

Elemental Colleges. Air: aerophones. Earth: drums or instruments made of metal or stone. Fire: instruments forged from metal. Water: double reed, fiddle, guitar, harp, and single reed.

EXAMPLES OF AFFINITIES

Example: To assist in hunting and war, a group of savanna pastoralists create a magic drum from lion hide and the hollowed-out base of a boab tree. The former creates an affinity with courage while the later invokes endurance, stamina, and permanence (also supported by the drum’s circular shape).

Example: Count Vasily doesn’t want to be a vampire but likes many of their powers. Working with his court magician, they design a magical vielle to give him the best of both worlds. The vielle’s hourglass shape suggests a connection to time, intended for magic to slow or halt aging. They craft the body of wood taken from the coffin of a famous (now re-deceased) vampire, creating a powerful sympathy with the Necromantic college. The vielle is strung with wolf gut, forging a connection to those children of the night. Finally, the count hopes that polishing the vielle with bat fat may help flight magic.

Gate College. Moving through space: drums and aerophones. Moving through time: chordophones (dulcimer or harp) and bells.

Illusion and Creation College. Dispelling illusions: drums and idiophones. Creating illusions: aerophones. Creation spells: chordophones.

Making and Breaking College. Making spells: chordophones. Breaking spells: large/loud aerophones.

Movement College. Drums and chordophones (especially dulcimer, harp, lyre, or zither).

Necromantic College. Extraplanar entities: chordophones (especially fiddle, lute, or vielle). Spirits: drums and idiophones. Undead: chordophones and keyboards.

Plant Control College. Instruments made of wood.

thousand-year-old mountain rosewood harvested on Solstice night from the Valley of the White Beast.”).

Playing a Different Tune

Three other concepts introduced in *GURPS Thaumatology* merit consideration: enchantment through age (pp. 110-112), enchantment through deed (pp. 112-113), and magic items as advantages (pp. 113-115).

Enchantment through age points out that – whether through amplification, significance, or use – the magic items with the most power are typically those that are the *oldest*. Instruments are excellent candidates for enchantment through age. It is widely held that, if properly cared for, the tonal quality of many instruments improves over time. Older instruments can also have pedigrees that give reflected glory and bragging rights to current owners.

Enchantment through deed can strengthen existing enchantments or render previously mundane objects magical by association with great or terrible actions and events. A musical instrument may lack the same opportunity for this kind of enchantment as, say, a sword or a wand, but the possibility exists. Notably, certain types of deeds (such as seducing the Empress of Megalos or halting the last battle between dwarves and elves) are quite plausible for magical instruments but harder to imagine for other types of items.

Handling magic items as advantages provides a variant system, modeling them as advantages with Gadget limitations (pp. B116-117). A wide range of PC-ready magical instruments can be designed by incorporating advantages and disadvantages, in addition to spells, into items. Note that, for enchantment purposes, one character point is equivalent to 25 energy points.

Devotional Enchantment: The Original Soul Music

The medieval church was deeply musical, an aspect carried into many

Middle Ages-influenced fantasy campaigns. In creating holy/ethical magical instruments, the GM should consider allowing the *Meditation, Holiness, or Study* option from *GURPS Thaumatology*, pp. 53-54, which treats every eight hours spent in prayer, meditation, or spiritual contemplation as one point of energy for enchantment. (Other ideas for devotional enchantment can be found on p. 113 of *Thaumatology*.)

Holy instruments are also candidates for enchantment through age (*Thaumatology*, pp. 110-112) and enchantment through deed (*Thaumatology*, pp. 112-113). If a holy musical instrument becomes a relic or a pilgrimage focus, don't forget to consider the impact of all that devotional energy.

PERFORMANCE ANXIETY

Just as the mightiest magic sword still needs a wielder to hit its target, magical instruments require musical performance to unleash their enchantments. The GM can consider adjusting the effects of a magical instrument based upon how well, or poorly, it is played. A substandard performance can render substandard magic. Conversely, true virtuosity may unlock potency even the enchanter did not expect.

Using this mechanism, well-played magical instruments can reduce the cost to cast or maintain their effects; become more difficult to resist; or even gain the ability to function in low mana areas when otherwise they would not. Poorly played instruments, however, can experience the reverse.

If this option is used, require performers to roll against the relevant Musical Instrument specialty and adjust the item's Power (on this occasion only) based on the table below.

Result	Effect on Enchantment
Critical success	Effective Power +2
Success by 5+	Effective Power +1
Failure by 1 or 2	Effective Power -1
Failure by 3+	Spell/effect does not occur.
Critical failure	Roll on <i>Critical Spell Failure Table</i> (p. B236; <i>GURPS Magic</i> , p. 7; or <i>GURPS Thaumatology</i> , pp. 256-260) or automatically use the result “spell produces the reverse of intended effect.”

Example: A bard with Magery playing the Pipe of St. Vitus succeeds by 6 on his Musical Instrument (Pipe) roll. The pipe was enchanted with Spasm-20 but, in this instance, behaves as if enchanted with Spasm-21. Conversely, if he failed the same roll by 2, the resulting effect would be Spasm-19.

Turning up the Enchantment

When magical instruments are created using the Law of Sympathy, inherent magic, and instrumental affinities, the GM has the option of reducing the required energy cost as presented in *GURPS Thaumatology* (p. 110). A 1-2% reduction for every relevant feature is appropriate, with a suggested maximum 10-15% total reduction.

A GM who strives for a more cinematic or mythic flavor can instead give small bonuses to enchantments when items are optimized for magical sympathy. In this case, increasing the cost or difficulty of obtaining materials is definitely justified (“I'm sorry, but the Winter Lute can only be made from

The drawback to holy instruments is that they may be fickle. Such items may function properly only for individuals of the appropriate faith or, at least, when used to support a cause of which the relevant deity or deities would approve.

Devotional: see **GURPS Thaumatology**, p. 113.
Inherent: see **GURPS Thaumatology**, pp. 96-100.
Traditional: see **GURPS Thaumatology**, pp. 107-110.

Harmony of the Spheres

The Ancient Greek idea that each celestial body naturally emitted its own distinctive music survived into the medieval era. For those who believed in the *Harmony of the Spheres* (also known as *Musica Universalis*), this music resulted from each celestial body's unique, intrinsic properties. Because of the Law of Sympathy, playing the appropriate celestial music creates a strong affinity with magic related to a body's astrological properties.

The GM who is interested in incorporating the Harmony of the Spheres into magic can give each celestial body an affinity with one or more colleges of magic. A magical instrument created or enchanted by someone with knowledge of the Harmony of the Spheres – who makes a successful Occultism (Harmony of the Spheres; see *Occultism*, below) roll – may likewise have an affinity for a celestial body and its associated colleges.

Traditionally, Harmony of the Spheres incorporated only celestial bodies known to antiquity: Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn, plus the sun and moon. Fantasy campaigns occurring on worlds with different solar systems or alternate history campaigns where planetary discovery has advanced should modify their systems accordingly.

Suggested Magical Affinities for Harmony of the Spheres

Celestial Body	Sympathetic Colleges
Sun	Creation; Fire; Light
Mercury	Communication; Gate; Movement
Venus	Empathy; Healing; Water
Moon	Darkness; Enchantment; Illusion
Mars	Breaking; Protection and Warning; plus damaging spells from any college
Jupiter	Air; Knowledge; Making and Breaking
Saturn	Earth; Necromantic; Sound

For colleges omitted from the above list, affinities for some (such as Animal and Plant) should be based on the spell's subject. Others (such as Body Control, Food and Mind Control) can be treated on a spell by spell basis. Because it is both essential and universal, the Meta College is not given an affinity with a particular sphere.

THE ENCHANTED CONSERVATORY

Each sample instrument below includes the skill needed to play it correctly, and suggested enchantment origins are offered. The minimum spells provided by the instrument and its suggested cost are also listed.

Enchantment Origins

Age: see **GURPS Thaumatology**, pp. 110-112.
Deed: see **GURPS Thaumatology**, pp. 112-113.

Occultism

see p. B218

Harmony of the Spheres: This specialty covers information about known celestial bodies, the music each produces, and its influence on the physical world and intelligent life. Scholars of the specialty can answer questions regarding magical properties of each sphere's music, how spheres interact, and philosophical dimensions of the harmonies. Suggested defaults for the specialty are IQ-6, Musical Composition-6, Occultism (Astrology)-4, Philosophy (Ancient Greek)-4, and Thaumatology-4.

Damsel's Alicorn

This precious object is an alicorn (unicorn horn) crafted into a *gemshorn* (an instrument made of animal horn with extra holes bored-out for melody). Once each year, if a virtuous maiden plays the Alicorn over the body of a person of great heart and noble spirit, the instrument brings him back to life. Like all alicorns, its touch also neutralizes poison.

To be resurrected, the deceased must have been dead no longer than a lunar month (preservation magic doesn't help). Typically, resurrection is automatically successful. If, however, either the musician or the deceased do not meet the Alicorn's high standards, things get sticky. If the musician is not a maiden of virtue (GM's discretion), the Alicorn will shatter, its magic lost forever. If the deceased is not of great heart and noble spirit (also GM's discretion), the maiden must make a Will roll or, likewise, the horn shatters. If she succeeds by 3 or more, the resurrection is also successful. Needless to say, shattering such a powerful item may bring additional consequences.

Skill: Musical Instrument (Serpent).

Enchantment Origins: Inherent, Traditional.

Spells: Inherent equivalent of Instant Neutralize Poison, plus Resurrection.

Cost: Not for sale.

DoomBellows

A bizarre organic-looking object festooned with a series of iron rods and pipes, DoomBellows is the preserved stomach of an ancient dragon turned into a bagpipe the size of a man. Created centuries ago by the orc tribe that felled the dragon, it has become their most potent and fearsome battle standard.

Enemies within hearing range of DoomBellows must make a Will-1 roll or flee from its sound until it can no longer be heard or until the piper stops playing. Those who resist are immune to the noise for the duration of the engagement. Orcs, and their allies, within 100 yards of DoomBellows also gain immunity to heat and fire (short of a blast furnace or volcano).

Skill: Musical Instrument (Bagpipes). It takes a minimum SM +1 and HT 15 to play DoomBells.

Enchantment Origins: Deed, Inherent, Traditional.

Spells: Panic, Resist Fire.

Cost: Not for sale. Best not to even ask.

*He sounded his pipe in
the alleyways and narrow
streets. This time it was not
rats and mice that came
running but rather children.*

*– The Brothers Grimm,
The Children
of Hameln*

Dryad Fingers

These simple flutes are whittled from dead branches (hence “Dryad Fingers”) by elves, druids, rangers, and other wilderness-savvy folk and then lent to well-intentioned people who are out of their element in the wild. Each Finger contains a single enchantment, determined by the wood from which it was carved:

- *Alder:* Ignite Fire.
- *Ash:* Swim.
- *Birch:* Create Food.
- *Hawthorn:* Hide.
- *Hazel:* Seek Water.
- *Holly:* Keen Sense.
- *Oak:* Find Direction.
- *Rowan:* Scryguard.
- *Willow:* Bravery.

Fingers also have mundane benefits. Because they are widely recognized as tokens of favor from friends of the wild, like-minded beings (sometimes including intelligent animals and nature spirits) will do what they can to prevent the bearer from coming to harm.

Skill: Musical Instrument (Flute).

Enchantment Origins: Traditional.

Spells: See above.

Cost: \$1,000 and up (black market only) depending on the spell and whether a point of power is included in the enchantment. Because of mundane benefits, Fingers have a black market value in excess of their magical value.

Heart of the Ancestors

Used by a powerful dwarven clan, the shell of this massive drum is forged from solid gold and covered by the skin of a cave bear (the clan totem). Named for the distinctive bass heartbeat sound of its cadence, the drum is a ritual object keeping clan elders in touch with their ancestors.

Playing Heart of the Ancestors summons any named spirit. If that spirit is a clan ancestor, energy cost is halved because of the strong sympathies involved. Up to 10 dwarves can play, and contribute energy to, Heart of the Ancestors simultaneously. If sufficient energy exists, it can summon multiple spirits.

Over long use, the drum has absorbed the essence of generations of drummers (most of whom have transitioned from summoners to summoned). It now conveys the Spirit Empathy advantage.

Uninvited or hostile spirits receive an unpleasant shock. The bottom of the drum shell forms a banishing sigil made of interwoven iron and silver. It can be activated by a single word from any dwarf playing the instrument.

Skill: Musical Instrument (Untuned Drum).

Enchantment Origins: Age, Devotional.

Spells: Spirit Empathy advantage, Summon Spirit, and Turn Spirit.

Cost: Not for sale.

Orchestra in a Box

A favorite at fairs and of relatively well-to-do magical buskers, these shabby wooden cases contain a dozen or so diminutive instruments, typically a mix of pipes, shawms, tablas, tabors, and vielles. When a keyword is spoken, the box summons an appropriate number of mice, rats or other small rodents. Clever buskers used trained rodents, resulting in a +1 Reaction from the crowd.

Through a combination of illusion and enchantment spells, the animals appear to play the instruments. Most Orchestras in a Box run have a three-song rotation.

Several variations of this item exist. In one version, the inside of the case is painted to resemble a tavern or a noble’s court and serves as backdrop. Larger sets exist sized for cats or dogs, but are uncommon. In one unfortunate recent variation, a gang of wererats added Dullness to the box’s enchantments and used it to relieve crowds of their jewelry and coin purses. The wererats were discovered and run out of town, but the gang and their box are still at large.

Skill: Group Performance (Conducting).

Enchantment Origins: Traditional.

Spells: Beast Summoning, Complex Illusion, Dancing Object, and Mammal Control.

Cost: \$50,000.

Ultimus Claves

Along with such achievements as cathedral architecture and the trebuchet, the pipe organ is one of the pinnacles of medieval technology. So, it is with little surprise that gnomes often take to the instrument with wild abandon. The Ultimus Claves is a pipe organ built by a gnomish enchanter completely versed (some would say “obsessed”) with the Harmony of the Spheres (p. 29), its 77 crystal pipes tower glitteringly toward the heavens.

Seven of its chords are harmonized with a different celestial body and associated college of magic. Playing the Ultimus Claves in the appropriate key increases the performer’s Magery by 1 in that college (“No Magery” raises to “Magery 0” and increases are, of course, subject to campaign limits).

Few beings can cast while playing; fortunately, the organ's effects linger for a duration equal to the time the mage spent playing. Colleges to which the Ultimius Claves is attuned are Communications and Empathy (empathy-themed only), Creation, Gate, Illusion, Knowledge, Protection and Warning, and Sound.

Although its builder/enchanter vanished mysteriously (allegedly after mastering the Harmonies and ascending to live among the Celestial Spheres), the organ remains a carefully guarded possession of the gnomish thaumatological guilds.

The Claves is built to gnomish proportions; larger or smaller races are at -1 to skill for each SM of difference. Given the arrangement and properties of the Ultimius Claves, critical failures frequently result in the haphazard admixture of magical energies and the spontaneous casting of random spells.

Skill: Musical Instrument (Keyboards).

Enchantment Origins: Traditional.

Spells: Hypothetical "Barrow Magery" spell, plus decades of research and several successful rolls of Occultism (Harmony of the Spheres).

Cost: Not for sale, but some gnomish thaumatologists are *fairly certain* they can build one just like it for, say, \$1,000,000 . . .

RESOURCES

Abrashev, Bozhidar and Gadjev, Vladimir. *The World Atlas of Music Instruments* (Ullman, 2013). A stunningly illustrated encyclopedia of human instrumental endeavor across both time and cultures.

Diagram Group. *Musical Instruments of the World* (Sterling, 1997). Cheaper and easier to find than the Abrashev text. Features more than 4,000 illustrations. The Western section focuses on modern instruments, but the volume is good for medieval/fantasy instruments from other regions.

Hoppin, Richard. *Medieval Music* (Norton, 1978). Though ponderous and written for students of music or history, this is

the book for those wanting to get serious about period music and musical instruments.

A Guide to Medieval and Renaissance Instruments, music.iastate.edu/antiqua/instrumt.html (Iowa State University). This online resource includes audio recordings of more than 30 period instruments.

Kelly, Thomas Forrest. *Capturing Music: The Story of Notation* (Norton, 2014). A highly readable social history of the development of musical notation.

Medieval Music (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2015). A superb-quality 23-track CD showcasing a variety of medieval instruments and styles by various artists.

*If you play the magic flute,
It will protect us on our way.
My father cut it in a magical hour
For the most important reasons
Out of the thousand-year-old oak
During lightning, thunder, storm &
shower.*

– Pamina, in Mozart's
Die Zauberflöte

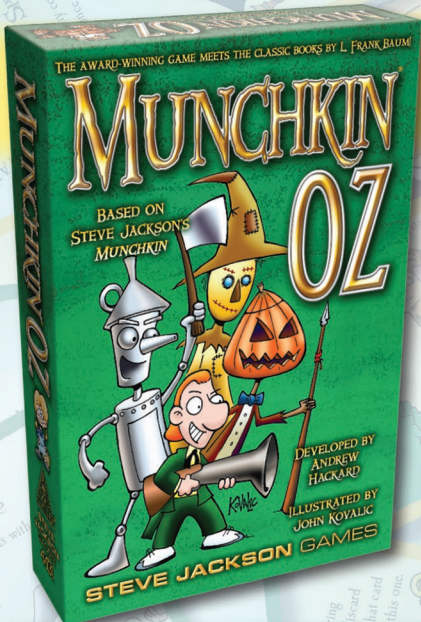
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jon Black is your basic "absinthe and BBQ" guy from Austin, Texas. An internationally published music journalist and music historian, he focuses on blues and country but has written about everything from punk to classical to klezmer. On today's most heated debate regarding TL3 music, he is solidly *pro*-bagpipe. Jon has enjoyed roleplaying games for more than 30 years, *GURPS* for more than 20 of them.

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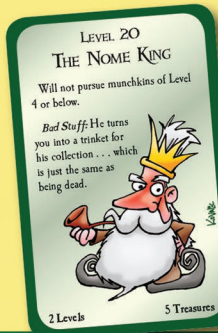


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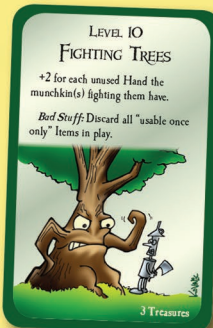
2. FIGHT THE MONSTER



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RANDOM THOUGHT TABLE

TANGIBLE ABSTRACTIONS

BY STEVEN MARSH, *PYRAMID* EDITOR

One of my favorite magical goodies from my childhood *Dungeons & Dragons* mental vista was the portable hole. It's not because it was particularly powerful (although entryways into extra-dimensional spaces are always pretty cool). It didn't have a whole lot of utility; it was mostly an inventory-management aid, with the bonus that you could climb into it. No, I think what really got my mental juices going was that it wasn't a *thing*, per se.

In comparison, a *sword* is a thing. A *magic* sword is a sword (which we can already wrap our mind around) that's . . . well, magic. But the basis for the portable hole isn't a thing; it's the *lack* of a thing – specifically, a hole is what you have when you remove the dirt/soil/concrete/whatever from a spot. The act of making the hole magical is to give that which doesn't exist as a thing, and *make it a thing*.

Realizing this opens up a number of possibilities when pondering the nature of magical items. Namely, what if that which is magical is that which isn't a *thing* until it's magical? Here are some ideas along those lines.

Tips for turning a concept into something concrete.

A LITTLE PLACE CALLED HOME

The Little Place Called Home (henceforth the Little Place) is a rectangle approximately 4" by 6". It has the same thickness and malleability of a piece of paper, but it's completely transparent.

To use the Little Place's magic, the wielder looks at a place he considers to be home *through* the Little Place. His home must be completely visible within the confines of the Little Place; this will almost certainly necessitate walking away from the home until perspective makes the homestead small enough to fit within the edges of the Little Place.

Once perspective has placed the object within its confines, the wielder can invoke the Little Place's magic (usually

by uttering a magic phrase and/or gesturing). When he does so, the home is transported *into* the Little Place, as if the size and position of the viewed perspective were transferred to the Little Place.

Any living entities – humans, animals, plants, etc. – within the homestead remain behind when it's transported into the Little Place; this likely leaves them standing in an open field or area. Any foundations, basements, etc. that are integral parts of the homestead are also transported into the Little Place. However, any amenities that rely on outside connections (such as electricity or plumbing) are *not* taken along.

To install the homestead to a new locale, the wielder simply reverses the process, looking through the Little Place until perspective places it in a new location (or an old one) and using the magic phrase or gesture. This transfer results in the Little Place sheet being transparently blank again.

The target homestead must be considered "home" to the wielder. If he somehow considers multiple places to be home, only the first location he stores in the Little Place is considered to be "home" as long as the user owns the magic item.

The magic of the Little Place is usually smart enough to figure out what the "real" (original) size of a stored house was. However, if the user of the device is clever – or dumb – enough, he *can* force it to return a homestead at an incorrect scale; for example, if he looks through the Little Place with his house placed upon a new flat mesa that's only 6' across, then the house will shrink itself to fit on the ill-chosen location. This seems to be a one-way effect; it seems to be much harder to "trick" the Little Place into enlarging a home . . . or returning a shrunken home to its original size.

Notes

In this case, the magic item is playing with the abstract ideas of "perception" and "home." A similar magic device could be devoted to related location ideas, such as "prison" or "training ground." The GM could also play with the storage aspect of the magic item. For example, maybe those who are inside are *not* ejected, but trapped inside; for those so trapped, it's up to the GM to determine how – or if – time passes.

A BOTTLE OF UP

This bottle houses 12 oz. of clear, thin liquid. To use its contents, the wielder must sprinkle the liquid to completely cover the target (minimum of 1 oz. per application).

The target is infused with a sense of the concept of *up*. The GM decides exactly what this means, but it should be the most obvious application of “up” for the chosen target: A light switch would go into the up position, someone who is depressed might become “up” (that is, happy), a feather might float to the ceiling, etc. In a setting without Viagra or similar pills, one application would likely be obvious and sought-after. If the wielder knows specifically about the effects of the Up Bottle, he has *much* finer control over its effects: For example, someone who uses it on a wooden box could compel it to float in place, fly into the sky, become hotter (its temperature goes up), combust (go *up* in flames), etc.

The GM should encourage creativity and allow pretty much any application that meets the criteria – primarily the target must be at least mildly spritzed in its entirety – but shouldn’t permit using completely fabricated definitions of “up.” As the distilled essence of a concept, it should be an absolute definition of the desired effect; thus, it could raise Excalibur embedded in the stone or Mjölmir.

The effects of the applied liquid last a maximum of one hour, or until it has fulfilled the applied definition of “up.” Thus, it would flip a light switch to the up position and then lose all effect. The bottle itself is nonmagical, and the liquid can not be used to “fill up” the container; once the 12 oz. are exhausted, that’s it.

Notes

The notion of a magic item being devoted to a *concept* is a strong one; the Bottle of Up could just as easily be an Ointment of Open or a Tincture of True. (For a similar idea, see the notion of Words – and their associated angels and demons – from *In Nomine*.)

If you allow for a concept to be used as a magic item, make sure you include some limiting factor. The Bottle of Up uses two: the number of ounces (and the requirement of a minimum of 1 oz. per application) and the maximum effect of one hour.

NANSWERS

Nanswers are small, featureless circular metal discs, about the same size and weight as a U.S. dime but featureless. They are easy to palm, and do not obviously radiate magic (although they will detect as such). They are usually found or aquired in a small pouch of three to four.

Someone who is handed a Nanswer while *actively* seeking the solution to a problem or the resolution to a question – that is, an answer – will have that need satisfied by the Nanswer. The Nanswer provides no actual insight into the problem; it merely provides the *satisfaction* of an answer.

If the giver of a Nanswer has a desired outcome in mind, *and* that outcome would be permitted with a certain answer, then the Nanswer-giver can force the desired outcome *even if the user doesn’t know what answer he needs to provide*. For example, if a Nanswer-owner was at a bridge where a magical force asks, “Are you a member of the Barfoo?” and he

knew that the force would only permit him to pass if he gave the right reply, the Nanswer would satisfy the force and allow the Nanswer-giver to pass if he so desired. However, the user would *still* not know if he did or did not need to be a member of the Barfoo to pass (since it’s just as likely the barrier was trying to keep Barfoo out as it was permitting them).

Situations where a Nanswer might prove useful include:

- “To pass this gate you must first solve my riddle . . .”
- “For the last time: Are you going to marry me?”
- “Can I trust you?”
- “What is the meaning of life?”

The Nanswer provides its *own* justification when needed, assuming the wielder can get the target to have a question in mind. For example, even if a guard would normally require identification papers, a biometric scan, or similar tangible evidence, if he can be persuaded to ask the question (even mentally), “Can I trust you?” the Nanswer will provide all the justification needed, presumably for a “yes” answer.

The usual method of delivering a Nanswer is to palm it and hand it to a target while the target has a question in mind. A supplemental technique for Nanswer-users is to either ask the question they want the Nanswer to respond to (“Excuse me . . . am I a spy?”), or to say, “I bet you’re asking yourself, ‘Is he a spy?’”). Either technique tends to work. The recipient never finds the receipt of the Nanswer to be noteworthy, and will either absentmindedly put it in his pocket, drop it, or just hold onto it until it’s convenient to lose or discard . . . similar to how one might react to receiving a business card of the mildest interest.

Once a Nanswer is given, it loses all magical properties, and it cannot be given back. The satisfaction of the Nanswer lasts until it is contradicted in some fashion; “What is the password?” might never be discovered (unless the Nanswer-giver flat-out admits later he didn’t know the password), but Nanswer satisfaction to something like “Can he be trusted?” would be dispelled as soon as the user backstabs the recipient.

Notes

Again, abstractions can be made tangible with magic – in this case, a social construct. Just come up with *how* they are tangible and what their effects are. A similar effect can be found in the 2004 *Doctor Who* reboot, where “psychic paper” shows viewers what they want to see to be favorably disposed toward the wielder.

“It smells like updog in here.”

“What’s ‘updog’?”

“Nothin’, dog. What’s up with you?”

ABOUT THE EDITOR

Steven Marsh is a freelance writer and editor. He has contributed to roleplaying game releases from Green Ronin, West End Games, White Wolf, Hogshead Publishing, and others. He has been editing *Pyramid* for over 15 years; during that time, he has won four Origins awards. He lives in Indiana with his wife, Nikola Vrtis, and their son.

ODDS AND ENDS

FOR THE ALCHEMIST ONLY

by Antoni Ten Monrós

The Alchemist's Talisman is a peculiar charm with a small reservoir that is capped by a metal topper. This reservoir can be filled with a potion of the bearer's choice (as long as the potion itself could normally be made into an amulet; see *GURPS Magic*, p. 222). The wearer then makes an Alchemy roll and spends FP equal to his margin of success to "bind" the potion to the talisman. From then on, the Alchemist's Talisman functions as a talisman of the appropriate type with a number of charges equal to the number of FP spent. When all the charges have been spent, the reservoir empties and may be refilled normally. The owner may refill it before then if he wishes. \$300,000, 0.25 lbs.

For more information on charms – including how to use them and a list of similar magical items – see *More Charms* (p. 37). For an alchemist template for *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*, see *Dungeon Brewmasters* (pp. 4-8).

ANOTHER IDEA

This month's Random Thought Table (pp. 33-34) delves into the realm of turning abstract ideas into magical items. For a more complex variation of the same idea, it's possible for the magic items *themselves* to be about transforming ideas.

Homophone Additive

The Homophone Additive is mixed in with a liquid magical effect; when this is done, the mixer can designate the effect of the potion to be a homophonic ideal of the original potion. Thus, a Weightlessness Potion could be transformed into a Waitlessness Potion, which removes the need to wait for a specific thing or idea ("I wait until I'm naturally healed." *Poof!* You're healed! "I can only cast this spell once a month? I use the potion to get rid of that wait." Done!). The homophone can span multiple words, provided the phrase sounds like the original; for example, a Potion of Fire Resistance could become a Potion of Ire Resistance, enabling the drinker supernatural calm in the face of all annoyances. The *effect* shouldn't drastically exceed the abilities of the original elixir (GM's discretion); for example, you couldn't use the Waitlessness Potion to wait for an empire to collapse unless the original Weightlessness Potion enabled the user to (say) go FTL.

In addition to the possibility for a Homophone Additive to affect items that are *not* potions, Rumors

abound that there are also *Homograph Additives*, allowing for the possibility of little girls surprising enemies with the Bows of Lightning tied in their hair, or – perhaps more horrifyingly – modern-day cell phones all having the One True Ring.

ABOUT THE COVER

This month's cover is from artist Brandon Moore. His work has previously graced the massive *Ogre Designer's Edition*, and Brandon is currently working with designer Scott Haring to bring the forthcoming revamped *Car Wars* to life.

On this *Pyramid* cover, we see an alchemist in action. It looks so easy when a skilled practitioner does it; what's her secret? (See pp. 4-8 for more alchemical options for *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* fiddlers.)

Brandon drew his inspiration from a lifetime of fantasy RPGs mixed with vintage oil paintings of alchemists and wizards, such as the works of early 20th-century Belgian artist Joseph Leopold Ratinckx. Brandon's work is entirely a digital creation, brought to life through the magic of Photoshop (wielded – of course – by Brandon's skilled hands). Visit Brandon's virtual realm at artofbrandonmoore.com.

Here is a preliminary sketch of the cover. For a text-free version of the art – suitable for framing – check out the finished work on p. 36.





APPENDIX Z

MORE CHARMS

BY ANTONI TEN MONRÓS

GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 1: Adventurers, p. 30, presents four alchemical amulets. There is, however, no reason not to use the same assumptions to create some new ones for delvers to find or spend their hard-earned cash on. Alchemical charms are divided into two categories: alchemical amulets and alchemical talismans. All of them can have incredibly varied appearances, but the standard one is a dark, dull, gray stone of irregular shape with a hole to pass a string through. They can be set in items as if they were gems. Each of them weighs 0.25 lbs.

ALCHEMICAL AMULETS

Alchemical amulets are always on, as long as they're worn. They're no different from standard "always on" magic items in this aspect.

Aesculapius Amulet: The wearer is immune to disease, and heals an additional 2 HP each time he makes natural recovery rolls, successful or not. \$18,680.

Aphrodite's Amulet: Increases the bearer's Appearance by one level. If worn by a nymph or other delver with Transcendent Appearance, it gives Terror (Awe) instead, because sometimes too much is just too much. \$13,960.

Atlas' Amulet: Always in demand and should be almost always available, unless the delvers are in a really backwater town. Multiplies the user's Basic Lift by 4 for the purposes of calculating encumbrance levels. \$4,820.

Boreas' Amulet: Grants the wearer immunity to normal cold and cold spells (such as frostbite). Does not protect against purely physical contact with ice, such as slamming an ice wall or being hit with an ice sphere. \$4,920.

Delphi's Amulet: Allows the user to see auras at will, as per the Aura spell (*GURPS Magic*, p. 101). \$18,680.

Hector's Amulet: Gives the bearer High Pain Threshold. \$9,440.

Hydra Amulet: Grants the wearer the Regrowth advantage. \$92,700.

Mermaid's Amulet: Allows the user to breathe underwater, as if he had Doesn't Breathe (Gills). \$23,150.

Steropes' Amulet: Bestows immunity to normal lightning and lightning spells on the bearer. \$4,920.

Tyche's Amulet: Grants the wearer one additional level of the Luck advantage, up to Extraordinary Luck. \$27,920.

For another talisman, see p. 35.

ALCHEMICAL TALISMANS

Alchemical talismans require a Concentrate maneuver to activate. They produce an effect that lasts for a given amount of time, and then they need some time to recharge. They must be worn to recharge, as they feed off the wearer's aura.

Apollo's Talisman: Grants the bearer +1d IQ for an hour, but this doesn't affect spells or other supernatural abilities. Recharge time is five days. \$23,700.

Ares' Talisman: Grants the wearer +1d DX for an hour. Recharge time is two days. \$9,390.

Chiron's Talisman: Heals 1d HP to the user; any excess restores FP instead. Recharge time is one day. \$4,670.

Chiron's Greater Talisman: Heals 3d HP to the bearer; any excess restores FP instead. Recharge time is three days. \$14,010.

Daedalus' Talisman: Bestows the Flight advantage on the wearer for an hour. Recharge time is 10 days. \$46,700.

Erebus' Talisman: Provides the user with the Shadow Form advantage for 2d hours. Recharge time is 10 days. \$46,800.

Heracles' Talisman: Grants the wearer +1d ST for an hour. Recharge time is two days. \$9,340.

Hermes' Lesser Talisman: Provides the user with Extra Attack 1 or Enhanced Move (Ground) 1 for 3d×2 minutes. Recharge time is 20 days. \$93,200.

Hermes' Talisman: Gives the wearer one level of Altered Time Rate for 3d×2 minutes. Recharge time is 20 days. \$186,400.

Hermes' Greater Talisman: Grants the bearer two levels of Altered Time Rate for 3d×2 minutes, but forces him to make an HT roll after the duration expires or permanently lose 1 HT. Recharge time is 20 days. \$279,600.

Trimegistus' Talisman: The wearer recovers 4 FP lost due to magic. Recharge time is 1.5 days (for the GM who does not wish to track fractional days, it can be used for two consecutive days, but must then be left to recharge for one entire day). \$6,640.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

When not learning the secrets of alchemy under Christopher R. Rice's instruction, or running his weekly *Dungeon Fantasy* game, Antoni Ten has the honor of being, as far as he knows, the only Spaniard to ever write for *Pyramid*. His boring day job includes computers, cubicles, and pointy haired bosses, so he will leave it at that. For another article by Antoni Ten, see *The Sorcerer* (pp. 9-13).

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