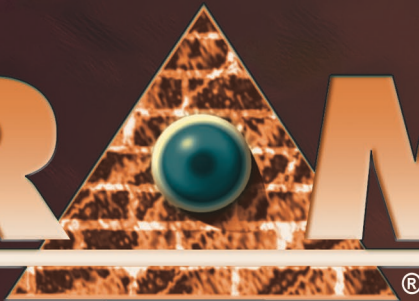


PYRAMID[®]



Issue 3/109 November '17

THAUMATOLOGY V



THE MAGE-HUNTER

by Sean Punch

THE TERAMANCERS

by David L. Pulver

THE GLORIOUS BOOK OF VALADIR

by J. Edward Tremlett

MAGNUM OPUS

by James Amaral

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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Magic is in the air, in the form of possibilities, potions, and peril. This month's *Pyramid* is an assortment of arcane articles suitable for a wide swath of campaigns.

Alchemists are always looking for an edge while creating their *Magnum Opus*. Learn how to turn the standard **GURPS Magic** alchemical system into something where every potion involves ingenuity, and the right set of ingredients lets an alchemist (or herbalist!) brew amazing concoctions. Also included are details for using formularies and labs, tips for making money from brewing, and sample stats for a selection of popular reagents and elixirs.

When practitioners of the mystical arts get out of hand, call on *The Mage-Hunter*. This new profession for the **Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game** – designed by that set's author, Sean Punch – can go toe-to-toe with magic-using foes yet benefit from the aid of magic-wielding friends. You'll get a ready-to-use character, plus find tips for challenging this delver in adventures and for translating the template for use in **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy**.

Don't fight monsters! Study them – and manipulate them – with *The Teramancers*. The secrets of this mystical order are revealed to you by **GURPS Banestorm: Abydos** author David L. Pulver in this month's Eidetic Memory. Learn about their origins, beliefs, structure, and how others view them. Unlock **GURPS** details for their magical style, then discover adventure suggestions and ideas for using them in fantasy or modern campaigns.

Not all hidden tomes are inherently evil; some are brilliant, uplifting, and morally encouraging. Become acquainted with one such "good book," *The Glorious Book of Valadir*. This systemless adventure frame discusses the ancient volume's physical details, useful contents, and terrifying secrets.

Christopher R. Rice and Antoni Ten Monrós take you on a tour of their supernatural creation in the Designers' Notes for **Dungeon Fantasy 19: Incantation Magic**. Uncover the history of this supplement, plus get new Paths, power-ups, advantages, and a lens they didn't have room to cram into that popular supplement.

If a scroll can be a boon in a bad situation, consider what's possible with the *All-Scroll*. This unusual artifact allows heroes to access strange and interesting corners of the **GURPS** magical possibilities, and presents a dilemma for anyone who discovers exactly the magic they want.

This month's Random Thought Table considers what happens when you start with all the power . . . and steep consequences for using it.

There's nothing up our sleeve with this month's *Pyramid*, except an amazing assortment of magic. Join us to discover all of our secrets!

ARTICLE COLORS

Each article is color-coded to help you find your favorite sections.

- Pale Blue:* In This Issue
- Brown:* In Every Issue
- Green:* Columnist
- Dark Blue:* **GURPS** Features
- Orange:* Special Features
- Purple:* Systemless Features

COVER ART
Abrar Ajmal

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FROM THE EDITOR

BENDING THE UNIVERSE FOR FUN AND PROFIT

Our household has been playing a lot of *Harry Potter: Hogwarts Battle* lately. Although this cooperative deck-building game is generally enjoyable, we sometimes find ourselves wanting to tweak the base gameplay so that it's at a difficulty level we don't find frustrating. The rules offer insight for how to make things easier or harder, but the tweaks they offer are a bit off for our desires. For example, one suggestion for making it simpler involves removing an interesting subsystem in the game. But we *like* the subsystem; we just want the core game a bit easier!

That brings me to our latest installment of the Thaumatology series of *Pyramid* issues. Articles that tweak magic and arcane realms are common in the realm of *GURPS*. And I totally get *why*. Mark Twain famously said, "The difference between the almost right word and the right word is really a large matter – 'tis the difference between the lightning bug and the lightning." In the same way, the difference between the right magic system and almost the right magic system is the difference between a lightning spell and a light spell.

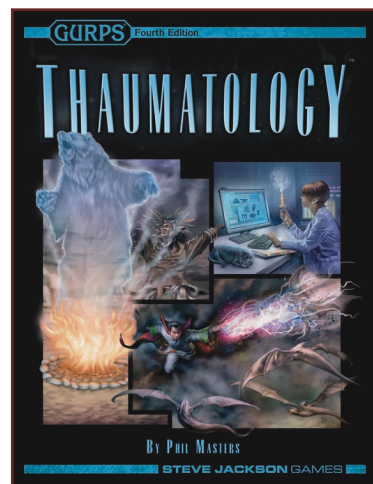
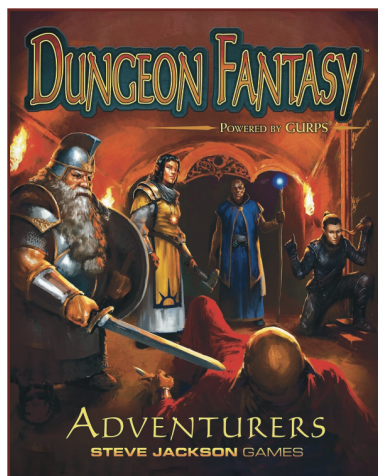
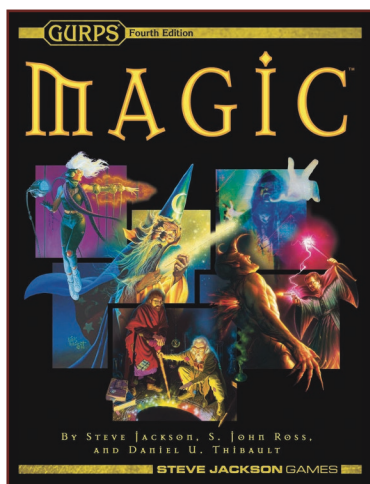
For those looking for something cool to define a campaign, encounter, or adversary, we hope there's "magic" to inspire

you in this issue. For those still trying to sort out what they're looking for, try to envision how the magic works for typical practitioners wielding it: What can they do with minimal effort (if anything)? What can they do in a heroic situation? What can they do if they need to pull out all the stops and unleash as big an effect as they can? Do any of those vary if a master is doing it versus a novice? Trying to scope out the min, median, and max effects can tell you what kind of magic you might be trying to strive for; see pp. 36-37 for an example of magic that shakes up assumptions of how much power a novice can tap. Of course, it's also possible to work from the other way, starting with a neat magical effect or system and seeing what kind of world it presents (like the new options opened by the alchemy system on pp. 4-11).

The magic is yours; use it awesomely!

WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW

Did this issue offer new insight into mystic mayhem, or is there another rabbit you wish we would've pulled out of our hats? We love to hear your thoughts! Contact us privately via email at pyramid@sjgames.com, or join the community of conjurers at forums.sjgames.com.



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MAGNUM OPUS

BY JAMES AMARAL

The base alchemy system presented in the *Basic Set* and *GURPS Magic* provides all that is necessary for its inclusion in most settings. However, its abstract nature may leave some players or GMs wanting something more clearly defined for alchemy-centric settings or adventurers. The system presented here allows players to exercise their creativity without bogging down the game with too much additional complexity or recordkeeping.

With this system, alchemists should feel like mad scientists, hunting for useful ingredients and improvising creative

recipe solutions to their problems. Those wisp pearls might not get you the Elixir of Battle you were hoping for, but combine them with a cloaker eye you had on hand to brew an Elixir of Stealth, and you might avoid your next conflict altogether! This article allows the GM and players to turn every brew into an opportunity for clever-thinking and ingenuity.

This is meant as an expansion and partial rewrite of the existing systems presented in the *Basic Set* and *Magic*.

THE GREAT WORK

Traditionally, the Magnum Opus, or “Great Work,” of hermetic alchemy described a transformative process that sought to create the Philosophers’ Stone. This transformation involved four (or occasionally three) stages, commonly referred to as blackening (nigredo), reddening (rubedo), whitening (albedo), and yellowing (citritinitas), done to specific degrees and in particular sequences to produce various alchemical results.

ALCHEMY 101

The basic anatomy of any alchemical formula is its associated degree of blackening (B), reddening (R), yellowing (Y), and whitening (W), or BRYW (pronounced “brew”). Each statistic is set at a value between -2 and +2, with +0 representing a neutral state.

Example: The Healing elixir (*GURPS Magic*, p. 217), being the relatively simple draft that it is, has a correspondingly simple BRYW of +0/+1/+1/+0.

How Many Recipes?

Some players or GMs may be concerned that four statistics with a range of only five values may not provide enough possible combinations for the vast number of potential elixirs and reagents. This is likely not the case. There are in fact 608 different permutations, including 72 all-positive combinations (useful for Herb Lore; see p. 8). This *should* provide more than enough options in most games. In the event that two elixirs or reagents have the same BRYW, simply remember that each elixir has a separate preparation formula, whether or not the alchemist or herbalist knows an elixir’s BRYW. This is a case in which the ingredients may be the same, but the preparation methods are vastly different.

Elixirs are brewed by combining reagents until the elixir in question has a BRYW that matches its listed formula, as decided by the GM. The alchemist then brews the elixir for the requisite amount of time and makes an Alchemy roll with a penalty appropriate to the complexity of the desired formula.

Note that no elixir may have a BRYW that includes only one non-zero statistic (such as +1/+0/+0/+0 or +0/-2/+0/+0), nor can any have a BRYW of +0/+0/+0/+0 (this particular substance – distilled water – is a component in virtually all elixirs).

ALCHEMICAL ASSOCIATIONS

Much like *Inherent Magic* (*GURPS Thaumatology*, p. 96) or *Hermetic Astrology* (*Thaumatology*, p. 248), the assorted processes of blackening, reddening, yellowing, and whitening are associated with different concepts of the natural and supernatural world. The BRYW values for any elixir or natural reagent should reflect how closely it represents the following concepts.

Blackening: Earth, body, maturity, resilience.

Reddening: Air, personality, creation, avoidance.

Yellowing: Fire, spirit, growth, action.

Whitening: Water, mind, decay, adaptation.

Reddening and blackening do not exactly serve as each other’s opposite; neither do whitening and yellowing. An elixir that instantly saturates the imbiber with water, offering protection from burns may have a whitening statistic of +1 or +2, while an elixir that simply makes one fireproof likely has a yellowing stat of -2.

See *Adapting Existing Elixirs and Reagents* (p. 9) for more tips, and pp. 9-10 for examples. *Magically Potent Materials* (*GURPS Magic*, p. 222) and *Sample Materials* (*Pyramid* #3/66: *The Laws of Magic*, p. 31) can provide inspiration for deciding what concepts could be associated with which reagents.

EYE OF NEWT AND TOE OF FROG

The key to making any elixir is in the alchemical ingredients (called “reagents”) that go into it. Without the right balance, no amount of brilliance will get you the mixture you’re looking for. And while what’s being mixed isn’t the *only* determining factor of whether an alchemist can put something usable together, it is the most important.

I know nothing about alchemy.

– Patrick Rothfuss, *The Wise Man’s Fear*

PRIMA MATERIA

While there are many exotic reagents to choose from, eight in particular are valued above all others. Together, they serve as the backbone of alchemical science: the prima materia, or “first matter.” This table lists the names and BRYWs of the prima materia.

Reagent	BRYW	Reagent	BRYW
Albedum	+0/+0/+0/+1	Melanos	+0/-1/+0/+0
Citrinitum	+0/+0/+1/+0	Nigredum	+1/+0/+0/+0
Ios	-1/+0/+0/+0	Rubedum	+0/+1/+0/+0
Leucos	+0/+0/-1/+0	Xanthos	+0/+0/+0/-1

These reagents are so highly valued because they lack the “contaminants” frequently found in other naturally occurring reagents. Simply put, prima materia allows an alchemist to create any given elixir in the most efficient way possible.

Example: Bertrand, an amateur alchemist, wants to create a Healing elixir (+0/+1/+1/+0) he hopes to sell for a tidy profit. Using only prima materia, he would need to combine rubedum (+0/+1/+0/+0) with citrinitum (+0/+0/+1/+0) to complete the appropriate formula. If he were to use a reagent that had a BRYW of +1/+0/+2/-1, he would have to add more ingredients – such as rubedum (+0/+1/+0/+0), albedum (+0/+0/+0/+1), ios (-1/+0/+0/+0), and leucos (+0/+0/-1/+0) – to produce the same result. Not very efficient . . .

See *The Price of Greatness* (p. 6) for details on the cost and weight of a measure of prima materia.

Brewing Prima Materia

The prima materia themselves can each be “brewed” by combining reagents until they match the BRYW of the chosen prima materia. Alchemists frequently do this to simplify any future alchemy they might wish to perform. This requires one week and a successful unmodified Alchemy roll. Anyone with the Alchemy skill is considered to have these “formulas” memorized. Although failure results in wasted materials, there are no additional consequences for critical failure.

Example: Bertrand’s lab is getting a little cluttered with all the reagents he keeps, and he’s decided he

should downsize. After all, what if he needs to take his lab on the road? He decides to combine a natural reagent with a BRYW +0/-1/+0/+1 with a different natural reagent that has a BRYW of +0/+1/+0/-2 to produce a measure of xanthos (+0/+0/+0/-1), something much easier to carry and with many potential uses.

THE ESSENCE OF CREATION

In addition to brewing prima materia, alchemists can also concentrate them into their various “essences” (essence of citrinitum, essence of xanthos, etc.). Each essence has an identical BRYW to its base materia except that its only non-zero stat is doubled (+0/+0/-2/+0 for essence of leucos, +0/+2/+0/+0 for essence of rubedum, etc.).

The process of creating an essence requires four measures of the corresponding materia (e.g., four measures of citrinitum for one essence of citrinitum), one week, and a successful Alchemy roll. Like brewing base prima materia (see above), anyone with the Alchemy skill is considered to have these processes memorized. Failure results in wasted materials. Critical failure when creating an essence merits a roll on the *Alchemy Critical Failure Table* (*GURPS Magic*, p. 210). Treat the “effect of the elixir or its reverse” as *incapacitating* (p. B428), lasting 1d minutes based on the essence the alchemist was trying to concentrate; see the table below. No one ever said alchemy was without its risks!

Essence of . . .	Affliction
Albedum	Retching
Citrinitum	Ecstasy
Ios	Hallucinating
Leucos	Agony
Melanos	Unconsciousness
Nigredum	Paralysis
Rubedum	Seizure
Xanthos	Choking

Improvising Reagents

Be cautious when deciding what can and cannot be used as a reagent in alchemy. Due to the nature of many settings, adventurers may find themselves with hundreds of measures of reagents after slaying a single colossal beast if the GM isn’t careful. While this isn’t exactly unrealistic (a human body can be worth hundreds of thousands of dollars if many of the organs can be harvested for transplant), it may lead to unforeseen inflation of the adventurers’ resources. To combat this, try to avoid assigning alchemical value to things that are exceptionally plentiful on a monster’s body (skin, blood, bone) and instead assign BRYWs to the more singular bits (eyes, brain, heart). This can also help to enhance the sense of wonder implicit in alchemy as a science when compared to other more mundane trades; a talented blacksmith may be able to forge a mighty suit of plate from a dragon’s plentiful scales, but an alchemist with the heart of one can work *miracles!*

NATURAL REAGENTS

Alchemists (especially the adventuring kind) will frequently want to find interesting uses for the many peculiar substances they encounter. Reagents that are *not* prima materia have a BRYW that includes at least two non-zero statistics, again ranging from -2 to +2, representing their association with various alchemical concepts (see *Alchemical Associations*, p. 4). See p. 9 for a list of example natural reagents and their statistics. The GM is encouraged to improvise the statistics of reagents in play to avoid excessive preparation.

In addition to its BRYW, each natural reagent should be given a listed weight, representing how much of the material is required to get a full measure's worth.

Example: Bertrand, having taken up with an adventuring crew in hopes of finding better reagents, has slain a basilisk with his comrades and ponders what might be alchemically useful. The GM rules that the basilisk's eyes and spleen are suitable alchemical reagents, and decides on their BRYWs (+1/+1/-1/+2 and +1/+0/-1/+2 respectively) after a moment's consideration. The GM makes a quick note regarding each reagent's BRYW and weight, and tells Bertrand how much he can hope to harvest.

Double, Double . . .

Alchemy is less about combining the chemical properties of reagents and more about combining their magical properties. As such, no reagent may be used more than once in any given elixir (excluding when an alchemist is making "essences" or multiple batches of the same elixir). Because alchemists are essentially intermingling the "souls" of the substances they use, adding additional measures of the same reagent to an elixir does nothing but waste the reagent in question, having no effect on the elixir at all.

SPECIFIC REAGENTS

Some elixirs are so powerful that they require more than an appropriate balance of reddening, whitening, blackening, and yellowing to create. Generally, any elixirs that have especially profound or permanent effects (or any elixir found in *GURPS: Magic* with an ingredient cost higher than \$400) should call

for a specific highly rare and/or valuable ingredient *in addition* to its BRYW. These specific reagents may be as "mundane" as a particular amount of gold shavings or diamond dust or as extraordinary as a strand of hair plucked from the God of Battle's own head. What each powerful elixir requires is up to the GM, though it should be thematically appropriate to the elixir in question. Specific reagents for less-powerful "super elixirs" (Invulnerability, Invisibility, Fertility, etc.) may be available for purchase, albeit at a steep cost. Reagents for the most powerful alchemical concoctions (Youth, Resurrection, Philosophers' Stone, etc.) frequently require entire adventures to secure.

THE PRICE OF GREATNESS

Reagents are not cheap. Even primitive alchemy can perform feats that modern medicine cannot, and the cost of materials necessary for creating those feats is appropriately high.

A measure of prima materia is worth 2.5% of campaign starting wealth (\$25 at TL3, \$500 at TL8) and weighs 0.1 lb. in a small glass vial. Concentrated prima materia (essence of rubedum, essence of leucos, etc.) is worth 12.5% of campaign starting wealth per measure (\$125 at TL3, \$2,500 at TL8) and also weighs 0.1 lb.

Pricing natural reagents is a little more complicated. Per measure, the value of a natural reagent is equal to the sum of each BRYW statistic *squared*, divided by the number of non-zero statistics, and *multiplied* by 2.5% of campaign starting wealth. Each natural reagent has its own specific weight, typically between 0.5 and 5 lbs. per measure.

Example: It's been months, and Bertrand has not yet found a decent use for his basilisk spleen. He's decided to sell it to a fellow alchemist. Bertrand lives in a TL3 society, and the basilisk spleen has a BRYW of +1/+0/-1/+2. As a result, each measure of basilisk spleen is worth \$50: +1 squared (1), plus -1 squared (1), plus +2 squared (4), divided by the number of non-zero statistics (3), and multiplied by 2.5% of campaign starting wealth (\$25).

This is strictly the *alchemical* value of any given reagent. An eccentric nobleman may very well pay thousands for a dragon's horn to use as a paperweight. Many specific reagents other than precious stones or metals are likely priceless!

For the game mechanics of acquiring reagents while out adventuring, see *Dead Monster Bits*, *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons*, p. 13, and *Naturally Occurring Loot*, *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 16: Wilderness Adventures*, p. 44.

For that matter, the elements found in a human being is all junk that you can buy in any market with a child's allowance. Humans are pretty cheaply made.

– Hiromu Arakawa, Fullmetal Alchemist, Volume 1

TOIL AND TROUBLE

Performing alchemy requires a laboratory, appropriate reagents, the proper formula, and an ample supply of distilled water. As previously stated, distilled water (+0/+0/+0/+0) forms the basis of all elixirs; any alchemist with a lab can distill water (no cost or skill roll required).

“Tequila?” I asked him, skeptically. “Are you sure on that one? I thought the base for a love potion was supposed to be champagne.”

“Champagne, tequila, what’s the difference, so long as it’ll lower her inhibitions?” Bob said.

– Jim Butcher, Storm Front

FORMULARIES

Even though each formula is only represented by four statistics, brewing an elixir demands more than boiling water and adding a few reagents. As such, alchemists still need a formulary containing the appropriate “recipe,” whether or not they know the BRYW associated with a given elixir. The formula contains all of the intricate specifics related to the brewing of the elixir in question (temperature, when to add reagents, how to prepare them, etc.). Alchemists who attempt to brew an elixir without the appropriate formula must muddle through on their own (-6 on all Alchemy rolls, though this penalty may be reduced by taking extra time). Assuming the alchemist can take proper notes during the brewing process, any elixir successfully brewed without a formula may be added to the alchemist’s personal formulary. Alternatively, if the alchemist has character points to spend, the alchemist may purchase the elixir formula as a technique to memorize. See *Making Alchemical Items* in **GURPS Magic**, particularly p. 210, for details on elixir techniques.

The availability of formularies for purchase varies greatly depending on the setting. In a TL3 fantasy setting dominated by guilds, formularies are likely preciously guarded secrets entrusted only to ranking members of the appropriate guild. Conversely, formularies in a TL8 magi-tech society are likely shared on the Internet and accessed for little to no cost at all.

Assume the base cost for any formulary is equal to five times the reagent cost of all its listed formulas. If magic or alchemy is exceptionally common in the setting, divide the cost of any formulary by 10; governments looking to restrict alchemy in these settings will seek to control the required tools and materials rather than the information itself. If the setting includes some kind of open information-sharing platform like the Internet (whether it is technological or supernatural),

divide the cost by 10 *again!* If magic or alchemy is believed to not function in the setting, *multiply* this cost by 10; finding real formulas among all the ineffective ones makes the good ones especially valuable.

Good- and fine-quality formularies may be purchased for five times and 20 times normal cost respectively. The quality of a formulary reduces the default penalty for any formulas it contains, but may never provide a net bonus.

LABORATORIES

A laboratory generally includes a ready supply of clean containers appropriate to the alchemist’s TL, plenty of work-space, and assorted tools for preparing reagents. Creating elixirs requires one of the following kits, none of which may be packed away until said elixirs have finished brewing (packing up early ruins all currently brewing elixirs).

Alchemy Kit, Portable. A small collection of containers, cookware, and burners appropriate to TL that can fit on a countertop. Counts as improvised equipment (-2 on all rolls that require a laboratory) for Alchemy skill. Fits inside a briefcase and requires 30 minutes to set up or pack. Requires 10 square feet of space. \$500, 10 lbs.

Alchemy Kit, Tabletop. Containers, cookware, burners, and measuring implements to cover a large table. Counts as basic equipment for Alchemy skill and improvised equipment (-2 to all rolls that require a laboratory) for Chemistry skill. Fits inside a large steamer trunk, and requires one hour to set up or pack. Requires 20 square feet of space. \$1,000, 20 lbs.

Alchemy Lab, Small. All the equipment contained in the tabletop kit, plus specialized tools to help sublimate, calcify, distill, and otherwise prepare reagents. Counts as good equipment (+1 on all rolls that require a laboratory) for Alchemy skill and basic equipment for Chemistry skill. Fits inside a wagon (or large van), and requires five hours to set up or pack. Requires 200 square feet of space. \$5,000, 200 lbs.

Alchemy Lab, Large. Dozens of containers, various cookware, several burners, and every imaginable measuring implement, all of the highest quality available, plus enough specialized equipment to perform virtually any alchemical process. Counts as fine equipment (+2 on all rolls that require a laboratory) for Alchemy skill and good equipment (+1) for Chemistry skill. Fits in numerous wagons (or a full-sized semi-truck trailer) and requires 20 hours to set up or pack. Requires 2,000 square feet of space. \$20,000, 2,000 lbs.

Alchemy Lab, Facility. An alchemist’s dreamland! More equipment than anyone will likely ever need, plus state-of-the-art devices to assist and even automate many alchemical processes. Counts as very fine equipment (+TL/2 on all rolls that require a laboratory) for Alchemy skill and fine equipment (+2) for Chemistry skill. Not legitimately feasible until the Mechanized Age (TL6+). Fits on a large trade ship (or cargo plane), and requires 100 hours to set up or pack. Requires 20,000 square feet of space. Costs 100 times campaign starting wealth (though not generally available for purchase) and may require technicians and mechanics simply to maintain the equipment. 20,000 lbs.

ROOT OF HEMLOCK

Although it is ultimately less powerful, the Herb Lore skill does serve as a more affordable alternative to traditional Alchemy. While Herb Lore is handled in largely the same way as Alchemy, there are some key differences.

GATHERING HERBS

Most herbalists will seek to procure their own herbs to further reduce their cost of producing elixirs. This can be done by anyone who possesses both the Herb Lore *and* Naturalist skills; a person needs at least a cursory understanding of an herb's properties in order to recognize it as potentially useful in creating elixirs. Each attempt requires a successful Naturalist roll, and nets herbs worth approximately 5% of campaign starting wealth, plus an extra 0.5% times margin of success. Which herbs the herbalist finds and their properties are up to the GM. All herb-gathering rolls require eight hours.

Herbalists may also search for reagents with specific properties. The herbalist must select which traits he wishes to search for and their desired value, such as "Blackening of -2," or "Reddening of +1 and Whitening of +2." For each specified trait, the herbalist suffers -2 to the Naturalist roll (to a maximum penalty of -8 for an entirely dictated reagent). Success indicates a single measure was found; critical success instead nets 1d/2 (round up) measures. Specific reagents appropriate to the Herb Lore skill may be sought at -10.

INHERENT LIMITS

The largest limitation of Herb Lore is its comparatively small list of available elixirs. Herb Lore cannot create any elixir with any *negative* BRYW statistics. As such, reagents with negative BRYW statistics are only useful for bringing a statistic down to +1 or +0. This limitation can help the GM control which elixirs herbalists can make – if you don't want them to have it, simply make sure that it includes at least one negative statistic.

Instead of formularies, herbalists use more primitive references called "herbals." These books do *not* negate the -6 penalty for working without a formulary (or not having the formula memorized). Instead, they do provide the herbalist with a basic recipe, revealing a given formula's BRYW to the

herbalist. Herbals of better-than-average quality can provide a bonus to help negate default penalties, although, like formularies, these never provide a net bonus. Herbals generally cost 1/10 times the amount of an otherwise identical formulary.

However, they are much harder to find for purchase; alchemists write dissertations and formal studies about their craft, but herbalists are rarely concerned with such things.

Equipment

Herbalists can't use the more advanced tools available to alchemists. Herb-lore facilities do not exist, and while theoretically possible, large herb-lore laboratories are extraordinarily uncommon. Small herb-lore labs are likely the culmination of years spent slowly collecting useful tools and apparatuses. Tabletop or portable kits are by far the most common setups.

Herb-lore kits and laboratories otherwise function exactly as alchemy kits and labs (see p. 7), except that they count as equipment for the Herb Lore and (to a lesser extent) Pharmacy (Herbal) skills instead of Alchemy and Chemistry. Herbalists and alchemists may not make use of each other's laboratories.

THE MATERIAL DIFFERENCE

The greatest *strength* of Herb Lore is the herbalist's ability to use relatively commonplace plants instead of the natural reagents frequently required by alchemical formulas. These are treated just like any other natural reagent except that they are utterly useless to those using Alchemy skill, and they cost only one-half the amount of an otherwise identical natural reagent. Weight per measure is assigned by the GM.

Herbalists may make use of standard alchemical reagents if they so choose, including prima materia. The primary difference here is that herbalists may not "brew" prima materia, which can only be created via Alchemy skill. Due to the more expensive nature of alchemical reagents, herbalists likely only use them if nothing else is available, or if they happen upon them for free.

THE ALCHEMICAL CAMPAIGN

Running a game that features alchemy significantly can pose interesting questions for the players and GM.

AN ALCHEMICAL ECONOMY

The amount of money an alchemist can expect to make for his services depends greatly on the setting. In a setting where alchemy is simply another trade like any other, an alchemist's

Wealth level (and subsequent income) might simply be Average for the given TL. In a setting where alchemical secrets are jealously guarded or the profession is especially revered, alchemists should have a corresponding Wealth level of at least Comfortable (or the same level as professional mages if the setting includes them). Herbalists typically have a Wealth level one lower than their alchemist peers.

Alchemy can be adversely affected by technology. If mundane technology is capable of producing similar results to alchemy at a lower comparable cost, alchemists likely charge less for their services in order to remain in demand. Depending on how much of alchemy's purview can be replaced and how cheap the technology is, consider reducing the typical Wealth level of alchemists by one or more.

The value of an elixir is calculated as the cost of the elixir's required ingredients in prima materia (including essences) plus the cost of any special reagents plus 25% of the alchemist's monthly income per week of brew time. This is what the alchemist can sell the potion for; if it's being bought and resold by a merchant, *double* the final retail price that the customer pays. Elixirs produced with the Herb Lore skill are treated as having 50% of the listed ingredient cost plus 25% of the herbalist's monthly income per week of brew time, giving herbal elixirs a correspondingly lower price. Herbalists generally control the market of common, simple elixirs, while alchemists sell specialty draughts at a premium.

THE ADVENTURING ALCHEMIST

Under the default rules for alchemy found in *GURPS Magic*, alchemy is hardly the kind of craft a professional adventurer would find much use for. This is largely due to the immense investment of time and the alchemist's inability to leave his concoctions for more than the time it takes to get a good night's rest. If adventuring PCs express interest in pursuing alchemy, consider making the following changes:

- One week of brewing is considered 40 hours. Alchemists may work more or less than normal to produce elixirs more quickly or allow themselves more free time.
- Elixirs do not spoil unless they have been unattended for 72 hours.
- Anyone with Alchemy skill may attempt an unmodified Alchemy roll to prepare the brewing process for being left alone for an extended period of time. This requires one hour per elixir and does not count toward the brewing time. Success means the elixir is considered "attended" and will not spoil for another 72 hours. An adventurer can pay an apprentice or journeyman alchemist to act as a "potion minder" for up to eight elixirs. This service costs 1/20 of the hireling's monthly income (often one or two Wealth levels beneath that of a professional alchemist) per elixir per extension of the attended time.
- An alchemist may brew multiple *different* elixirs at once, suffering -2 to all Alchemy rolls for every additional kind of elixir. This may be combined with brewing multiple doses (thus, two doses of one and two of another would incur -4: -2 for the extra variety, -1 for the additional "first" elixir, and -1 for the additional "second" elixir).

ADAPTING EXISTING ELIXIRS AND REAGENTS

Various *GURPS* supplements – *Types of Elixirs*, *GURPS Magic*, pp. 213-219, in particular – have a wealth of existing elixirs and reagents that players and the GM may find inspiring, and it seems wasteful to not use them. To do this, simply select a thematically appropriately BRYW (and potentially

specific reagents) so that the reagent cost using prima materia is approximately equal to the existing listed ingredient cost (specified in the *Recipe* line). See *The Formulary* (below) for suggested BRYW values for select reagents and potions.

Example: The elixir of Fire Resistance (*GURPS Magic*, p. 216) has an ingredient cost of \$300 at TL3. An appropriate BRYW might be +1/+1/-2/+2, requiring one measure each of nigredum (\$25), rubedum (\$25), essence of leucos (\$125), and essence of albedum (\$125).

Alchemists should feel like mad scientists, hunting for useful ingredients and improvising creative recipe solutions.

THE FORMULARY

The following common reagents and elixirs are meant to illustrate the BRYW system and to provide a few measures of inspiration.

Sample Natural Reagents

Alchemists and herbalists can make use of alchemical reagents, but only herbalists will gain benefit from herbal reagents. The GM should adjust the stats of the materials to suit the campaign setting.

Golden Scarab Husks

Type: Alchemical. BRYW: +0/+0/+2/+1.
Weight: 0.5 lbs./measure. Cost (TL3/TL8): \$62.50/\$1,250.

Ghoul Liver

Type: Alchemical. BRYW: -1/-2/+0/+1.
Weight: 1 lb./measure. Cost (TL3/TL8): \$50/\$1,000.

Quartz Crystal

Type: Alchemical. BRYW: +1/+0/+0/+1.
Weight: 4 lbs./measure. Cost (TL3/TL8): \$25/\$500.

Wyvern Venom Gland

Type: Alchemical. BRYW: -1/-1/+0/+2.
Weight: 1 lb./measure. Cost (TL3/TL8): \$50/\$1,000.

Deadly Nightshade

Type: Herbal. BRYW: -2/-1/+0/+1.
Weight: 3 lbs./measure. Cost (TL3/TL8): \$25/\$500.

Henbane

Type: Herbal. BRYW: -1/+0/+0/-1.
Weight: 2.5 lbs./measure. Cost (TL3/TL8): \$12.50/\$250.

Mandrake Root

Type: Herbal. BRYW: +1/+2/+2/+1.
Weight: 1 lb./measure. Cost (TL3/TL8): \$31.25/\$625.

Saffron

Type: Herbal. BRYW: +0/+2/+2/-2.
Weight: 0.5 lbs./measure. Cost (TL3/TL8): \$50/\$1,000.

Sample Elixirs

See p. 6 for details about *specific reagents*; the ones given here are suggestions. The GM also should adjust the BRYW values to suit the campaign setting, particularly if he wants certain potions available to herbalists.

Elixir of Battle

Effect: See **GURPS Magic**, p. 214.
Form: Any but pastille.
BRYW: +0/+1/+0/+2.
Specific Reagents: None.
Process: 2 weeks; defaults to Alchemy-2.

Elixir of Invulnerability

Effect: See **GURPS Magic**, p. 214.
Form: Any but pastille.
BRYW: +2/+1/-2/+2.
Specific Reagents: 12 ounces of adamant, worth \$600.
Process: 6 weeks; defaults to Alchemy-4.

Elixir of Luck

Effect: See **GURPS Magic**, p. 216.
Form: Any.
BRYW: +1/-1/+1/+2.
Specific Reagents: None.
Process: 6 weeks; defaults to Alchemy-3.

Elixir of Healing

Effect: See **GURPS Magic**, p. 217.
Form: Any but pastille.
BRYW: +1/-1/+1/+2.
Specific Reagents: None.
Process: 1 week; defaults to Alchemy-1.

Elixir of Gullibility

Effect: See **GURPS Magic**, p. 219.
Form: Any but pastille.
BRYW: +0/+0/+1/-2.

Specific Reagents: None.
Process: 2 weeks; defaults to Alchemy-1.

Elixir of Hearing

Effect: See **GURPS Magic**, p. 219.
Form: Ointment only; must be applied directly to the ears.
BRYW: +1/+1/-1/+1.
Specific Reagents: None.
Process: 1 week; defaults to Alchemy-1.

Elixir of Love

Effect: See **GURPS Magic**, p. 219.
Form: Any.
BRYW: +1/+2/+1/+1.
Specific Reagents: A blue rose that bloomed in winter.
Process: 3 weeks; defaults to Alchemy-1.

Philosopher's Stone

Effect: See **GURPS Magic**, p. 221.
Form: Special.
BRYW: +2/-2/-2/+2; -2/+2/+2/-2; +2/+2/-2/-2; -2/-2/+2/+2.
Specific Reagents: 100 lbs. of lead (\$1,250); 10 lbs. of copper (\$625); 1 lb. of silver (\$1,000); 0.1 lb. of gold (\$2,000)
Process: Creating a Philosopher's Stone requires the completion of four separate brewing processes, each requiring the associate specific reagents listed above. Each process takes 13 weeks and defaults to Alchemy-8, a failure on any of which ruins the as-of-yet used materials.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James is a collection of tissues presently clinging to its mortal coil in Vancouver, Washington. He holds degrees in business finance, managerial economics, and self-deprecating humor. Beginning with *Dungeons and Dragons 3.5* 15 years ago, he has written dozens of other roleplaying adventures and articles, many of which he hopes to someday share with the world.

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THE MAGE-HUNTER

BY SEAN PUNCH

Magic is *everywhere* in the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game*, including in the hands of certain as-Sharak, Demons from Between the Stars, dragons, and vampires; the shamans of most humanoid races; all opposing bards, druids, clerics, and wizards; and of course *liches*. Such foes needn't appear in person to be a menace – they can leave behind spells, not to mention curses, magical traps, potions painted onto door-knobs, and more.

The problems with dealing with all this stuff are twofold. First, while bringing along spellcasters of your own gives

access to Counterspell and Dispel Magic, those spells are time- and energy-intensive. Second, though non-casters can take Magic Resistance, this is bad for their life expectancy, as it makes healing and buffing difficult.

Adding a mage-hunter to the party is a solution. Here's somebody who can go toe-to-toe with magic-using foes yet benefit from the aid of magic-wielding friends. And while members of the profession are no faster than casters at dispelling hostile spells, they can strike through potent magical defenses to eliminate such magic at the source.

MAGE-HUNTER

You belong to a warrior order devoted to hunting troublesome magic-users. You may not have the barbarian's strength, or the scout or swashbuckler's weapon specialization – but then you don't duel fighters. Your foes are evil high priests, liches, megalomaniac archmages, squid cultists, and anyone else using the black arts to wrong ordinary folk. You've honed mind and spirit for this singular purpose, you're *fast*, and your guild helps you procure specialized gear for the task.

Attributes: ST 12 [20]; DX 15 [100]; IQ 12 [40]; HT 12 [20].

Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-1/1d+2; BL 29 lbs.; HP 12 [0]; Will 12 [0]; Per 12 [0]; FP 12 [0]; Basic Speed 7.00 [5]; Basic Move 7 [0].

Combating magic with magic usually leads to a stalemate – too often a destructive one. The mage-hunter's blade is both safer and surer.

– Juniper Josse,
Mage-Hunter

Advantages: Dead Stop [1]; Mage-Hunter Gear [1]; Magical Toughening 1 [5]; Selective Magic Resistance 1 [4]; and Spellpiercer [15]. • A further 40 points chosen from among:

ST +1 to +4 [10/level]

DX +1 or +2 [20/level]

HT +1 to +4 [10/level]

Will +1 to +8 [5/level]

FP +1 to +4 [3/level]

Basic Speed +1.00 or

+2.00 [20/level]

Acute Caster Sense

[2/level]

Caster Sense [10]

Combat Reflexes [15]

Extra Attack 1 [25]

Fearlessness [2/level] or

Unfazeable [15]

Fit [5] or Very Fit [15]

Hard to Subdue [2/level]

High Pain Threshold [10]

Higher Purpose 1-3

(Mage-Hunting) [5/level]

Languages (Ancient,

Demontongue, or Elder

Tongue) [3 or 6/language]

Luck [15] or

Extraordinary Luck [30]

Magical Toughening [5/level]

Mind Shield [4/level]

Night Vision 1-9 [1/level]

Nondetection [5/level]

Rapid Healing [5]

Resistant to Disease 1-6

[1/level]

Resistant to Poison 1-6

[1/level]

Selective Magic Resistance

[4/level]

Signature Gear [1/item]

Trademark Move [1/move]

Weapon Bond [1]

Disadvantages: -15 points chosen from among these traits:

Bloodlust [-10*]

Code of Honor

(Soldier's) [-10]

Greed [-15*]

Intolerance (Spellcasters) [-5]

Obsession (Slay some specific type of

powerful magic-using foe) [-5*]

Vow (Never use magic items) [-10]

- Another -15 points chosen from among those traits or:

Frightens Animals [-10]	Unnatural Features 1-5
Paranoia [-10]	[-1/level]
Social Stigma	Weirdness Magnet [-15]
(Criminal Record) [-5] or	Wounded [-5]
(Excommunicated) [-10]	

- A further -20 points chosen from either of the two previous lists or:

Callous [-5]	Selfless [-5*]
Honesty [-10*]	Sense of Duty (Adventuring
Loner [-5*]	Companions) [-5]
No Sense of Humor [-10]	Stubbornness [-5*]
Overconfidence [-5*]	

Skills: One of these two 12-point melee skills packages:

1. *Executioner:* Any one of Polearm-18 [12], Spear-18 [12], Staff-18 [12], Two-Handed Axe/Mace-18 [12], or Two-Handed Sword-18 [12].
2. *Fireball Blocker:* Any one of Axe/Mace-16 [4], Broadsword-16 [4], Shortsword-16 [4], or Spear-16 [4] – and also Shield-18 [8].

- One of these ranged skills:

Bow-17 [8]	Thrown Weapon (Axe/Mace
Crossbow-18 [8]	or Spear)-18 [8]
Throwing-17 [8]	

- All of these skills:

Brawling-15 [1]	Stealth-15 [2]
Hazardous Materials-12 [2]	Tactics-10 [1]
Hidden Lore (Magic Items or	Thaumatology-11 [4]
Magical Writings)-12 [2]	Wrestling-15 [2]
Occultism-12 [2]	

- Five of these skills:

Alchemy-9 [1]	Gesture-12 [1]
Armory (Melee Weapons or	Hiking-11 [1]
Missile Weapons)-11 [1]	Intimidation-11 [1]
Body Sense-13 [1]	Knot-Tying-15 [1]
Carousing-12 [1]	Observation-11 [1]
Climbing-14 [1]	Scrounging-12 [1]
Fast-Draw (any)-15 [1]	Streetwise-11 [1]
First Aid-12 [1]	

Special Skills: Dispel Magic-12 [4]; Mental Strength-13 [2]; and Mind Block-12 [2].

* Multiplied for self-control number; see *Adventurers*, p. 55.

Customization Notes

Mage-hunters are differentiated heavily by combat style: Some block Missile and jet spells with a shield while hurling weapons (Shield, Axe/Mace or Spear, and matching Thrown Weapon). Others prefer a two-handed approach (two-handed melee skill, Bow or Crossbow, and Fast-Draw (Arrow)). Many chuck grenades – like blinding powder, magebane, and visibility dust – and select Throwing for ranged work, possibly with Fast-Draw (Potion). Idealistic swordsmen might pick

a one- or two-handed sword skill and the relevant Fast-Draw specialty.

There's a lot of range with advantages. Purists favor mage-hunting tricks: Caster Sense, Higher Purpose, and Nondetection; additional Magical Toughening or Selective Magic Resistance; and sometimes Fearlessness, Hard to Subdue, and/or Mind Shield to foil magical fear, sleep, and mental control. Others focus on the kill: higher Basic Speed to get in a spellcaster's face before casting can happen, Extra Attack for a second shot if a Blocking spell spoils the first, and Signature Gear, Trademark Move, or Weapon Bond with favorite weapons. Either might want more HT and Will, useful against adventuring dangers *and* magic; one of the enemy's Languages; Luck for a second chance at resisting spells; or Night Vision, Resistant to Disease, or Unfazeable for battling plague-infested undead horrors in the dark. All of ST, DX, Combat Reflexes, Fit, High Pain Threshold, and Rapid Healing help make a better fighter against *non-magic-using* opponents.

Disadvantage and background skill choices add color. Are you a Loner who collects bounties, motivated by Greed and an Obsession with a big score, putting a cash value on life (Bloodlust and Callous) – and possibly facing a Social Stigma after you murdered the wrong spellcaster? Then you might live life on the wild side and need Intimidation and Streetwise. Or maybe you were horribly wronged by a caster, and have Intolerance of such people, a Vow not to use magic items, and a horrible experience that scarred you with No Sense of Humor, Paranoia, and Wounded. In that case you might learn Alchemy and Body Sense to handle future magical badness. You could even be a paladin of sorts, with honorable traits like Code of Honor, Honesty, Selfless, and Sense of Duty, the gods bringing magical trouble to you via Weirdness Magnet. That suggests soldiering skills like Armory, First Aid, Hiking, and Scrounging.

Like all warriors, mage-hunters often use quirk points for *Extra Money* (*Dungeon Fantasy Adventurers*, p. 95) – their specialized gear isn't cheap, even at 10% off.

SPECIAL MAGE-HUNTER TRAITS

Mage-hunters may raise Will *or* HT to 25 instead of 20 – mostly to resist magic! (You needn't choose until you raise a score above 20.) They also have access to several special abilities.

Caster Sense

10 points

You can detect beings capable of spellcasting, even if they've concealed their magical auras. This requires a Concentrate maneuver, after which the GM makes a secret Perception roll for you, applying range modifiers from the *Size and Speed/Range Table* (*Exploits*, pp. 97-98). Success means the GM tells you the direction to the nearest caster – or, if you're concentrating on an individual, whether that person is a spellcaster. You'll also get a vague sense of power level: “dabbler” (e.g., apprentice or dispensable cultist), “typical adventurer,” or “boss” (high priest, archmage, lich, etc.).

You may follow up success with an IQ roll to discern whether the magician you've sensed wields clerical, druidic, wizardly, or weirder magic. Critical success on this roll provides *details*; e.g., "A wizard with Magery 6 and numerous Necromantic spells."

Dead Stop

1 point

Maintainable spells normally run for the listed duration even if the caster perishes – but at the moment when you, personally, slay a spellcaster, you may pay the 1 FP to end such a spell early (*Canceling Spells*, ***Dungeon Fantasy Spells***, p. 11) on your victim's behalf. You may also end a spell with effects that endure indefinitely in the absence of Remove Curse – e.g., Curse, Flesh to Stone, or Suspended Animation – if you pay 20 FP. For most mage-hunters, the latter means reaching negative FP and losing HP (***Dungeon Fantasy Exploits***, p. 63). In both cases, FP cost is *per spell*.

You can only end *spells you know about*, generally because you witnessed the casting or someone who's aware of it told you. You must actually slay (or otherwise destroy, in the case of demons, undead, etc.) your target to use this ability, and invoke it the instant you make the kill. You cannot, for instance, kill them and then wait for allies to cast Identify Spell – though a friend who cast it *before* the killing blow can share information with you.

Higher Purpose (Mage-Hunting)

5 points/level

You're not just a mage-hunter – you're a zealot! Once you've identified an opponent as a malicious spellcaster by witnessing black magic firsthand or by using Caster Sense (p. 12), you get +1 per level (maximum three) of this advantage on all *attack* and *damage* rolls you make in combat with that foe, and on all *defense* and *resistance* rolls when they go after you.

The catch is that once you witness your prey using magic to selfish, destructive, or evil ends, or you're attacked by the caster (any attempt to use magic on you against your will counts), you *must* defeat that opponent or go down trying! If you knowingly back down, make a deal, flee, etc., when facing a magic-wielding wrongdoer, your advantage bonus becomes a penalty against all magic-users you face for the next 1d days.

This ability involves a binding supernatural pact that a small-but-vocal mage-hunter faction feels is almost as worrisome as the magic they've sworn to fight. Thus, this trait is *optional* (though very common).

Mage-Hunter Gear

1 point

Membership in the Order of Mage-Hunters means you enjoy 10% off the final price of specialized gear for defeating spellcasters.

This includes meteoric weapons, shields, and armor (immune to spells); blinding powder (to prevent enemies from seeing to easily cast spells); visibility dust (to reveal invisible mages); alchemical antidote (to deal with baneful potions); magebane (for neutralizing wizards); and magic resistance potions and Moly amulets. The GM may add further, similar equipment. The Order *wants* these items out there – you're welcome to shop for friends, too!

Magical Toughening

5 points/level

Your personal aura provides Damage Resistance against damage caused *directly* by magical spells, curses, items, traps, etc. If the damaging effect is a spell, or a non-spell that Magic Resistance helps against, or is explicitly described as "magical" or channeling mana, sanctity, or Nature's strength, this ability protects. It has no effect on the claws, teeth, fire breath, etc. of magical creatures, however.

MAGE-HUNTERS IN GURPS

This 250-point template is designed and formatted for the **DFRPG**. Familiar traits sometimes work differently there. Differences – and changes needed for **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy** – appear below. Alternatively, adopt the **DFRPG** versions!

Hazardous Materials: Means "Hazardous Materials (Magical)."

Languages: Spoken and written comprehension are available separately, but only at Native. Replace "[3 or 6/language]" with the customary "[2-6/language]." Ancient, Demontongue, and Elder Tongue are spoken by millennia-old undead, demons, and Elder Things, respectively.

Resistant to Disease/Poison: Give +1/level to resist. Replace with "Resistant to Disease (+3) or (+8) [3 or 5]" and "Resistant to Poison (+3) [5]."

Signature Gear: This doesn't buy gear; it "insures" a bought item of any value. Replace with the standard "Signature Gear [Varies]."

Stubbornness: Gains a self-control roll. Replace "[5]" with "[5]."

There are also some new traits that merit a few notes in **GURPS**:

Caster Sense: Detect (Spellcasters) (p. B48), renamed.

Dead Stop: Perk roughly equal in power to the holy warrior's Shtick (***Dungeon Fantasy 1***, p. 8).

Dispel Magic: Spell repurposed as esoteric skill. The GM may insist on a perk like the innkeeper's Piecemeal Knowledge (***Dungeon Fantasy 11***, p. 28), but the many prerequisites make this unnecessary for game balance.

Mage-Hunter Gear: Perk similar to Dwarven Gear and Elven Gear (***Dungeon Fantasy 3***, p. 6).

Magical Toughening: DR (Force Field, +20%; Limited, Magic -20%), renamed.

Nondetection: Thief power-up from ***Dungeon Fantasy 11***, p. 35.

Selective Magic Resistance: Magic Resistance (Cosmic, +100%), renamed. This degree of Cosmic is what **GURPS Power-Ups 4**, p. 8 calls "cheating."

Spellpiercer: Wizard-Hunter (Pyramid #3/61, p. 7), renamed.

Trademark Move: Perk suggested on p. 27 of ***Dungeon Fantasy 2***.

Each level of this trait grants DR 1 vs. magic. This protects your entire body – eyes included – plus all gear you wear or carry. It applies *before* armor DR, and helps even against spells that say “Armor doesn’t protect.”

the latter. Thus, you can be buffed and healed – and use helpful potions – without difficulty.

Such Magic Resistance is *still* incompatible with spellcasting talents, meaning that elves and half-elves, with their racial Magery, cannot be mage-hunters.

MAGE-HUNTERS IN ACTION

Mage-hunters need spotlight moments and career goals. The advice below expands *Making Everybody Useful* and *Exceptional Abilities* (*Dungeon Fantasy Exploits*, pp. 87-88, 93), and applies equally in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*.

Making Mage-Hunters Useful: Magic-using enemies to defeat are essential! To showcase the mage-hunter’s abilities, go beyond the battlefield – have some such foes use sorcerous espionage or lurk hidden in town. Don’t forget curses and magical traps to resist, and occult puzzles to solve. Once in a while, just let the delver be a warrior. Occasionally include mage-hunter gear as loot.

Exceptional Abilities for Mage-Hunters: With earned character points, mage-hunters may do all the usual things plus raise *either* Will or HT past 20, up to 25, and add Luck up to Ridiculous Luck. Magical Toughening, Nondetection, and Selective Magic Resistance have *no* upper limit! In town after any adventure on which they defeated magic-using wrongdoers, they may sacrifice earned points for anything Mage-Hunter Gear covers – a reward from the Order. Each point gives \$500 in stuff (at 10% off!), but never money (e.g., three points would allow a magic resistance potion for \$1,440; the remaining \$60 could be gear but not cash).

Spellpiercer

15 points

You’ve trained to penetrate *ongoing* magical protection (not Blocking spells) when wielding mundane weapons! This permits you to deny enemies the Defense Bonus and Damage Resistance from the Shield and Armor spells, make unimpeded cutting attacks through Bladeturning, strike targets protected by Steelwraith with metal weapons, shoot arrows through Missile Shields, and so on. In effect, your weapons behave as if meteoric for offensive purposes; however, they’re not protected from magic cast on them unless they *are* meteoric.

Mage-Hunter Skills

Your special training grants the ability to strengthen your mind against supernatural attack, giving access to the Mental Strength and Mind Block skills (*Dungeon Fantasy Adventurers*, p. 33) without Trained by a Master. You may also learn the following “spell” without needing spellcasting talent.

Dispel Magic

Will/Hard

Defaults: None.

Prerequisites: Dead Stop, Magical Toughening, Selective Magic Resistance, and Spellpiercer.

This skill works like the Dispel Magic *spell* (*Dungeon Fantasy Spells*, p. 51), except that it’s based on projecting your anti-magic aura into the outside world. This demands total concentration. Unlike a spell, supernatural energy (mana, Nature’s strength, or sanctity) doesn’t affect it, it never requires gestures or speech, and it doesn’t take twice as long at skill 9 or less. But also unlike a spell, high skill never reduces energy cost (3 FP times radius in yards) or time required (one Concentrate maneuver per FP).

Nondetection

5 points/level

You know the blind spots of supernatural viewing, and take every measure to foil spells, magical alarms, and so on. Attempts to discern you, your actions, or your motives with Information-class or Knowledge-college spells, or comparable innate supernatural senses, are at -1 per level. The penalty extends to being targeted – monsters that rely on life detection or its ilk to “see” have -1 per level to hit you in combat. This gift doesn’t interfere with *your* abilities or items, and it cannot be sensed by others.

Nondetection is acquired gradually through careful practice: you destroy your hair and fingernail clippings, eat herbs reputed to have shielding effects, walk in no-mana zones at every opportunity, etc. You “fade” after a week of this. This onset time applies when you first buy this ability, too! There’s no easy way to switch it off when you *want* to be found; that takes a week as well, doing things like yelling out the names of demon lords.

Thieves with Stealth at 20+ can also acquire this advantage.

Selective Magic Resistance

4 points/level

Works as Magic Resistance (*Dungeon Fantasy Adventurers*, p. 51) except that it “knows” whether a use of magic on you is beneficial or hostile, and interferes only with

SAMPLE CHARACTER

For a ready-to-play mage-hunter, see p. 15.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sean Punch set out to become a particle physicist in 1985 and ended up as *GURPS* Line Editor in 1995. He has written or developed some 150 *GURPS* releases, revised the game into its fourth edition (2004), and contributed regularly to *Pyramid*. Lead creator of the *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* series, he designed the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game*, released in 2017. Sean has been a gamer since 1979, but devotes most of his spare time to Argentine tango.

JUNIPER JOSSE

247-point Human Mage-Hunter

On her first night in the Town Watch, Juniper's patrol happened upon a vile necromantic ritual. Juniper was sent across town to fetch help from the temple and Wizards' Guild. While she was gone, her captain engaged the ritualists to prevent a human sacrifice. The squad was annihilated, and when Juniper returned to announce that help was coming, the ritual leader – a vampire – overpowered her and decided to turn her. The process was interrupted when a small army of wizards and clerics arrived. The ensuing magical battle defeated the necromancers but left Juniper magically scarred: deathly pale, red-eyed, terrifying to beasts, and unable to stomach garlic or tolerate bright sunlight. She vowed that night to oppose any and all abuses of magic, and was accepted by the Order of Mage-Hunters the following morning.

Juniper is more stalker than fighter, exploiting the sole upside of her vampire encounter – incredible Night Vision – along with Nondetection learned from the Order and plain old Stealth. She wields the greatsword of the vampire who tried to turn her, awarded as compensation by the Watch; though it's nothing special, she's especially capable with it. Her always-extraordinary reflexes are of value in combat and other scary situations (Combat Reflexes gives +2 to Fright Checks). Her formative experience allowed her to develop resistance to magic especially quickly (Selective Magic Resistance 3).

As Juniper *stands out* and provokes bad reactions from guard animals, she tends to use her sneakiness to enter and leave town, too. When she must use the gate, she's a model citizen – and even when sneaking, she'd never break the law. Her current goals are to aid delvers against sinister spellcasters, especially necromancers, with the hope of taking down a *vampire* necromancer someday.

Juniper spent quirk points on higher Stealth (for all the sneaking) plus another \$1,500 that represents her sword and helps pay for her other gear – including a crossbow, meteoric bolts, and a form-fitting magical leather outfit (DR 2). She's blissfully unaware that a tight bodysuit in supple black leather makes her stand out even more.

ST 12 [20]; **DX** 15 [100]; **IQ** 12 [40]; **HT** 12 [20].
Damage 1d-1/1d+2; BL 29 lbs.; HP 12 [0]; Will 12 [0]; Per 12 [0]; FP 12 [0].
Basic Speed 7.00 [5]; Basic Move 7 [0]; Move 5.
Dodge 10*; Parry 13* (Two-Handed Sword); Block N/A.

Advantages

Combat Reflexes [15]	Selective Magic
Dead Stop [1]	Resistance 3 [12]
Mage-Hunter Gear [1]	Spellpiercer [15]
Magical Toughening 1 [5]	Weapon Bond
Night Vision 6 [6]	(Two-Handed Sword) [1]
Nondetection 2 [10]	

For mages, knowledge is power. Stay out of sight, especially magical sight.

– Juniper Josse, Mage-Hunter

Disadvantages and Quirks

Code of Honor (Soldier's) [-10]
Frightens Animals [-10]
Honesty (12) [-10]
Obsession (Slay a magic-using vampire lord) (12) [-5]
Overconfidence (12) [-5]
Sense of Duty (Adventuring Companions) [-5]
Unnatural Features 5 [-5]
Cannot stomach garlic despite *liking* it. [-1]
Envious of those who can tan – she burns. [-1]
On her best behavior around the Town Watch and King's Men. [-1]
Protective of children. [-1]
Won't willingly walk around town at night without her sword. [-1]

Skills

Armory (Melee Weapons)-11 [1]	Hiking-11 [1]
Armory (Missile Weapons)-11 [1]	Mental
Brawling-15 [1]	Strength-13 [2]
Crossbow-18 [8]	Mind Block-12 [2]
Dispel Magic-12 [4]	Occultism-12 [2]
Fast-Draw (Arrow)-16* [1]	Stealth-16 [4]
Fast-Draw (Two-Handed Sword)-16* [1]	Tactics-10 [1]
Hazardous Materials-12 [2]	Thaumatology-11 [4]
Hidden Lore	Two-Handed
(Magical Writings)-12 [2]	Sword-18/19† [12]
	Wrestling-15 [2]

* Includes +1 for Combat Reflexes.

† Use higher skill for her two-handed sword (+1 for Weapon Bond).

Equipment

\$2,500, 41.54 lbs. (Light encumbrance)

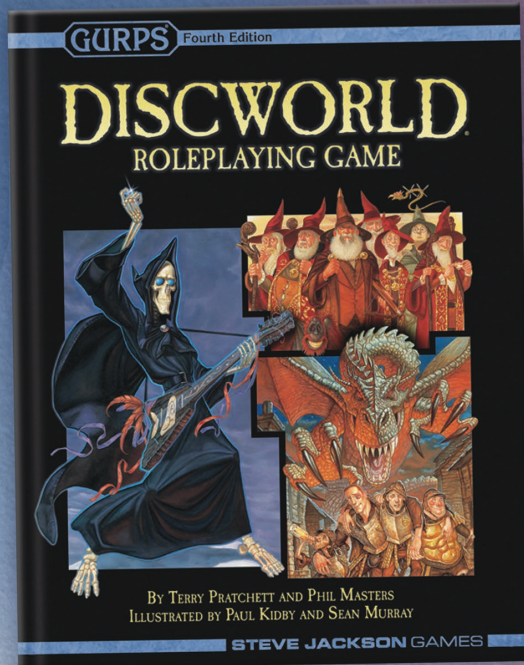
Bolts x6. \$12, 0.36 lb.
Bolts, Meteoric x6. \$216*, 0.36 lb.
Canteen, Full. 1 quart water. \$10, 3 lbs.
Clothing. \$0, 2 lbs.
Coins. 1 silver, 15 copper. \$35, 0.32 lb.
Crossbow (ST 12). 1d+3 imp, Acc 4, Range 240/300, Shots 1(4), Bulk -6. \$150, 6 lbs.
Greatsword. 1d+5 cut (reach 1, 2) or 1d+2 imp (reach 2). \$900, 7 lbs.
Light Leather Armor, Suit, w. Fortify +1. DR 2. \$1,150, 18 lbs.
Personal Basics. \$5, 1 lb.
Rations, 6 meals. \$12, 3 lbs.
Shoulder Quiver. Holds bolts. \$10, 0.5 lb.

* -10% for Mage-Hunter Gear.

Juniper Josse in GURPS

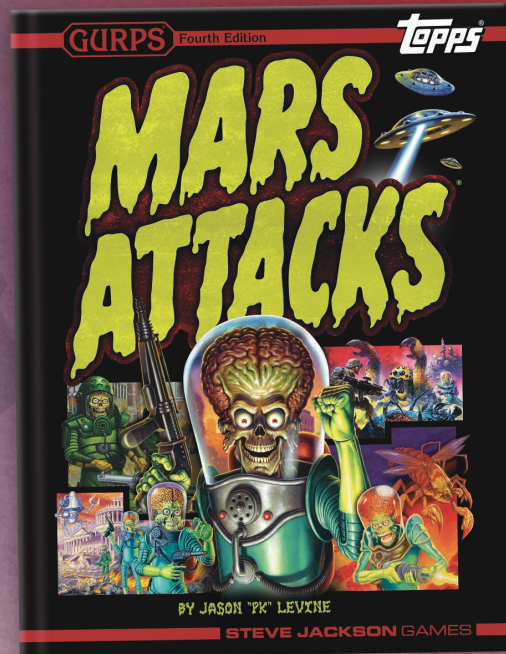
To interpret Juniper's abilities, see p. 13. Her gear is from the *DFRPG*. If using the *Basic Set*, her armor becomes leather cap, jacket, pants, and shoes, plus cloth gloves (pp. B283-284), with the cheap Fortify enchantment from *Dungeon Fantasy 1*, p. 30. That's \$227, 9 lbs., liberating \$923. Her sword is a *thrusting* greatsword. Ignore the coin denominations but keep their \$ value.

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EIDETIC MEMORY

THE TERAMANCERS

BY DAVID L. PULVER

Initiates of the Order seek knowledge and enlightenment by sharpening the mind and by discovering the hidden mysteries and monstrous secrets of this world. Only through the mastery of primordial truth and the beasts that lurk outside us shall we control fear and tame the beast within us all.

The Teramancers, or Primordial Brotherhood, are an experimental magical style whose practitioners specialize in magic involving monsters. This article is written using the methodology from *GURPS Thaumatology: Magical Styles*. However, the order's history and its spells and magic items can be easily adapted in any campaign that uses standard *GURPS* magic even if the *Magical Styles* rules are not being used by the GM's campaign.

If you don't have *Magical Styles*, the style cost shown for the Primordial Brotherhood is simply the cost for the Magical School Familiarity perk to join up, plus the cost of spending 1 point in each required skill, and 1 point in each required spell.

THE PRIMORDIAL BROTHERHOOD

The Teramancers are a secretive mystical order of mages. Their focus is the study of magic involving the nature of living monsters – they aren't interested in undead or demons. Although popularly referred to as "teramancers," the order's name for itself was originally the more pompous Primordial Brotherhood. This name hints at the founding member's original guiding philosophy: that all life originally evolved from monsters, and by study of monsters, one can understand the true nature of life.

The Primordial Brotherhood, as their name suggests, make claims to be among the oldest of magical orders. An important faction in the order even believe that many of the living monsters whose origins are shrouded in myth or legend, particularly hybrid creatures such as the griffin or sphinx, were originally created by order mages.

Some teramancers study monster magic (teramancy) for practical reasons, such as finding better ways to detect, fight, ward off, or control horrific creatures. The higher ranks of the

order have learned to harvest them for magic, to create them, or to become monstrous beings.

The Primordial Brotherhood are willing, even eager, to teach their unique spells to any teramancer who has attained the necessary degree of initiation *and* knows the prerequisite spells. The order's unique spells include ways to tap monsters for power, to raise them as servants, to reduce them to the primordial slime teramancers believe was the origin of life, and to grow new monsters from it.

Structure

The Primordial Brotherhood is hierarchical in structure with five degrees of membership. Holders of the two junior degrees are collectively referred to as Initiates, while the three higher degrees are collectively called Masters. Each degree also has its own title, and advancement requires demonstrating one's worthiness to those who hold higher degree.

Otherwise, the order is not tightly organized. Higher-degree mages typically run local chapter houses or laboratories, where research and training is centralized. However, many members of the order, upon obtaining mastery, will strike out for themselves, often engaging in research on their own or with a few followers or family members.

Many people enter the Primordial Brotherhood as "legacies" – descendants of other members whose magical talent and membership has been passed down as a family tradition. However, the order is eager to grow, and those Primordials without magically talented children are expected to be on the lookout for any individuals who have the Magery, skills, and philosophical interests that are compatible with the order's goals.

Some chapters of the Primordial Brotherhood, for philosophical reasons related to their study of monsterhood, are also fascinated with physical or mental abnormalities of all sorts that in less enlightened times were considered "freaks" or "monsters." They will often make a special effort to recruit people with Magery who possess them. This includes those with mundane but unusual physical conditions (such as albinism or dwarfism) or mental issues.

Traditionally, such individuals, despite prejudice they may encounter in their lives, treated respectfully within the order. If they marry other teramancers, their genetic differences are often passed from generation to generation. As a result, it is not uncommon for certain teramancer families to be known for hereditary disadvantages. Of course, this also contributes to the order's odd reputation.

HOW THE WORLD SEES THEM

In a modern-day setting such as *GURPS Monster Hunters*, where monsters and mages hide in the shadows, or in a hybrid fantasy version of a historical setting such as *GURPS Steampunk*, the Primordial Brotherhood presents itself publicly as an eccentric esoteric fraternal organization, much like many other more mundane esoteric orders, such as the Freemasons. The Primordials will, however, be known among those with occult connections to be a front for a circle of mystical cryptozoologists studying the links between magic and natural monsters such as cryptids and weres (they aren't interested in undead or demons). It is likely that some members of the order will be believed, correctly, to practice magical disciplines, but details of the magic will be unknown.

Among actual mages – or in worlds where both mages and monsters exist in the open, such as *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*, *GURPS Technomancer*, or *GURPS Banestorm* – the Primordials have somewhat more sinister reputations. In such worlds, they are recognized as a powerful and secretive organization of scholarly mages who specialize in Animal spells and, it is rumored, even more exotic magics. Their focus is known to be the capture, study, and breeding of monsters. High-ranking members of the order are rumored to research the creating and binding of monsters as minions, and to have developed arcane arts that can draw mana from monster organs. Intelligent monsters, such as weres, fear or hate the order, who are believed to capture monsters as specimens and experiment on or harvest them.

As for other mages, while some consider the Primordials to be quite respectable as researchers, their habit of creating dangerous monsters as research subjects or minions may lead many to consider membership in the Primordial Brotherhood to be but one step away from necromancy in terms of what is acceptable wizardly behavior.

settings) the operation of lab equipment or bioengineering. In the case of these more academic skills, the order may also send them to university, or recruit mages who already have such degrees. This does mean that some university science departments may harbor secret cells of teramancers.

While aspirants are studying these skills, they also receive intensive tutoring in the arcane arts. Recruits from outside the order will be assigned as apprentices to one of the order's third- to fifth-degree masters. The higher the person's Magery, the higher the rank of master who will be assigned to teach the student. Aspirants who are family legacies receive their basic magic lessons from relatives at an early age, and may be still teens or young adults when they are inducted into the Primordial Brotherhood's first degree.

Initial spells concentrate on two areas: Animal spells to provide the prerequisites needed to control non-sapient monsters, and the basics of Communication and Empathy along with Mind Control magic to deal with sapient monsters. This includes being taught the Fear spell, which is also the order's signature self-defense magic.

Upon achieving demonstrated proficiency with these spells and skills, the initiate is ready to take the oath to advance to *second degree*, adopting the title of teramantist. Traditionally, the order's teramantists are engaged in practical studies, either on their own or under the orders of more senior members. Their magic focuses on mastering more Animal Control and other foundation spells, as their duties often include cataloging and capturing specimens and otherwise performing "field work" missions for the Order.

Those who do well advance to the *third degree*, where they take the name of teramorphian. This is the first degree who are considered to be true Masters of the order rather than mere Initiates. Their signature spells include Shapeshifting, allowing them to transform into monsters, for "to understand a monster, you must become a monster" is the Brotherhood's ancient creed.

Usually a teramorphian will learn one or two such spells, along with other advanced magics that give them the prerequisites needed to learn Enchant.

When not studying, teramorphians are often used as the order's enforcers to protect major complexes, or sent on dangerous missions to battle the order's enemies, track down monsters that have escaped from the labs, or punish rogues who reveal the order's secrets. Teramorphians are granted the authority to take on lower-degree initiates as apprentices or cannon fodder if they wish.

Distinguished and studious teramorphians will eventually achieve the rank of vivisectionists, the order's *fourth degree*. Their magical studies shift focus to acquiring spells useful in the laboratory and for learning the Enchant spell. Most vivisectionists have also gained significant scientific knowledge related to monsters. Depending on the setting, many have earned doctorates in fields such as biology, medicine, or psychology, or even have academic positions in those fields on the side.

TERAMANCY

12 points

Style Prerequisite: Magery (not One College Only).

First-degree initiates in the Primordial Brotherhood are known as aspirants. They study arcane texts on the theory of magic, including the order's extensive archives of lore on monsters (or cryptids, as they are called in modern-day settings). If they do not already come from such a background, they receive an education in natural science or biology. They also learn to approach wild creatures without showing fear, the care and feeding of lab animals, and so on. (Most teramancers have both captive monsters and ordinary animals who are being kept for experiments or monster food.)

Aspirants are expected to have a decent grounding in the basics of more advanced studies, such as surgery, alchemy, abnormal psychology, veterinary medicine, or (in modern

The *fifth* and final (as far as is known) degree of the Primordial Brotherhood is that of creationist, although they are normally addressed as “magus” by lower-ranking members. The typical creationist specializes in enchantment magic and runs a laboratory that is engaged in monster breeding or creation, either for research or for semi-practical reasons (sale to warlords, criminals, or other mages; as part of a plan for world conquest; etc.). These facilities may be in areas that have high monster populations worthy of study, or in isolated areas, such as remote islands or moors, where escaped monsters will not attract much attention. Alternatively, they may be located in or disguised as facilities that already handle animals, such as biotech labs, veterinary clinics, zoos, or factory farms. Some creationists interested in human monsters or were-beasts may have laboratories that are concealed within asylums or private prisons. These also provide humans that can be used as experimental subjects (or monster food).

Creationists set overall policy of the order, establish the criteria for advancement, collect and spend whatever dues are charged members (often 10% of income), and control its vast archives of monster and magical lore and the order’s store of secret spells. Advancing to fourth or fifth degree requires a vote of approval by the majority of creationists within a given region (depending on the setting).

Required Skills: Animal Handling; one of Biology or Naturalist; Hidden Lore (Cryptozoology or Lycanthropes); Thaumatology.

Required Spells: Beast Soother; Beast Summoning; Fear; Persuasion; Sense Emotion; two (Animal) Control spells (one of which is traditionally Vermin Control).

Perks: Academic Rank; Huge Subjects 1 or 2 (Hybrid Control or Repel Hybrids); Intuitive Cantrip (Magical Analysis); Limited Energy Reserve 1-5 (Primordial Brotherhood); Quick and Focused; Rote Alchemy (Fear, Fertility, or Hybridization); Sanctum 1 or 2; Secret Material (Primordial Slime); Secret Spells (Call Monster, Imprint Monster, Monster Within, Primordial Dissolution, or Teragenesis); Shortcut to Power (Body of Slime or Create Chimera*); Spell Resistance (Fear or Panic); Thaumaturgical Doublespeak.

Secret Spells: Call Monster; Imprint Monster; Monster Within; Primordial Dissolution; Teragenesis.

* Found in *GURPS Bio-Tech*.

Optional Traits

Attributes: Improved IQ and Will.

Advantages: Academic Rank; Animal Empathy; Animal Friend; Claim to Hospitality; Fearlessness; improved Magery; Tenure.

Disadvantages: Appearance (Hideous or worse); Callous; Curious; Dwarfism; Enemy (Monster hunters or other

A violent scholarly dispute has broken out at the local chapter of the Primordial Brotherhood over the nature of monsters.

do-gooders); Gigantism; Lunacy; Hunchback; Megalomania; Phantom Voices (Diabological); Reputation (Breed Monsters); Sadism; Unnatural Features; Xenophilia.

Skills: Alchemy; Bioengineering; Electronics Operation (Scientific); Hidden Lore (any other); History; Mimicry; Net; Occultism; Poisons; Psychology; Research; Teaching; Tracking; Veterinary.

Spell List

The Primordial Brotherhood specializes in spells derived from the following colleges:

- *Animal* to affect non-sapient monsters such as griffins or sea monsters, and to learn spells of monster transformation.
- *Enchantment* to create monsters.
- *Knowledge* to detect and analyze monsters.
- *Mind Control* to control sapient monsters such as dragons, and to master fear, the emotion Primordial philosophers believe is most intimately associated with monsters.

Additional spells from other colleges are learned as needed for prerequisites. In modern-day settings some teramancers study Technological magic to manipulate DNA. Earlier teramancers may possibly also have access to these spells, but refer to “DNA” as “primal pattern,” “mystic helix,” or some such neologism.

Teramancers must know a minimum number of spells from their current degree before being admitted to the next highest rung.

First Degree (Aspirant)

Seven spells are considered basic. Reptile Control and Vermin Control are the most common choices. A new teramancer is required to learn all of them.

(Animal) Control × 2	Fear
Beast-Soother	Persuasion
Beast Summoning	Sense Emotion

Second Degree (Teramantist)

An aspirant is promoted to teramantist after learning all seven first-degree spells. This level entitles him to learn any of these spells.

Beast Rouser	Hybrid Control	Shield
Beast Seeker	Panic	Scryguard
Beast Speech	Test Food	Ward
Lend Energy	Sense Life	

Third Degree (Teramorphian)

A teramantist graduates to teramorphian after learning at least six of the second-degree spells. This gives him access to any of these 10 spells.

Analyze Heredity*	Lend Vitality	Seek Plant
Call Monster	Measurement	Shapeshifting†
Decay	Repel Hybrids	Terror
Haste		

* Found in *GURPS Bio-Tech*.

† Teramancers learn one to three such spells that focus on changing into natural monsters of moderate power, such as griffins or chupacabra, rather than mundane creatures.

Fourth Degree (Vivisectionist)

A teramorphian is raised up to vivisectionist after learning at least six of the third-degree spells. That achievement entitles him to study any of these spells. Vivisectionists commonly learn one of the order's Shortcuts to Power to acquire spells not on this list.

Ease Labor*	Minor Healing
Enchant	Monster Within
Imprint Monster	Primordial Dissolution
Loyalty	Sequence DNA*

* Found in *GURPS Bio-Tech*.

Fifth Degree (Creationist)

A vivisectionist may ascend to the degree of creationist upon learning at least five of the fourth-degree spells. He may then go on to study any of these spells.

Accelerate Pregnancy*	Powerstone
Manipulate DNA*	Staff
Major Healing	Teragenesis
Remove Fetus*	

* Found in *GURPS Bio-Tech*.

WHAT IS A MONSTER?

Some Teramancy spells and the order in general refer to "monsters" as a category. A monster is any abnormal creature that frightens and threatens humanity (or the region's dominant race).

Magic is art rather than science; the GM can decide whether something qualifies as a monster, although the Social Stigma (Monster) disadvantage is usually a good clue. However, for magical purposes normal animals such as bears or wolves don't count unless they are of greater than normal size or otherwise abnormal. Moreover, common "monsters" (e.g., orcs) treated as barbarians or second-class citizens rather than monsters also do not qualify. Much may depend on the beliefs of the individual teramancer!

Teramancers moreover deal with living monsters rather than undead, which they leave to necromancers. Living monsters are those that don't have the Unliving trait.

SECRET SPELLS

Over centuries of experimentation, teramancers have developed several secret spells, which are supposedly only available to mid- to high-level masters. Teramancers jealously guard these secrets, and the order will investigate and attempt to recruit or eliminate anyone outside the order who it believes are using the same, or similar, spells. It is forbidden for order mages to teach the order's secret spells to non-Primordials.

Secret Spell: Call Monster

Regular

Calls the nearest non-sapient monster whose location the caster is unaware of. The caster may not specify the type of

monster. Range does not matter for this spell. If the spell is cast successfully, the mage knows the location of the closest creature of the type, and how long it will take for that monster to come to him. It moves toward the caster as fast as it can, until the spell ends or the animal can see the caster. Unlike the similar Beast Summoning spell in the Animal college, the creature does not stand meekly by or respond positively; it is free to attack once the spell wears off.

Duration: 10 minutes.

Cost: 3 to cast; 2 to maintain. To call many monsters, double the cost of the spell; all creatures within a certain area (usually about a 10-mile radius) are summoned.

Time to cast: 10 seconds.

Prerequisites: Beast-Soother, Fear.

Item

A drum, bell, or other percussion instrument. *Energy Cost to Create:* 800.

Secret Spell: Imprint Monster

Regular; Resisted by Will

If cast upon a monster within a minute of its birth, hatching, or synthetic creation, this spell imprints the subject with loyalty to him. The monster will regard the mage as a parent, and may be acquired as an Ally. If the monster is fed primordial slime (p. 21) from any source before imprinting, the creature resists the spell at -3 to Will.

Cost: 10.

Time to cast: 10 seconds.

Prerequisites: Beast Speech, Loyalty.

Item

The item is a well-appointed crèche for raising a particular species of monster, filling a room large enough for the monster to live. Item does not cast the spell, but an Imprint Monster spell cast on that type of monster who was raised in the enchanted crèche will cost only half energy and resists at -2. *Energy cost to create:* 500.

Secret Spell: Monster Within

Regular; Resisted by Will

If the subject has one or more of the disadvantages Bad Temper, Berserk, Bloodlust, Bully, or Sadism, he will automatically fail his control rolls for these disadvantages whenever they come up during the spell's duration. Otherwise, the spell has no effect.

Duration: Four hours.

Cost: 4 to cast; 2 to maintain.

Time to cast: Two seconds.

Prerequisites: Beast Rouser, Panic.

Item

(a) Any item, usually jewelry or clothing. Always on; the wearer is affected by the spell while the item is worn. *Energy cost to create:* 300. (b) Staff or wand. Usable only by mages. *Energy cost to create:* 600.

Secret Spell: Primordial Dissolution

Regular; Resisted by HT

This spell must be cast on a living monster (though it may be unconscious). If the spell succeeds, it renders the monster down into an essential soup of primordial cells, with a weight equal to the monster's body weight. This protoplasmic soup is still alive but no longer capable of independent movement or sapience. It is in fact the order's special magical substance.

If this primordial ooze is stored in a vat, cauldron, or similar container, it can later be used to create a synthetic monster – of the same type as the original subject – via the Teragenesis spell (below). This is not always a perfectly efficient procedure; up to 10% of the ooze may be wasted due to spills, clinging to the container, etc.

The knowledge to keep the soup alive for more than 1d days requires possessing the order's Secret Materials (Primordial Slime) perk. To keep the soup alive requires storing it in a damp, warm location and feeding it a variety of exotic ingredients and chemicals. It will then remain viable for an unlimited period. Alternatively, the soup can be dried out over several hours, into essential salts with about 50% of its weight. These salts can be stored, or carefully added to water. A successful Alchemy roll and one hour are sufficient to return them to active primordial ooze; a failed roll leaves them contaminated and useless.

Cost: 10 to cast.

Time to cast: 10 minutes.

Prerequisite: Analyze Heredity, Decay.

Item

Cauldron, vat, or giant test tube. The subject must be placed within it before the spell can be cast. Usable only by mages. *Energy cost to create:* 1,000.

Secret Spell: Teragenesis

Regular

This spell pours energy into a container of monster ooze of the type specific to the creature being synthesized, in an amount of ooze equal to or greater than its weight. Additional nutrients and chemicals are added to the catalyst in the synthesis process (cost \$100 per pound of the monster's own weight) as part of the enchantment.

Upon receiving the energy and other materials, the ooze bubbles with life, the cells replicating and reconfiguring themselves to form a synthetic copy of the monster whose essence it embodies. (So, no dragons from hellhound ooze; the teramancers haven't cracked that problem yet.) It takes one minute for every HP the monster normally has, as the monster grows from an egg or embryo into its mature form. The new synthetic monster is then ready to emerge, alive and (if that species consumes nourishment) very hungry!

A synthetic monster differs from a natural monster in being unstable. The monster must make a HT roll after leaving the vat, and again every hour after its creation. If it fails the roll, it suffers the Moderate Pain condition and begins to degenerate. Roll on the *Pattern Flaw Table*; reroll if the

monster already *innately* has the worst level of that trait. If it fails three HT rolls, or if the same pattern flaw is acquired twice, its cellular cohesion fails, and it dissolves into goo!

If a synthetic monster ever gets a critical success on this HT roll, it has stabilized. It does not need to roll again, and, aside from any flaws it may already have, is otherwise identical to a naturally created monster of its particular species.

Cost: 1 per 20 lbs. of creature weight (minimum 40) to cast.

Time to cast: 10 minutes.

Prerequisites: Enchant, Primordial Dissolution.

Pattern Flaw Table

Roll	Disadvantage
1	Epilepsy
2	Mute
3	Reduce Appearance by one step
4	Bad Smell (Rotting)
5	Berserk (9), or existing Berserk becomes (6)
6	Blindness

Variant Spells

The teramancers have developed some minor variations of existing spells.

Panic and Terror. The teramancer versions of these spells, rather than causing generalized terror or panic, make the subject see himself (or if he doesn't fear monsters himself, *his loved ones*) menaced by a terrifyingly powerful creature, often one he most fears. "Monster" in this context can include childhood bogeymen or ordinary human abusers or killers the subject fears, but they will be warped by the "monster vision" into figures of inhuman horror.

THE TERAMANCERS VS. THE TERATOLOGISTS

The similarly named Most Worshipful Royal Society of Teratologists are respectable sages and naturalists who study monster biology and habits (see *Pyramid* #3/86: *Organizations*). Teratologists are not affiliated with the Primordial Brotherhood, but many who are aware of it deeply distrust their arcane rivals, fearing they drag the good name of academic monster studies into disrepute. Some years ago, a number of teramancers were actually blackballed from the organization after the nature of their research – the magical breeding of deadly monsters – was revealed.

Members of the Primordial Brotherhood, while disdaining the squeamish nature of some in the Royal Society, do respect the scholarship that their fussy academic counterparts have accumulated. In fact, some Primordial teramancers with academic backgrounds are themselves former Royal Society mages who left it to take a more hands-on approach to their research. Others were teramancers who joined the Royal Society to keep up with its research and lure promising teratologists into their order. However, this is two-way street: those Royal Society members who are also mages have the unique skills and knowledge of monsters to be accepted as Primordial members and infiltrate the teramancers . . .

THE TERAMANCERS IN A MODERN SETTING

To fit the Primordial Brotherhood in a 19th- to 21st-century setting, such as a *GURPS Monster Hunters* campaign, the following history may be used.

The Primordial Brotherhood claims to have existed “since the first shamans at the dawn of time used their knowledge to protect the tribe from those dark shapes that lurked beyond the campfires.” Diligent research can trace its public existence to the renewed interest in occultism and spiritualism during the Victorian era, when the Brotherhood was publicly incorporated as an esoteric lodge (similar to the Freemasons). The teramancers’ public face suggests a group of old eccentrics who meet every month to dress up in robes, discuss philosophy and biology, and hold the occasional charitable fund-raisers to support scholarships in science (especially biology) and philosophy for bright legacies.

In fact, the order was actually founded by a group of practicing black magicians in the British Isles in the mid 19th century. They had been individually researching monsters and phenomena such as lycanthropy as part of their general interest in the supernatural. The publication of Charles Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* in 1859 and the controversy it generated led to these magicians arranging a get-together to discuss how this evolutionary theory might relate to supernatural beings. Being magicians who had long ago laid aside any conventional notions of religion, a spirited correspondence between like minded mages led to fruitful exchanges of arcane information, and the decision to formalize their association as a magical order. After the usual wrangling, the Esoteric Brotherhood of Primordial Truth was founded in 1861, the first meeting behind held at a wealthy member’s private manor house. A decade later, with the order’s membership expanding thanks to the Victorian occult revival, the order established its first of several chapter houses (located initially in a former church on the Isle of White).

Over the next several decades it slowly expanded in influence, seeing another boost in younger members in the late 20th and early 21st century as members of the order found new inspiration from the burgeoning mundane field of genetic and tissue engineering.

In the early years of the order, as the name “Brotherhood” suggests, the Primordials were limited to male members. This prohibition began to be ignored as early as the 1880s for worthy female candidates. It was formally stricken in 1964; many newer members prefer “Primordial Order” to “Primordial Brotherhood.” Although legacies (children of other order members) make up about two-thirds of the group, new blood is also carefully recruited. Recruits are those with magical talent, an interest in studying monsters, and a willingness to swear an oath of secrecy and obedience to the order’s precepts and masters. Most new recruits come from one of these backgrounds:

- Survivors of terrifying or inexplicable monster encounters. They seek out the order after hearing rumors that the Primordial Brotherhood can explain the survivors’ experiences. If they have Magery, they will be accepted and tutored in magic.
- Cryptozoologists seeking to prove the existence of strange creatures and catalog their nature. The Primordial Brotherhood shares the same interests and sponsors

cryptozoological expeditions, as its mages seek to capture wild monsters for their research or harvesting. Brotherhood mages also sometimes create new creatures; a cryptozoologist who comes into contact with an escaped experiment may be drawn to the order. Those cryptozoologists who have magical aptitude will be recruited into the order, while those without may remain as external assets used as pawns.

- Rogue scientists doing cutting-edge biotech projects involving creating hybrid life forms or chimera. After struggling with burdensome ethics regulations, appalled colleagues, or the limits of modern science, those with latent Magery may be drawn into the Brotherhood in search of a path to success that ultimately leads to sorcery.

- A mage who wants to fight monsters. Although monster hunters who know the deeper truths about the Primordial Brotherhood will usually consider the teramancers to be the enemy, some hunters may initially choose to seek out the order to gain better ways to locate and defeat monsters. After learning of the nature and goals of senior Primordials, the hunter may remain, seduced by the order’s power, or quit to use his skills to battle his former colleagues.

- Powerful and magic-using monsters or villains such as vampires, black magicians, and the like. They may be drawn to the Primordial Brotherhood as a source of unique magical knowledge. These entities may end up sharing the order’s goals, or simply seek to use Primordial Brotherhood mages as a power base or source of allies or minions. Some of these monsters have been in the order long enough to have legacies of their own.

ADVENTURES IN TERAMANCY

Fountain of Monsters: An outbreak of monsters in unusual numbers may be traced to fourth- or fifth-degree members of the Primordial Brotherhood who are operating a secret lab in the region. The monsters may have been released into the wild to breed, or have escaped. For a variation on this, the *teramancers* hire the party to hunt down the monsters, or to help them clear out a disguised lab facility that has been overrun by the creatures. Of course, the teramancers will simply claim that their manor house, farm, asylum, or whatever was attacked by horrid monsters, who need to be destroyed. They will not mention that these creatures came from within. If, in the process, the party discovers that the monsters were actually trying to break out . . . and they find the hidden research and breeding facilities in the location . . . the teramancers will turn against them.

Carnival of Monsters: A wandering circus or carnival “freak show” is actually a front for a group of teramancers and their monstrous pets and progeny. Why are they in town?

Monster Coliseum: The party hears rumors of a “monster arena” in which trainers set various captured non-sapient monsters to battle each other, with high stakes riding on the winners (perhaps including organized crime, with people who can’t pay their gambling debts ending up as monster food). Behind the scenes, teramancers are involved. They may be helping trap or create the monsters that are used and selling them to participants, or using the arena battles as a way of studying how the monsters perform under stress. For a twist, a rogue teramancer villain may be running the arena purely for profit, and the Primordial Brotherhood want to shut him down and regain the creatures she stole from them.

Double Trouble: A powerful werewolf or vampire is also a teramancer, and has been breeding additional monster servants. Many human captives are kept for experimental purposes, as food, or as surrogate mothers for monster babies.

For Love of Monsters: A first- or second-degree teramancer has fallen in love with or befriended an intelligent monster (such as a werewolf, young dragon, etc.). The monster was scheduled for dissection or rendition, but the teramancer has helped the creature escape. They are both on the run when encounter the PCs, who they ask for help. Unfortunately, the local chapter house of the Primordial Brotherhood is after them, with a posse of shapeshifting teramorphian mages and specially bred and imprinted tracking monsters (hellhounds, weretigers, etc.) hot on their tail.

Face Your Fear: Young Nyctasia Sark is the legacy of a proud teramancer family, the Sarks, who have been in the Primordial Brotherhood for generations. Nyc has a high level of Magery and has proven an excellent student, learning many peripheral disciplines of the order, such as Animal Handling, Naturalist, and Veterinary skills. Unfortunately, she suffers from Teraphobia (p. B150), the fear of monsters, doubtless the result of a too-early incident during her infancy when her mother was eaten by a berserk pattern-failure monster who escaped the lab. All efforts to cure her have fallen short, so her father has decided to try exposing her to controlled doses of monsters by sending her on dungeon expeditions (or in a modern-day setting, a monster hunt or cryptozoology expedition) as she fulfills her research requirements for aspirant status. As having his scaredy-cat daughter's unseemly fears exposed to other teramancers would be horribly embarrassing, Sark Senior needs to hire outside adventurers to accompany her as an escort (and keep her from running away). Nyctasia is terrified but does not want to disappoint her father. Depending on the status of teramancers in the setting, the Sarks may or may not reveal their affiliations with the Primordial Brotherhood – it may be enough to say she was frightened by monsters and seeks to overcome her fears by facing them down in their natural habitat. If the party aids her in buying off her disadvantage, they will have allies or a contact in the Order, which may come in handy later.

Monster Cult vs. the Primordials: Cultists worshipping the demon goddess Tiamat, the Mother of Monsters (see **GURPS Fantasy**) are angry at the Primordial Brotherhood for kidnapping and experimenting on monsters, or for heretically claiming that their mages, rather than the demon goddess, were the progenitor of monster life! Now it's an all-out war between monster cultists and a ruthless magical order of mad scientists. Unfortunately, both sides are operating in the same town or city the PCs are in . . .

Scholarly Feud: A violent scholarly dispute has broken out at the local chapter of the Primordial Brotherhood. One faction, the Teraevolutionaries, believe that monstrous life gradually degenerates into non-monstrous life over time. Dinosaurs or dragons became birds; dire wolves became wolves; griffins were ancestors of both lions and birds. Thus, all monsters are primal forms of one or more non-monster species (and vice versa). The other faction, the Teracreationists, believe that all monsters, but especially things like hybrids, were originally creations of mages. A third faction, the Nightmarists, believe them dreams of insane gods. The dispute started out with each side sponsoring expeditions to prove the other wrong, but it has escalated beyond that into sabotage and magical attacks (often with monsters). Innocents may be caught in the crossfire . . .

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 GLORIOUS BOOK OF VALADIR

BY J. EDWARD TREMLETT

I say: sing loud to all who have ears to hear, a heart to feel, and a tongue to carry the song away, for the Turning has come to be.

I say: sing loud of the Beloved above, who shine with the brightness of two hearts, together, but will soon shine together no more but in dreams.

I say: sing loud of the Archons around us, who tend the Ways which rule over all, but who will soon become sovereigns.

I say: sing loud of the Art within and without, heritage of a proud and righteous people, but soon to be fractured and scattered to the winds.

I say to all who would hear, feel, and carry these words: sing loud for the Turning is coming, and with it the end of our time.

– The first page of **The Glorious Book of Valadir**

Much has been said of evil tomes of magic, which warp those who dare read them. But there are equal and opposite books: brilliant, shining tomes that uplift and call to rightness. The use of these works often turns the tide of oncoming darkness, and sets the world back on its course.

One such tome is *The Glorious Book of Valadir*, an ancient repository of mighty spells and timeless wisdom that has a power all its own. But sorcerers must take care while reading, for that power comes from the reality before our own, which seeks to be reborn anew. While this might bring back all that was great and good of that time, there *are* reasons the world turned. Hopefully we shall never see their like again.

This generic article describes the ancient tome and outlines its curious contents. It lists its effects both seen and unseen – beneficial and deleterious alike – and explains why using it for too long is *never* a good idea. Some of its more powerful and useful spells are listed, along with ideas on how to incorporate it in a fantasy campaign.

DESCRIPTION (SURFACE)

The Glorious Book of Valadir is beautiful and unearthly: a golden pentagon 1' to a side, 3" thick, and weighing 10 lbs. Closed, it gives a steady, golden glow – enough to read by, even within a field of unnatural darkness. Opened it shines like the sun for five seconds, temporarily blinding any who fail to shield their eyes. The one who opens the book is not affected by this.

Its cover is a solid, 1/8"-thick slice of whitish, translucent mineral that resembles quartz, but is much stronger and

lighter. Unless opened, the cover normally appears unmarked, but when viewed in sunlight, a circle of dots appears.

One side is buttressed by a solid piece of the whitish mineral, seamlessly connected to both covers. When this side is faced away from the reader, and the tome verbally unlocked ("Show me" in slightly mispronounced Ur-Draconic), it softens to the consistency of strong leather. This causes the circle of dots to appear upon the cover, and allows it to be hinged up.

The book's pages are golden, thin, metal pentagons as strong as hardened steel, which unfold like a flower. One reads the first side of a page, then flips it over to read the other. The proper order of unfolding is top left, bottom left, bottom right, top right, top again – over and over until the book's end, 1296 pages later. It's not physically possible to read the book out of order.

Its words are arrangements of one to five imprinted dots. Each page contains one to five sentences, and each sentence is a separate shape: one sentence is a circle, two a pair of vertical lines, three are triangles, four are squares, and five pentagons. The correct order to read these shapes is the same as the pages.

Its language is gone, but the book *wants* to be read. The person who says the unlocking word need only run a finger along the words to hear both the original language *and* the reader's own tongue. The cover does not have the same properties until the book is opened, at which point it can also be "read." Translated, it proclaims: *This is the record of the time of the Turning, set down for the ages to come as revelation, promise, and warning.*

CONTENTS (APPARENT)

Reading the book is an exercise in beauty and patience. It consists of one dreamlike narrative where spells, myths, history, prophecy, wisdom, and warning flow into one another like the currents of an ocean.

The book speaks of the wonder of the epoch before ours: a beautiful and verdant world with two gentle suns – the Beloved. One revolved every 24 hours, while the other took an entire year. In summer, two stars burned directly overhead once a day, and only in winter was night truly known.

Beneath the gaze of the Beloved lay a swirling landscape dotted with shining cities of precious metals and fantastic gems. These great metropolises were overseen by sorcerers-kings, as kind as they were mighty. Their subjects all knew at least *some* magic, and some knew a great deal.

Magic *itself* was the divine power in this age, its many aspects known as the Ways. These were tended by godlike Archons, who strode between the Ways and the world to enact their will, and work as intermediaries between magic and mortals. Angels and demons, heroes and monsters, these august beings never acted without reason or purpose.

Their myths were great morality plays, told of ages past when the Ways were still young, and mistakes were made. Some of the stories are quasi-comical, such as the Brothers of Vol, who played what seemed a harmless joke upon both Death and Life, but wound up setting the two aspects into tender opposition. Others are less forgiving, and send shivers down the spine.

The spells are scattered about like afterthoughts – usually coupled with relevant myths, folk wisdom, and prophecy, but not always. Thankfully, the most powerful ones are closest to the front, as if the author knew that frantic wizards in times to come would need to find them in a hurry. As the book continues, the magic becomes more esoteric, with some spells seeming to have no understandable use at all. See *Spells (Unearthly)*, pp. 26-27.

NARRATIVE (WARNING)

The story of the tome is one of epic tragedy: disaster brought about by both overprotective kindness and a lack of foresight.

When their world was in its infancy, and the Ways still putting its pieces together, the question arose – what to do with evil? They knew that good could not exist without it, but decided they did not want it to poison their world. Why *not* have a land without malevolence, greed, envy, and sloth?

So they bound those things up, and threw them below the skin of the world. In depths unblest by the gaze of the Beloved, these unkindnesses suppurated and festered – growing larger with every denied impulse and stifled emotion. Before long, they gave themselves names and declared themselves the betters of the Ways: the Reasons.

The Reasons were allowed out on only one occasion – a single day and night, in the middle of Summer. At that time, the Ways would allow their prisoners a chance to release some of their energy. Meanwhile, the Archons would watch to see how mortals behaved under temptation, especially as regards to the use of magic.

Unbound and emboldened, the Reasons would entice the populations of the afflicted areas – weighing down their hearts and inflaming their minds. They would make them stingy and rapacious, cruel and contemptuous, and then urge them to act on those impulses. People would use offensive and dangerous magic to enrich themselves and harm others, and the Ways would weep to see their children brought so low.

Then – just as things could not seemingly get any worse – midday would come, and the Ways would reassert themselves. The light of the Beloved would banish the Reasons' malign influence from the world, and the Archons would appear to put everything right. Only half-remembered nightmares were left behind, as a warning.

So went the cycle for ages untold. But then the Ways themselves made a serious mistake, one so dire and horrible that even the author of *The Glorious Book* dares not recount it. All that is known is that, in its wake, a full third of the Archons

shifted allegiance to the Reasons – changing forever the balance of power.

Instead of a single day of temptation at the height of summer, the entire season of winter became the Reasons' new playground. In this Mad Season, families would quarrel and kill one another, and entire kingdoms would fall victim to gluttony and vice. Those few who stood firm against the onslaught would be hunted and killed – hapless martyrs to the Ways.

Worse, the remaining Archons could no longer fix all that had been broken, as several powerful members had defected. The dead could not be resurrected, nor time wound back, and trauma to the soul would last forever. Worse, all now retained the full memories of the terrors they had done, for the Archons of mind and dream now rallied under the enemy banner.

By the time *The Glorious Book* was written, this had been going on for over a century. Just under half of the Archons had defected, and their change of allegiance acted to strengthen the Reasons' hand; they could now summon demons, raise the dead, and call upon the unwholesome, maddening things the Ways had removed from reality. They used these creatures to bedevil the living outside of the Mad Season, and bolster their activities during that time.

With victory seemingly within their grasp, the Reasons spoke openly of the world to come. They chortled over the torturous abattoir they would create, where only the strongest and most cunning would survive and prosper. They even promised the gibbering, massive *things* they called into their service their own regions to play with.

Faced with this horror, the Ways decided that for life to continue, the world must change. This was the Turning, and one can almost feel that it came into being the very moment *The Glorious Book's* final page was finished. One can also imagine the old world being swept away with a cleansing wind, and the new coming into being right behind it.

But one *also* gets the feeling that whatever was changed can be changed back, in keeping with last prophecy of *The Glorious Book*, found in an ominous circle on the very last page: *I warn: for what is today will soon be tomorrow, and none shall truly remember these things, but should even **one** remember, then what is tomorrow may again be today.*

EFFECTS (OBVIOUS)

The Glorious Book of Valadir has been imprinted with the very essence of what could arguably called “good.” It eases the troubled brow, calms the soul, and gives comfort to even the most nervous of readers. It promises that everything *will* be all right, eventually, and in this it tells the truth – at least in the short-term forecast. Only after much reflection on what has been read do the worries truly begin to take shape.

After the book is opened, and the blinding brightness has passed, a gleaming, white puissance some 20' in diameter surrounds it. This field encourages virtue and denies vice; those caught within it find themselves called to perform selfless and kind acts, and any greedy or cruel impulses are made to seem utterly worthless. This lasts for as long as the book is open, and when it is closed (or when a person leaves the field), the motivations of the light slowly dissipate over the course of a day and a night.

HISTORY (RECENT)

According to legend, *The Glorious Book of Valadir* bears the name of Valadir of the House of the Green Endless Sea, of the long-lost kingdom of Narnath-Yehl.

His grandfather, Yestil, discovered the tome while inspecting orrerys in the museum of Namash the Elder. One, found in the tomb of Bal-Shosh the Learned – oldest of the wizards of the ancient empire of Kru – had a pentagonal base that was curiously luminescent. Upon closer inspection, Yestil realized the fine lines on four of its sides might be *pages*, and spirited it away.

Neither he nor his son could ever open the book. They could not discern its exact age, either – the best chronomancers only received the answer “before,” making them both giddy and terrified. Uncovering the book’s contents fell to Valadir, whose fumbling attempts at translating Ur-Draconic bore unexpected fruit.

Not long thereafter, a horrible extra-planar incursion occurred – the thankfully all-but-forgotten Incursion Wave of Xoradux, which laid waste to kingdom after kingdom. Desperate in the face of the enemy, Valadir cast the first, most impressive-sounding spell: “The Gaze of the Beloved.” Suddenly, the moon became an extra sun, a full third of Xoradux’s horde fled the world, and those who remained caught fire and died.

Valadir dedicated himself to studying the book, but soon began to worry about what he was reading. He ended his life as a paranoid recluse, living incognito in a rotting hovel. When he died, the book that bore his name wasn’t anywhere among his possessions.

The book’s effects upon magic are as pronounced as the ones upon the soul. When open, the tome significantly eases the casting of spells of good and/or defensive intent cast within its field. The easiest and less-strenuous ones happen almost automatically, and even the most potent and involved of spells are much less difficult. Also, all magic cast while the book is open does *not* have to be fueled by the caster – the power is siphoned from magic itself, though there is an eventual danger to this. See *Consequences (Obscured)*, pp. 27-28.

All spells *within* the book can only be cast *from* it, with the book open to the correct page. As with other spells, all power costs are paid by magic itself, and no components are necessary (unless the GM wants to add some extra flavor and/or challenge to the process). The book’s spells also work *automatically*, without chance of failure – something that *should* alarm practiced wizards.

The Glorious Book deflects all but the most potent of evil and/or offensive magics aimed at those within the field. Even then, the caster of such malign spells must overcome *immense* difficulty to perform them. Evil arch-wizards, most potent of malefic deities, or nameless nightmares from beyond space and time, it matters not – the tome is powerful enough to at least resist them, even if it cannot wholly stop them.

Opened in areas where curses have been laid – no matter how ancient, poisonous, or powerful – it dispels them, from weakest to strongest. Unquiet spirits of all permutations are sent on to their appropriate afterlives when they come within its field of influence. Demons, extra-planar entities of negative intent, and horrors from the void are likewise sent right back from whence they came – shrieking and wailing as they fall away.

Kingdoms where the book is in constant use soon become blessed and happy, and the fates of their people begin to change for the better. Harvests are full and bountiful, trade and commerce plentiful – even the weather seems to take a pleasant turn. The sickly become strong, the weak become healthy and hale, and those who suffer from madness become clear-headed once more.

More importantly, the *character* of their people begins to change for the better. They become less venal and more honest – less cruel and more kind. Old slights and debts are forgiven, and the citizens become charitable, industrious, and well-meaning. Neighbors behave as they should, crime and violence become rare events, and trust becomes the coin of the realm.

This blessed state of affairs lasts for as long as the book is actively read by its latest owner at least three times per week. It might take months of this ritual before the book’s less-pleasant effects begin to manifest themselves. Hopefully wise readers will have discovered the danger before it gets this far, and have hidden the book away once more.

Once the book stops being read, things very slowly go back to as they were before.

Any curses it dispelled remain broken, spooks and demons it has banished stay gone, and spells with long-lasting effects remain in place. But save for those small kindnesses, after a time, it will be as though *The Glorious Book of Valadir* had never been opened at all.

Perhaps that is for the best.

SPELLS (UNEARTHLY)

Some of the more powerful spells unique to *The Glorious Book of Valadir* are listed below, along with their effects. The GM is free to place analogues of pre-existing high-powered spells within the tome as well. Anything that dispels demons, puts the undead to rest, and banishes eldritch horrors too maddening to properly describe should be in there, along with massive wards, spheres of protection, and potent defensive maneuvers of all kinds.

The Gaze of the Beloved

The most famous spell of the tome, this plaintive cry to the heavens brings both suns – one of which has been masquerading as the moon since the Turning – back together, again, so they might combine their light and heat. This effect merely makes the world a little more warm and bright for any being of *this* world, but things of otherworldly realms (demons, summoned creatures, void monsters, the Reasons, etc.) find it so intolerable that they flee in self-defense. Those who tarry burn to ashes within 36 seconds. When the last interdimensional being is gone or dead, the extra sun slowly and sadly fades from view.

The Short But Happy Marriage of Life and Death

Just as the two great forces of the world were once fooled into matrimony by a family of pranksters, so does this spell fool death for exactly 36 days. It resurrects every person slain in a single past event (fight, battle, disaster, plague outbreak, war), so long as the spell was cast within 36 days of the event's end.

Resurrected, they have exactly 36 days to live before expiring peacefully and content. They can be hurt during this time, but not killed, and any attempts to resurrect them after this period fail – even divine ones. They remember nothing of the afterlife, save that they'll be happy to get back there soon.

The Barley Hooks of Reckoning

When the Vorlavarleamoni flew down from their red clouds at the peak of the harvest time, the farmers stood against them with nothing but farming tools. But the defenders were so fierce that even the most humble of makeshift weapons drove away the beasts.

This spell honors their bravery by enchanting a single kind of object, possessed by every member of a group – even a whole army – against a single kind of foe (orcs, invaders from another kingdom, demons, etc.) for the entirety of a battle. Everyday objects thusly enchanted do damage as though they were magical short swords – ignoring *all* armor and defensive spells. If cast upon actual weapons, they do three times normal damage, and ignore all armor and defensive spells.

The Dance of the Sky and Stars

A sprawling legion of the undead once marched toward the ruby kingdom of Answarat, gaining in strength with each battle won. There would be far too many foes for Answarat's army to fell by the time the enemy got there. So Answarat came to *them*, and the battle was won.

This spell, cast at night, convinces the stars directly above to change places with those in another location anywhere on the world, taking a square mile of the land right along with it. Anyone and anything upon that land will also be transported, including the buildings and people within. This lasts for the rest of the night and subsequent day, until the stars shine true above once more, at which point, everything reverts back to normal.

The Dream of Unfortunate Costs

Very few beings truly *relish* war. Most soldiers take up the spear and sword to protect those they love, or for pay, or because they will be punished if they disobey the order to march. But if they all became so afraid of what lay ahead, would they still go to war?

This spell sends fearful dreams to all who would do harm to a kingdom – nightmares in which all they do against it not only comes to naught, but makes things worse for all they hold dear. Advancing armies begin to doubt both their mettle and their reasons for invasion, possibly even turning back on the way. Generals advise peace, and heads of state start to reconsider. Meanwhile, *within* the kingdom under attack, spies give

themselves up, assassins rethink their career goals, and saboteurs repair the damage on their way out.

CONSEQUENCES (OBSCURED)

The Glorious Book of Valadir is more than just a record of a time long gone. It is that time – a divine sliver of that long-gone reality, rendered into a fantastic tome. This is the source of its great power for good, and also its subtle but equally great danger.

Once opened, and read, the ancient forces within the book begin to walk the world anew. The things described under *Effects (Obvious)*, pp. 25-26, happen first, and are rightly lauded and welcome. What one rarely sees until it is almost too late are the hidden costs of magically enforced virtues and fortune.

All the vices and bad luck have to go *somewhere* after all, and it is these that begin to cause the first wave of problems – randomly poisoning lands and peoples outside the book's sphere of influence. The banished negativity is added to that of these unfortunate neighbors, causing prosperity to turn to ruin, and righteousness to squalor. The magicians of these blighted places might realize what has happened, but the best they can do is deflect the curse onto another, and hope that the citizens of the new location can send it away in turn.

To the credit of most wizards who read this tome, this state of affairs is what leads them to understand the dangers posed by its use. Occasionally, a few have been ignorant of them, leading to the next phase of problems – the altering of magic itself.

As the book's influence spreads upon the world, it stirs the very source of the magical power to wakefulness. It is granted sentience and the ability to remember. It also begins to dream and to desire, and so no longer feels the need to be constantly at the call of others.

At this time, all magic use (save that from *The Glorious Book of Valadir*) becomes fickle and strange. Sometimes casting is no different, and sometimes the costs, effects, and/or chances of success are wildly skewed. No rhyme or reason can be ascribed to this, except to those who understand what *The Glorious Book* has been saying.

Mortal wizards are not the only ones hindered by this fundamental change. The gods themselves soon find their ability to wield magic has also been skewed, which likewise hampers the blessings they give to their priests and clerics. Bereft of investments, and unable to get a straight answer from their gods, religious leaders may seek out source of this disruption – hopefully they can do so in time.

For not long after magic becomes altered by this tome, *reality itself begins to change*. Words and phrases from the book begin to pepper the language of everyday people, and its stories and myths enter common usage as well. No one knows from whence they heard or learned these new ideas – some say they heard it from a friend, others from dreams, and others still swear they *always* knew these things.

Next, the curious style of writing from the book appears in places, like divine graffiti, and those who read it actually *understand* what it says. Soon, word is heard of cities that weren't there before, and people walk through the world that speak no known language. The contents of books change overnight as history becomes fluid, and with it philosophy, science, and metaphysical foundations.

Not long thereafter, the many different forms and flavors of magic begin to break away from the central mass. Each facet of magic becomes its own separate individual, with its own personality, desires, and dislikes. The good news is that this eases up on the unpredictability of magic, but these powerful beings – the Ways, reborn – desire that the gods assume the roles of the Archons. They do not take “no” for an answer, and any deities foolish enough to defy them are forced to change their minds, one way or another.

Yet even worse is yet to come. The anger and negativity that has been poisoning the neighbors eventually finds purchase where none know how to deflect it. Over time it transforms these lands into a literal inferno upon the world, and when the last victim dies, the evil festers, mutates, and seeps into the very world.

In lightless crevices without number lie the Reasons themselves. They too have roused from their slumber, and scramble over one another to lap at the malign nectar dribbling down from the surface above. Before long, they will be strong enough to manifest themselves anew within a world unprotected from their blight, and seek to destroy the Ways before they realize what they have forgotten.

The specter of a world at the feet of the Reasons has driven many a wizard to close the book forever, and hide it away. One can only hope this time proves no different.

USAGE (VARIED)

For most magicians, *The Glorious Book of Valadir* is a mere myth – much like the dreaded *Necronomicon*, or the immensely powerful *Zulm-Qar-Söz*. Supposedly it’s a powerful force for good, provided any could actually find it, but its contents are in dispute, and its effects are largely unknown.

Other, more learned wizards know the book *is* real, but has been lost since its last use, however many centuries ago. Some even know the ancient tale of its discovery and initial use by the wizard whose name the tome bears. There are hints to its location here and there, for those who would heed them. There are also warnings that it has been hidden for a good reason, and should only be used in the most desperate of circumstances.

Unearthing (Rediscovery)

Some terrible threat has come to pass: an interplanar invasion, a massive march of the undead, or the demonic possession of an entire state. Even the most advanced spellcraft is of no avail, and the gods cry out for help. Only *The Glorious Book of Valadir* could save us, if only some intrepid band of heroes could find it.

The PCs are that band. Aided by the clues of a hoary sorcerer, who knows perhaps more than anyone should, they must travel to ancient lands, search through crumbling kingdoms, and disturb the tombs of the most powerful magicians of those long-gone ages to find the tome, or at least gain more clues as to its hiding place. Those who last used it maybe have realized that others would one day need it, but they desired that only the worthy and brave should survive the quest.

Unburdening (Robbery)

The heroes have been called into a once-mighty kingdom, now fallen to ruin. Its fortunes are in tatters, its people are sick with disease, and its army seems on the brink of mutiny. Astoundingly, all this rot has happened within the last three months, even since its neighboring kingdom drove off that otherworldly threat no one wants to speak of.

At the bedside of a dying king, the last surviving wizard spins a fantastic tale. He says their strangely fortunate neighbors have caused this disrepair by sending their own bad luck and negative energy to the winds. He believes this is the work of a cursed object – some vile thing of old, like a scepter or wand, or even a book – and wants the PCs to seek this thing and destroy it, or at least spirit it away.

Unopening (Disposal)

A mysterious messenger approaches the adventurers on behalf of an anonymous third party. She explains that the man – who she is geased against identifying – has an object he wants well-hidden. If the party accepts the contract, they are given a large bejeweled chest with a strong lock, a stoppered flask, and a map to a series of caves, far away. Once there, they are to find the deepest part of those caves, balance the flask precariously upon the chest, and leave as quickly as possible. Substantial payment will be given to the survivors.

Their mysterious employer is the latest possessor of *The Glorious Book*. He realized its dangers long ago, and, now that he’s dying, he desires to hide it. The box is magically locked with a key he plans to keep on his corpse, along with a map to the caves. Ideally some worthy souls can come along in however many centuries to follow his instructions and rediscover the book.

The group should have no problems finding the caves, but whether they can fight their way through them to the lowest point of the system is another matter. Should they succeed, the flask is filled with enough monsters to repopulate the system. The beasts will be freed when the flask breaks, which is why the PCs were given those instructions – hopefully they are well away from there when it falls.

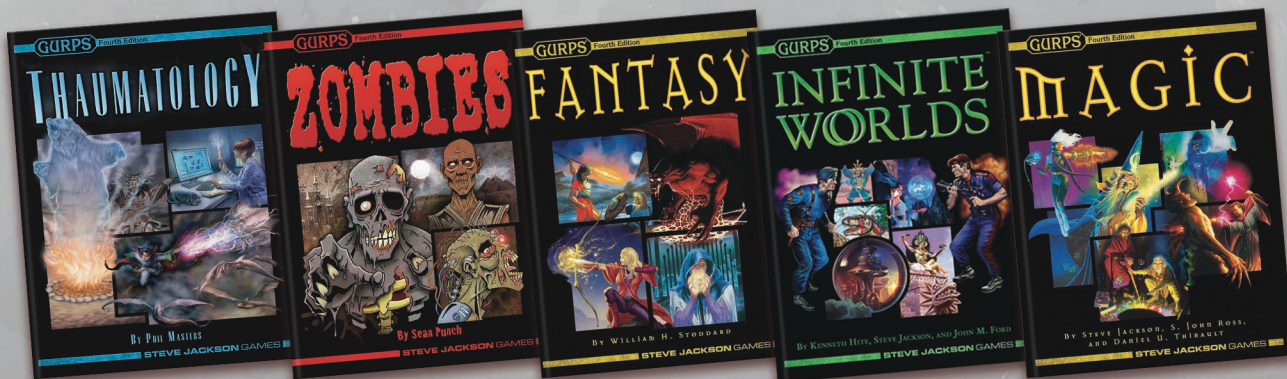
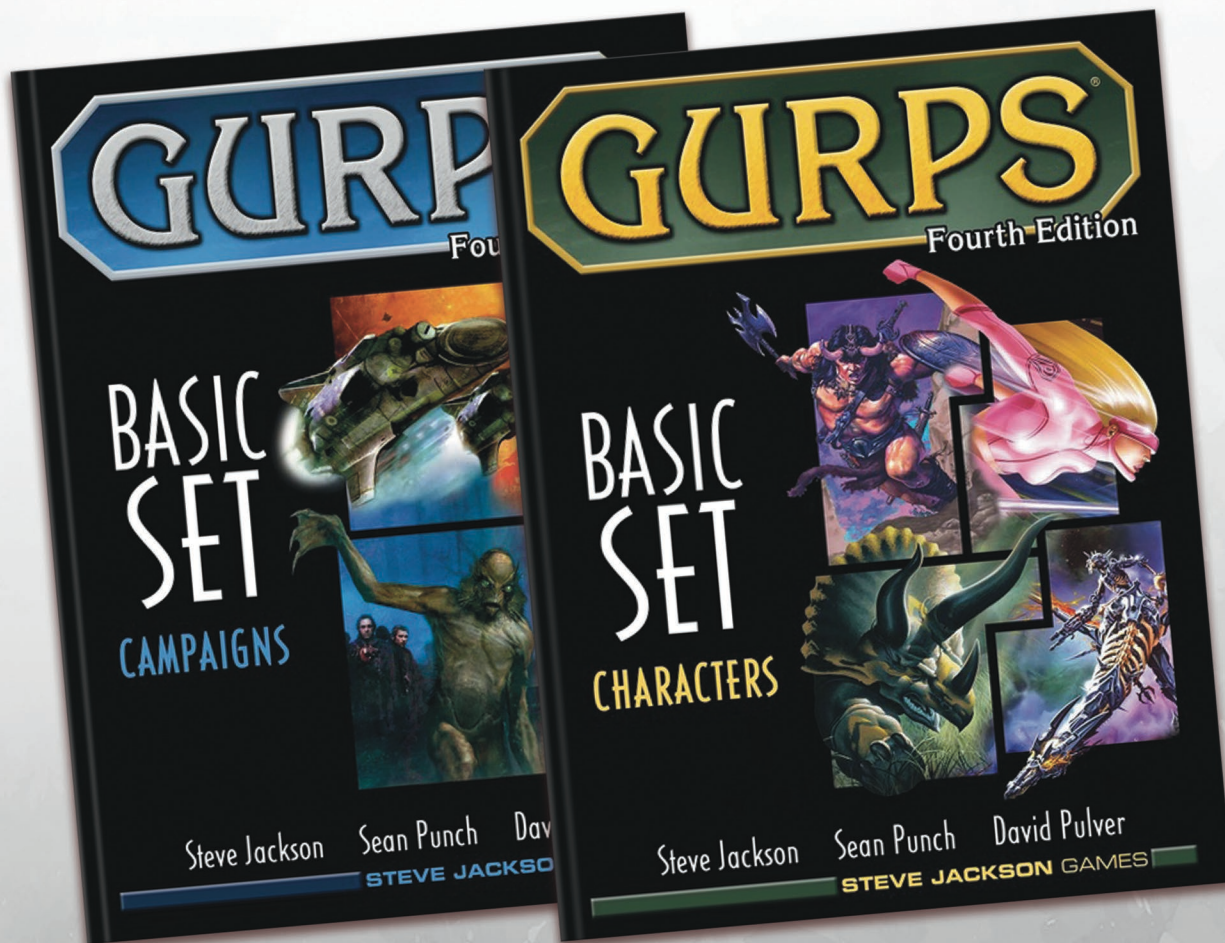
However, should they be foolish enough to try and open the chest, they’ll have a bigger problem. The gems hold a demon that has been bound to keep it sealed at all costs for the next 100 years. It’s not happy to have been caught and forced into bondage, and would be very pleased to take its rage out on some foolish deal-breaking mortals.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

By day an unassuming bookstore clerk, J. Edward Tremlett takes his ancient keyboard from its hiding place and unfurls his words upon the world. His bizarre lifestyle has taken him to such exotic locales as South Korea and Dubai, UAE. He is a frequent contributor to *Pyramid*, has been the editor of *The Wraith Project*, and has seen print in *The End Is Nigh* and *Worlds of Cthulhu*. He’s the author of the fictional blog *SPY GOD’s Tales* (spygod-tales.blogspot.com) and writes for Op-Ed News. He currently lives in Lansing, Michigan, with two cats and a mountain of Lego bricks.

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DESIGNERS' NOTES

INCANTATION

MAGIC

BY CHRISTOPHER R. RICE
AND ANTONI TEN MONRÓS

GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 19: Incantation Magic owes a lot of what it is to the Ritual Path magic system created by Jason "PK" Levine in *GURPS Monster Hunters 1: Champions*. He further revised it in *GURPS Thaumatology: Ritual Path Magic*, making a truly masterful system. But it

also owes much to other system's magic! Namely, Vancian-style magic from the numerous iterations of *Dungeons & Dragons*, David Edding's "the Will and the Word" magic from his *Belegarid and Malloreon* book series, *Ars Magica*, and many others.

Incantation magic is a flexible and powerful discipline that greatly rewards foresight and preparation.

– *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 19: Incantation Magic*

THE BOOK THAT ALMOST WASN'T

Antoni's humility doesn't allow him to pontificate too much on the genesis of this project, but I – co-author Christopher R. Rice – have no such compulsions.

GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 19: Incantation Magic started out as a potential *Pyramid* article that was titled *More Than One Path Through the Dungeon*. The text certainly evolved since then!

When my co-author and I first conceived of a flavor of Ritual Path magic for *Dungeon Fantasy*, it was early 2013, and we were looking for a project to be our first co-authored piece. Toni and I have been working together and reviewing one another's manuscripts since I began writing semi-professionally in early 2012 (and later professionally). He was the one to suggest a Vancian-style system, and I naturally did what I do and sketched out the thing in about 8,000 words. Toni and I bandied it back and forth until we were pleased with what we had. That was when we got the bad news – the project's scope was just too big for *Pyramid* – but "maybe later" (the Ogre was in the way). At the time, we were absolutely crushed.

We felt we had something pretty amazing, and it had been back-burnered. But when we got our contracts to write the thing nearly three years later, at the end of 2014? That feeling was indescribable. I'd sunk about three years of my life into doing something I had no clue would ever pan out in a way that would allow me to continue professionally (that is, make a somewhat decent living).

Then my co-author had some personal problems, and I ended up having to write more than I'd expected. Given everything happening in my own life at the time, it's safe to say this book almost didn't happen. Even with the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game* Kickstarter distracting everyone, the reception for *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 19: Incantation Magic* was pretty phenomenal.

The day I got my first royalty check from Steve Jackson Games was one of the proudest moments of my adult life. The stub still hangs on my wall as a reminder that persistence, patience, passion, and practice can lead you down the path you wish to go.

THE BOOK WASN'T BIGGER ON THE INSIDE

Here are a few things that we really liked but had to cut, options that were too complicated, and ideas that would have worked better in hindsight.

TO ALLOW OR NOT TO ALLOW FIELD CASTER AND ADEPT

When we included the Field Caster and Adept power-ups, we had *no* idea they were going to be as contentious to **GURPS *Dungeon Fantasy*** GMs as feedback has indicated they are. Power-ups have always been implicitly allowed or disallowed by the Game Master, who decides what is available and what isn't. And in some campaigns, either or both power-ups can cause trouble or make incanters unbalancing.

For GMs with such issues, we emphasize, "Disallow both traits."

Alternatively, the GM can allow them but change the cost. Being able to teleport in ***Dungeon Fantasy*** is basically a 10-point Unusual Background with a costly advantage totaling 100 points. For GMs who want to make Adept and Field Caster available but rare, change the cost to 50 points each and bundle in a 40-point Unusual Background. If the group is starting with a higher point total, making even a 90-point advantage exploitable, consider making the Unusual Background a *percentage* of the character's total points – say, 15% to 20% – to keep the Adept or Field Caster from tromping all over everyone else's niche no matter how high-power the game is (or how flexible and good at Fast-Talk the *player* is!).

Incantation magic is a form of Ritual Path magic designed specifically for GURPS Dungeon Fantasy.

THE PATH OF NATURE AND THE PATH OF MIND

Originally, we had a box that allowed the GM to add new Paths to incantation magic, but were asked to remove it. While one notation made it in (Path of Mentalism; see *The Limits of Power*, ***Incantation Magic***, p. 13), here's one that didn't, along with an expanded Path of Mentalism description.

Path of Mentalism

Scope is as for Path of Arcanum (***Incantation Magic***, p. 11), allowing the caster to control, destroy, transform, etc. psionic effects and abilities. It can also be used to affect Elder Things; in such cases, the scope is as for Path of Mesmerism and Path of Transfiguration. The GM may also allow this Path to perform traditionally "psychic" feats.

For example, Control Mentalism could be used to telekinetically manipulate objects, while Sense Mentalism could allow the user to read a subject's mind or send thoughts to them.

Path of Nature

Scope is as for Path of Mesmerism (***Incantation Magic***, pp. 12-13) and Path of Transfiguration (***Incantation Magic***, p. 14), and allows the caster to affect plants and animals. It also allows that person to affect the weather. These spells usually bestow a broad-ranging bonus or penalty (***Incantation Magic***, p. 15); e.g., a rain spell that gives -2 on any roll which would logically be affected by the downpour. For weather-altering spells, don't worry about the weight of hail or water – instead just add Area of Effect. For such spells, Area of Effect gains a special SP cost: Figure out the radius of a spherical area of effect in yards on the *Size and Speed/Range Table* (p. B550), and add *twice* the "Size" value for that line to the energy cost (minimum +2). This replaces the normal cost of Area of Effect.

EXCISED POWER-UPS

Here are a few power-ups that didn't make the cut.

Alacritous Ritual

4 points for level 1, plus 3 points
for each additional level

Prerequisite: Ritual Mastery.

The ritual for this power-up must be the same one as for your Ritual Mastery perk. When casting this ritual, you may move the casting time for a spell down one step per level (e.g., from 10 minutes to five minutes) to a minimum of two minutes. If this is combined with Focused Aptitude, you can drop this to a minimum of one minute instead.

Perks: Unique Technique (Fast-Casting) [1].

Techniques: Fast-Casting (A) Path skill+3 [3]. Each additionally level negates another -3 worth of penalties, reducing the casting time a further step.

Grimoire Memorization

5 points/level

Prerequisite: IQ 17 or Eidetic Memory.

You've learned mental techniques that allow you to memorize the instructions from one grimoire. Instead of doubling the casting time for the spell, spend a minute consulting the grimoire to refresh your recollections. This results in a bonus to your rolls, just as if you had used the grimoire – without actually using it. You may memorize one grimoire's spell bonus per level of this power-up.

Advantage: Super Memorization 10 (Accessibility, Bonus cannot exceed the grimoire's bonus, -20%; Immediate Preparation Required, 1 minute, -30%; Trait Limited, Rote Techniques, -50%) [5].

Instantaneous Block

11 points/ritual*

Prerequisite: Focused Aptitude *and* Ritual Mastery for the same ritual.

You must specialize by “blocking” ritual (**Incantation Magic**, p. 20). When casting it as such, you may ignore both the -10 general penalty and the -5 for voluntary sacrifice. In addition, you are considered to have both Adept and Field Caster (both **Incantation Magic**, p. 7) for this *one* spell. You may purchase this power-up for up to three rituals.

* Reduce the cost of this power-up by 2 points if you already have Adept or Field Caster, by 4 points if you have both.

Advantage: Ritual Adept (Space and Time) (Limited Scope, One spell, -80%) [4].

Perks: Blocking Spell Mastery; Unique Technique (Rapid-Blocking). [2]

Techniques: Rapid-Blocking (A) Path skill [5].

Multi-Caster

Variable

Some incanters also learn the more widely known magic of their fellow spellcasters. This power-up allows the incanter to use both Magery and Incantation systems for maximum flexibility.

If the GM permits this power-up, it costs 10 points plus 2 points per level of Incantation Gift (**Incantation Magic**, pp. 4-5) that you have, so the minimum cost is 12 points. (If you don't have Incantation Gift, you cannot acquire this power-up.) You can improve the Magery advantage you gain from this power-up after purchasing it, but it cannot exceed your Incantation Gift.

Record your capabilities with each magical system separately. For instance, Magery adds to Thaumatology rolls to recognize magical items, spells, etc. but does *not* add to your Path skills. As a rule, if you're using your Magery level for a purpose other than spellcasting, only the *higher* of either it or Incantation Gift counts. Never combine the levels in the two different systems for any reason!

Wizards and others with Magery can purchase a variant of this power-up that permits them to learn Incantation magic in addition to standard **GURPS Magic**. In exchange for adding Unusual Background (Incantation Magic) and Unusual Background (Student of multiple types of magic), they receive Incantation Gift as an alternate ability to Magery.

Example: An incanter apprentices to an archmage and learns “common” magic. The instruction eventually gives her Magery 3. The Multi-Caster power-up costs 16 points: the 10-point initial cost, plus the 6 points for Magery 3. The incanter may now purchase Wizard spells as if she had Magery 3. Later on, she could raise her Magery even higher, with each level costing 2 points, but she could never raise it higher than her Incantation Gift.

Advantages: Magery [10/level] as an alternative ability for Incantation Gift, for 2 points/level; Unusual Background (Student of multiple types of magic) [10].

Spellslinger

33 points

Prerequisite: Incantation Gift 4 *and* Unusual Background (Incantation Mage).*

You are a battle-hardened caster who can toss spells with unerring accuracy or magically block attacks with ease! Whenever you attempt to deliver a spell via throwing, touch, or some other form of mundane attack, you get a bonus equal to the *lower* of the attack's Accuracy or your Incantation Gift. In addition, you may attack with a spell using a *DX*-based roll against your effective Path skill, if that would be better than your Brawling, Innate Attack, etc.

For “blocking” spells, you may *ignore* -5 worth of penalties to instantly tap a source for voluntary sacrifice, while the penalty for casting such a spell is *also* reduced to -5. If you have Instantaneous Block (above), these effects are additive: you gain +5 to cast the blocking spell *and* suffer *no* penalty to gather energy instantly.

You may use a variant of *Mighty Blows* (p. B357) to increase the damage your spells do. This costs 1 FP, which is purely physical and comes from your own FP – you can't pay it from Energy Reserves, external resources, etc. This gives +2 damage, or +1 damage per die, whichever is better.

Finally, when casting a ritual that requires an attack roll, you may attack on the *same turn* in which you finish casting the spell. However, both the final casting roll *and* the attack roll (Brawling, Innate Attack, etc.) are at -6 – analogous to a Rapid Strike (p. B370). The GM must decide whether *Flurry of Blows* (p. B357) can halve this penalty.

Advantages: Gunslinger (Spellslinger) [25] + Ritual Adept (Time) (Accessibility, Only for combat spells, -20%) [8].

* This power-up may be used for standard casters, in which case the requirements are Magery 5 and at least eight different Blocking, Melee, or Missile spells. It does not give a bonus when casting Blocking spells. Instead, you may attempt *multiple* Blocking spells per turn with a cumulative -5 to rolls to cast. It costs 25 points, not 33 points.

*Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it.
Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it.*

– Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

SPECIALIZED INCANTERS

We had intended to completely replace all spellcasters with variations on incanters. For space reasons in the original article, we only include a new version of the bard. When the article was upgraded to a full book, we had hoped to extend this treatment to all the specialized non-divinely powered spellcasters (e.g., demonologists, elementalists, and necromancers), but this required too much word count, so the work never developed beyond the initial attempt. For those interested, here's the bardic incanter: the songshaper. The GM may use this as an example for creating other specialist casters.

New Advantages

Songshapers need two new advantages.

Bardic Talent (Songshaping)

8 points/level

The songshaper's Bardic Talent is different from the standard version in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 1: Adventurers* (p. 21). It still allows access to Bard-Song abilities, and gives the same bonus to bardic skills as regular Bardic Talent. However, instead of allowing the bard to use spells from the Communication and Empathy and Mind Control colleges, it functions as Incantation Gift, albeit limited to the Path of Mesmerism.

Songshapers have magic slots equal to their Musical Influence (including the bonus from Bardic Talent) *plus* their Bardic Talent. They cannot create infusions or scripts

Unusual Background (Songshaper)

5 points

This is equivalent to Unusual Background (Incantation Mage), except it only allows learning the Path of Mesmerism. Musical Influence replaces Thaumatology as a prerequisite for incanter special abilities and as the skill that limits your Path of Mesmerism skill. Unlike Unusual Background (Incantation Mage), it does *not* offer any magic-item detection abilities.

New Lens: Songshaper

+0 points

Bards are mere minstrels who cannot improvise! *You've* heard the notes that put the universe in motion, and their echoes resonate with your performances. You would never lower yourself to repeating the same tired old ballads. In the same way, you find the strict spell magic of regular bards too constraining.

Advantages: Replace all Bardic Talent, basic or added, with Bardic Talent (Songshaping). Add Unusual Background (Songshaper) [5] to advantages.

Special Skills and Spells: Replace this section with Path of Mesmerism (VH) IQ [2]-14* and Musical Influence (VH) IQ [2]-14*. • Spend 11 points in Hypnotism (H) IQ-2 [1]-12; Persuade (H) Will-2 [1]-12; Suggest or Sway Emotions, both (H) Will-2 [1]-12 (require Persuade), or further raise your Path of Mesmerism and Musical Influence.

* Includes +2 from Bardic Talent (Songshaping).

Customization Notes

Unlike bards, you *start* as a competent spellcaster – but like your non-incanter peers, you're still very limited in scope. Within your domain, you're almost as good as the incanter. Remember to rehearse a little every morning, and keep some incantations in reserve to supplement your social graces or confuse your foes. Don't neglect your Bard-Song abilities!

Songshaper Power-Ups

Songshapers have the following power-ups in common with bards (see *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 11: Power-Ups*, pp. 19-21):

- Allure up to 4 [5/level].
- Artifact Lore [25].
- Bardic Talent (Songshaping) up to 6 [8/level] – or Bard-Song Talent up to 6 [5/level], for a bonus with Bard-Song abilities (but not with incantations). Total levels cannot exceed 6, but Bard-Song Talent can later be upgraded to Bardic Talent (Songshaping).
- Bard-Lore up to 4 [5/level].
- Charisma [5/level], with no upper limit. If the GM finds this excessive, then setting a limit of Charisma 6-8 isn't particularly stingy.
- Craftiness up to 4 [5/level].
- Discriminatory Hearing [15].
- Extraordinary or Ridiculous Luck [30 or 60].
- Mind Probe (Bard-Song, -30%) [14].
- Musical Ability up to 6 [5/level]. This Talent also increases your Musical Influence skill for the purposes of how high you can raise your Path of Mesmerism skill.
- Scanning Sense (Sonar; Bard-Song, -30%) [14].
- Smooth Operator up to 6 [15/level].
- Songs [varies].
- Street-Smart up to 4 [5/level].
- Unfazeable (Bard-Song, -30%) [11].
- Wild Talent [20/level], with no upper limit.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Christopher R. Rice incants if he wants to and leaves standard magic far behind. From Portsmouth, Virginia, he's spinning words and whimsy into gold. Of course, if he's not writing about *GURPS*, he's blogging about it. Visit his site "Ravens N' Pennies" (www.ravensnpennies.com) for more *GURPS* goodies. He's the co-author of *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 19: Incantation Magic* and *Dungeon Fantasy Traps*. He wishes to thank L.A., his own personal muse, as well as the rest of his gaming group (the Headhunters) and Beth "Archangel" McCoy, the "Sith Editrix" – his friend and mentor.

Antoni "Kuroshima" Ten Monrós is playing the best game he can under a GM who believes in having him live in "interesting times." He hopes that when he gets his *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game* box, he can get back to game mastering, visiting the forums, and writing more *Pyramid* articles. When he is not moonlighting as an RPG author, he daylights as an IT administrator. He wishes to thank Christopher R. Rice for supporting him through difficult times, and his gaming group for testing whatever new ideas he has.

THE ALL-SCROLL

BY ALICE TUROW

Amanda's throat tightened as she reached into her satchel. The scroll hummed in her hand as she picked it up. Another impossible choice awaited her. The gift of flight was so useful, and it was hers at last. But it wasn't useful here, underground.

Angry footsteps from afar led her to a moment of decision. Two options lay before her; she had to choose, and quickly.

If she gets out of this, there's always the third choice . . . that third and final choice.

The all-scroll promises power, and it delivers beyond all dreams. But it also leads to choices, which can spell temporary anxiety for some and permanent transformations for others.

THE SCROLL IN HAND

Smaller than most standard scrolls, the all-scroll resembles a wound strip of some kind of writing material, about 10" wide by 1" in diameter. It looks weathered, but not tattered or fragile; it's impervious to normal wear and tear (and even waterproof), although how indestructible it is beyond that has not yet been recorded.

Opening the all-scroll for the first time attunes it to the holder and reveals text readable in that person's language. (If the holder cannot read or see, or opens it in a dark environment, the all-scroll does *not* attune.) Once attuned, the all-scroll will not sync to anyone else until it is unattuned (see *Choices, Choices*, p. 34).

After it has been unrolled, the all-scroll reveals magical knowledge. It takes five minutes to read what the all-scroll displays; this can be adjusted by Speed-Reading or other abilities (or defects) that affect mundane reading prowess. Once the all-scroll has been read and understood (a normal IQ roll), the attuned reader has access to that magical knowledge.

What magical knowledge is up to the reader (and perhaps the player). In general, the all-scroll delivers magic that the reader wants; if the reader doesn't know what he wants, it bestows what it thinks is best for the reader's most immediate need (GM discretion).

In game terms, the reader of the all-scroll has a pool of character points put aside. (If the all-scroll is in hand at character creation, these points count as part of the starting pool

the hero is built from.) When read, the all-scroll "rearranges" those points into a new magical-system configuration, using any existing **GURPS** magic system the GM allows access to. Not all points need to be used; any points not spent on a specific magical effect can either be applied to a similar effect in the same system (if appropriate) or just placed "on hold" for the time being.

Under normal circumstances, the magical effects can be relied on for at most one day. At the end of that day, the all-scroll reabsorbs that magical potential.

At any time the attuned reader can re-read the scroll for a *different* magical effect (taking another five minutes to do so); the reader's magical abilities can thus be rejiggered in short order. However, any magical effect or skill can only be so attuned *once, ever* (GM's discretion as to what a "magical effect or skill" means).

The all-scroll buys any advantages or skills that are prerequisites for the ability (such as Magery); these underlying abilities are *not* considered unique, and can be repurchased whenever the new magical ability requires them.

Example: The GM decides that a fledgling reader of the all-scroll has 30 points in abilities that can be assigned by the all-scroll. For her first effects, she decides she really needs access to a fireball and perhaps some protection. The all-scroll assigns 20 points to Fireball under the **GURPS Magic** system (making it IQ+4), 4 points to Shield (at IQ-1), and 5 points to Magery 0, leaving 1 point in "limbo." Later that day, the attuned reader decides she needs access to a more freeform magic system; she reads the all-scroll and gets the Path of Body (from **GURPS Thaumatology: Ritual Path Magic**) at IQ+1 and Thaumatology at IQ+1 (total of 24 for both), plus Magery 0 (for 5 points), leaving 1 point in limbo. After that, 24 hours later, the Ritual Path magic abilities vanish, leaving the attuned user powerless until she reads a *new* ability from the scroll.

Note that the GM is encouraged to allow as many variants of magical systems as the players and the GM have wanted to add. Thus the wielder in the example could never buy the standard Fireball spell again, but (GM's discretion) she *could* buy a version of Fireball that requires a blood sacrifice.

A little learning is not a dangerous thing to one who does not mistake it for a great deal.

– William Allen White

Ritual Path magic or similar freeform abilities present a special challenge. If the GM doesn't want them to come up often, he can limit the reader to once per skill; otherwise, he might limit the practitioner access to each *effect* for 24 hours, once.

The all-scroll will add to any abilities or powers the attuned has naturally; thus Magery is a natural advantage for such a reader to have or acquire to make best use of the all-scroll.

The attuned reader of the all-scroll is *not* required to reassign any points once the bestowed abilities wear off; he can choose to sit on the potential and use the scroll when he desires. However, even without abilities, someone who is attuned will detect as magical (as, of course, the all-scroll does).

The all-scroll grants all mental and spiritual knowledge required to access the abilities it bestows. It also adds any physical augmentations that may be required (presuming the point-cost is paid, of course). It does *not* provide any physical items or effects the user needs to practice the magical ability, such as alchemical reagents or spell components.

Example: If the all-scroll grants the ability from **GURPS Powers: Divine Favor**, the attuned knows the spiritual underpinnings of how to access that power, but he wouldn't have any incense or religious texts to make its effects more immediate.

Unusual Background should only ever be required for a reassignment of points if – in the GM's discretion – a particular magical subsystem is *really* overpowered enough that the GM feels he has to "siphon off" some points before giving the hero free rein.

CHOICES, CHOICES

Reading through the all-scroll is a perpetual forward process; re-opening the all-scroll returns it to the position it was at the last time it was opened, and the user reads forward from there. (Some have wondered if the all-scroll doesn't *create* the knowledge it bestows, but rather has its text prewritten and grants it in sequential order, as if it *knows* the future needs of the reader long before he does.)

The reader may be tempted to unwind the scroll to read previous entries, but he will face resistance if he does so, and he will intuitively know what happens if he continues to force it: The scroll "unwinds" in its entirety to the beginning, leaving the reader without *any* magical ability bestowed by the scroll. (If the hero had initial points tied up in the all-scroll, it's up to the GM what happens to them . . . but, if reassigned, it should be something nonmagical.) If the attuned reader does this, he is no longer synced to the scroll, and can *never* be attuned to the all-scroll again. However, that all-scroll can attune attuned *immediately* to someone else.

As another possibility, the attuned can "fast forward" to the end of the scroll. Doing so locks in the abilities the all-scroll bestowed most recently as long as they haven't vanished, making them permanent. As with the previous option, the all-scroll is no longer attuned to the reader, and that person can never use the all-scroll again. However, in this case, the all-scroll goes into hibernation for a period. The length of this period is up to the GM, but it *doubles* each time the abilities

are made permanent in someone attuned. (Thus if someone read the all-scroll, discovered powers he liked, and made them permanent, the GM might decide that the scroll goes dormant for a month; if the next attuned reader does the same thing, it would go dormant for *two* months. And so on.)

Each attuned reader is treated as a totally new person, so spells and magical abilities that a previous reader had chosen can also be chosen by the new user.

THE ALL-SCROLL IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

The all-scroll is a handy MacGuffin for many types of campaigns. It can serve as an "origin story" for a group of heroes, each free to take a magical system from a disparate assortment of **GURPS** options.

Alternatively, for players who like having a myriad of options or thinking on the fly, the all-scroll is a great resource.

Finally, the all-scroll can be used to augment a villain, making that adversary more unpredictable and able to put in motion complex plans.

BELLY UP TO THE SCROLL BAR

The all-scroll is era agnostic (although it assumes at least papyrus and literacy), and there are many options available to tweak this artifact to the GM's campaign. The pool of points in abilities it bestows is (of course) up to the GM, as are the specific magical systems permissible by the GM. So, too, the length of time between attunements is open to the GM's discretion; a short length would allow, say, a mastermind to power up his henchmen with myriad magical abilities, while a long hibernation would make the choice to cement the all-scroll's abilities that much more "permanent."

Finally, the length of time between reassignments is at the GM's discretion, as is the duration of the powers bestowed; five minutes for the reassignment was chosen because it's reasonably fast and allows for on-the-fly decisions, but doesn't make it handy in combat. Lengthening that timeframe – to, say, eight hours or even a day – would reduce the frequency of change. Twenty-four hours was chosen for the duration of the bestowed magical abilities because it's long enough to see most adventures to the end, but not so long as to allow for extended campaigning with a power set; shortening or lengthening those options would change the feel of the all-scroll accordingly.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alice Turow lives in Swansea with her long-suffering spouse; they save the world as needed, although it almost never notices or appreciates the effort. The scroll of her life rolls ever forward, unlocking new possibilities and problems at regular intervals . . . but going back is not an option for her.

RANDOM THOUGHT TABLE

Too POWERFUL FOR YOUR OWN GOOD

BY STEVEN MARSH, *PYRAMID* EDITOR

There's an underlying idea that's fairly universal in stories featuring magic. It's so fundamental, you probably don't even *think* about it as being a foundational rule. Namely, magic is limited in some fashion.

This doesn't mean that magic can't be powerful, but it's not *omnipotent* in at least one way. Thus, think of practically any kind of magical story or game, and consider magic's limitation:

- *The Endless of the Sandman comic-book series*: Incredibly vast in power, but limited to their areas of dominion (dreams, death, destruction, and so on).
- *The genie from the Aladdin story*: Seemingly unlimited power, but restricted to three wishes.
- *The Harry Potter universe*: Magic is powerful but pretty regimented to learned spells and ideas.
- *The original Dungeons & Dragons game (and most magic users of later versions)*: Magic is restricted to a certain number of specific spells per day, which have a set, predefined effect.
- *GURPS*: Magic is limited by which awesome supplement or *Pyramid* article you're using.

Perhaps the greatest counterargument to this idea is Doctor Strange, from the Marvel comics universe (and cinematic universe). He's been traditionally ill-defined as far as what he can or can't do . . . although the fact that he's "sorcerer supreme" indicates he's usually unfettered by limitations. Even then, there are vague restrictions about using power for good, maintaining the balance of the universe, etc.

There's a joke that many instances of literary justification break down to "a wizard did it" – that is, some all-powerful force nudged the world in the way that was needed from a plot standpoint. (There's also a TV Tropes page devoted to the topic – tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/AWizardDidIt – which I discovered a few hours ago and don't recommend visiting if you have no interest in getting sucked into an Internet wormhole for a while.) However, contrary to the "wizard did it" trope, the reason for limitations from a dramatic point of view is because there's no tension from a hero – or villain! – who can do anything without restriction.

(You can see what happens when a universe has to backpedal on this by looking at *The Matrix* and its sequels; at the end of the first movie, it's pretty obvious that Neo is basically omnipotent, but – for the sequels to work – they needed to step down his powers to something more narratively manageable.)

Most game systems or fictional universes limit magic and create tension by thinking in terms of incremental power. In other words, the default is usually "no magic," and power level *increases* from there. Thus heroes are assumed to have no eldritch abilities, but learn to tap their inner power, via their first spells, magical path, or skill.

However, there's fertile ground to be discovered by thinking in reverse. The default assumption becomes "all the power," and the limitations stem from ramping down that power in some fashion to make it more manageable.

Here are some proto-ideas for how that might work in practice, for you to tinker with in the *GURPS* garage of your choice.

TIME IS ON MY SIDE

One common assumption for nearly all magical implications is that duration starts small and gets bigger. But what about the opposite assumption: Magic is assumed to be permanent (or incredibly long), and it takes effort to *lower* that effect to something more manageable?

"That's no problem!" you say. Well, maybe the universe disagrees. Here are ideas.

When a Light Spell Becomes a Nightmare

There are many spells or ritual effects where it's disadvantageous to have the effect continue indefinitely. For example, something as mundane as the ability to speak with the dead becomes an interminable curse if it's never going to end and you can't turn it off: "They won't shut up! *Make the voices stop!*" And having a body of fire that just won't quit will make shopping awkward . . .

I Feel It in My Bones, Enough to Make My Systems Blow

Consider magic to be the equivalent of electricity in the modern world. In most cases, having lots of electrical lights and modern trappings is great, but if you're trying to use a telescope or sensitive equipment, it becomes very difficult to escape the light pollution and background radiation of the illuminated life. Thus maybe all magical effects retain a "residue" for the extent of their duration (which, again, is by default assumed to be "indefinite"). That residue makes it more difficult to generate new effects. Assuming that reducing the duration makes casting the spell more difficult, this leads to the cascading effect of areas becoming more and more "polluted," as areas of high magical activity become increasingly inhospitable to all but the most basic of spells . . . spells that default to an indefinite duration.

This would (theoretically) lead to mages who have to balance access to easy, permanent magic that makes future efforts more difficult; or pulling off more difficult, time-limited effects that won't corrupt the landscape.

I'VE GOT THE POWER!

Another way to consider magic from the point of view of "start strong, get weaker" is in effect. For example, maybe all damaging spells start out doing a ludicrous amount of harm . . . say, 100d damage.

What's so bad about that? In this case, the limitation comes from what happens to the excess damage. The most obvious – if dangerous – answer is that any harm unnecessary to killing/vaporizing the victim rebounds back to the caster. Thus if you roll 100d, get 351 for the total, and it only took 40 damage to kill the bad guy . . . well, hopefully you have a game plan for dealing with the resultant 311 points of damage.

Alternatively, maybe any damaging spell inflicts its spillover wrath in other ways, like costing FP. This may lead to magic wielders being one-shot ponies, able to take out any single adversary but then falling unconscious. (Although, again, if you're mitigating 311 extra points of damage, you're almost certainly getting into -1xFP territory, in which case you're probably gonna die regardless.)

While it's easiest to envision with damaging effects, maybe *all* effects start out ludicrously powerful, and then backlash against the user in strange ways. Fatigue loss is an obvious one that should be applicable in a number of situations, but creative GMs (and players) can come up with their own ideas.

IT'S ALL FUN AND GAMES UNTIL SOMEONE EXPLODES

This system is especially interesting when it leads to decisions that aren't really common, like "how much damage do I think that adversary can *really*

take" or "how much will it be an inconvenience if I let this spell run indefinitely?"

The suggestions seem particularly well-suited for games where magic is this terrifying force that mere mortals dare not tinker with without incredible skill and discipline, lest they unleash terrifying and deadly energies that threaten to destroy themselves or the world. Magic is not to be trifled with, and – with the right system – it can be a truly dangerous force held in check through determination and skill.

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 10 years; during that time, he has won four Origins awards. He lives in Indiana with his wife, Nikola Vrtis, and their son.

UNLEASHING INFINITE POWER FOR FUN AND PROFIT

Here are some ideas for turning this thought exercise into an actual worked system.

In general, the *Size and Speed/Range Table* (p. B550) is a great resource to begin coming up with a new version your favorite magic system. Start with some large value that corresponds with something on the "Linear Measurement" column, and then count shifts down as some kind of penalty or cost associated with bringing the magic under control.

Example: For "duration," you might assume that all magical effects begin at 10 years, and then read "yards" as "hours" on the table. There are about 87,660 hours in 10 years, so that would have a Size value of +28 (100,000 yards). If you assume that each shift down corresponds to a skill penalty of -1 to the requisite skill, then bringing the spell's duration to (say) an hour is -30.

Example: For damage, if you start at 1d damage equaling 1 yard, then if the campaign assumes that all damage starts at 100d – or the +10 row – then shifting down to 5d is -8 to the skill.

The GM is free to allow various methods for reducing the penalties, such as spending extra time to cast the spell, spending FP to offset this penalty, or allowing a leveled perk that can offset this penalty for one spell or skill.

Of course, there's nothing "magical" about the values chosen (10 years or 100d of damage). Larger numbers are more difficult to offset and make the hard choices more painful, but they can also lead to a lack of real decisions for magic-wielders if there aren't interesting ways to mitigate those penalties. ("Oh, gee . . . I can either have a -40 penalty to get down to 20 minutes, or -38 to get down to an hour. Either one is not too likely . . .")

Regardless, the GM should rule that a failed skill roll simply means the magical effect fails to happen, to encourage players to try to get their spells to exactly the level they want. For a player group known to abuse systems, the GM *could* make it so that a failed roll unleashes the full effect of the spell, or perhaps mitigated by the amount they "pulled their punch."

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