


PYRAMID[®]



Issue 3/113 March '18

DUNGEON FANTASIES



FIVE EASY PIECES

Sean Punch

MONSTERS AS TREASURES

David L. Pulver

SIMPLE SPELL COMPONENTS

Peter V. Dell'Orto

ALL WET

Charles Saeger

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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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
Brandon Moore

Gamers love to delve! Whether you're exploring the delights of the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game* or the *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* series that formed its inspiration, there's plenty of *GURPS* gaming goodness in this month's *Pyramid* that will prove *fantastic* for any crypt-crawling campaign.

When the 11 professions presented in the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game* just won't satisfy you, but you want something faster than distributing 250 points among hundreds of individual characteristics, you need *Five Easy Pieces*. In a few steps, Sean Punch – author of the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game* – shows how to create a highly customized character. Combine over a dozen themed trait modules, then follow the tips for optimizing, adding fine details, and checking your work. You'll also get an example character – Sergeant Emily Gore – and tips for using this system (and Sergeant Gore!) with *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*.

If you love to add bonuses to abilities and you wish you could do the same for your magic, seek out *Simple Spell Components*. This basic system – described by Peter V. Dell'Orto, author of *Dungeon Fantasy Magic Items* – provides a broad method for designating how spell components may be used. There are also two new *GURPS* traits and a long list of suggested material-college associations.

The natural order of the universe sees to it that monsters guard treasures . . . but what if you were to look at *Monsters as Treasures*? In this month's Eidetic Memory, David L. Pulver – author of *GURPS Banestorm: Abydos* – describes seven new monsters for *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*. Each one includes full stats and notes about what makes them valuable beyond any loot they're guarding.

When the adventurers head to water, they need to be careful about meeting creatures who are *All Wet*. Whether it's a river, lake, or sea, the heroes could encounter one of these 10 new monsters. Along with *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* stats for each being, you'll get a new watery racial template to add to your own game.

Discover the genesis of how *Dungeon Fantasy Traps* came into existence, in the latest offering of *Designer's Notes*. *Traps* authors Christopher R. Rice and Jason "PK" Levine provide their insights, plus give you five new traps, a new monster, and a new look at Mystical Runes, all with *Dungeon Fantasy RPG* stats.

This month's Random Thought Table wonders how necessary climactic moments are to the dungeon-crawling genre, while Odds and Ends has a few tips for making things a little more exciting, along with some bits we found at the bottom of a chest. Trips and traps, treasures and terrors, this issue of *Pyramid* has it all!

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FROM THE EDITOR

WHERE FANTASIES BECOME REALITIES

I'm pretty sure the first *GURPS* book I picked up was *GURPS Wild Cards*. And I mean literally "picked up"; I remember thumbing through it at Waldenbooks whenever I'd visit there. I would have been about 15 or 16, I imagine, and my interest in the book's realistic treatment of superheroes (despite my lack of knowledge at the time of the Wild Cards book series) was fascinating to me.

Looking through that book led me to the *GURPS Basic Set* (nearby on the same shelf), and my first realization that I could, indeed, use any *GURPS* book with any other, and it would make sense. It blew my mind. My soul still shuddered at an incident a couple of years earlier, when I'd purchased some *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* adventures in the erroneous belief that it'd be completely compatible with the *Dungeons & Dragons* boxed sets I'd been buying; in fact, they were about as immediately applicable to my pre-teen mind as a 1967 automotive repair manual. (I advise against trying to make sense of *Queen of the Demonweb Pits* with just the *Expert Set*.)

This issue of *Pyramid* is the first one where we've embraced both aspects of our "dungeon fantasies" – the

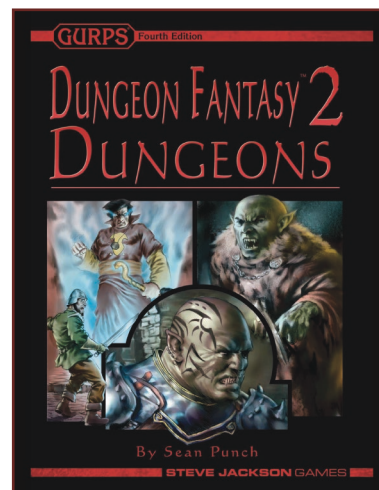
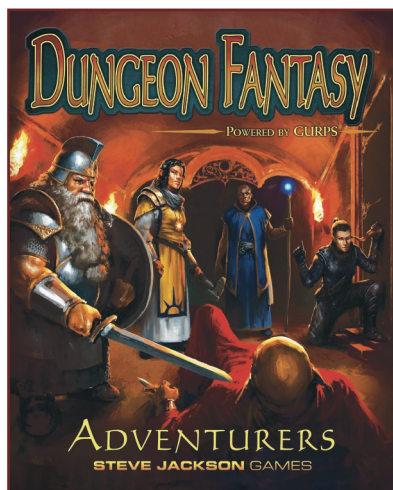
beautiful *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game* boxed set and the immensely popular and expansive *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* series. And, unlike the brain freeze I inflicted on my 1980s gaming self, those two *are* really darn compatible.

One of the secrets of improvisational theatre is saying, "Yes! And . . ."; that is, if your acting partner has a crazy suggestion for what's going on in the scene, you nod and go along with it . . . adding on your own twists. The intersection of the *GURPS* and *Dungeon Fantasy* worlds is a perfect time to look at how *GURPS* encourages, "Yes! And . . ."

Regardless of what you're doing with *GURPS*, we hope that *Pyramid* has plenty of excitement to add to your game. The game is designed to ping-pong among possibilities, and now there's a new assortment of additions for your crypt-crawling campaigns. Pick up your sword or don your robe; adventure awaits!

WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW

We love to hear about how your dungeon-delving exploits are going! Let us know what you thought of this trove privately via email to pyramid@sjgames.com, or by joining the discussion at forums.sjgames.com.



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FIVE EASY PIECES

BY SEAN PUNCH

A major difference between the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game (DFRPG)* and its parent game, the *Generic Universal Roleplaying Game (GURPS)*, is that the *DFRPG* uses professional templates to get you off to a running start while *GURPS* says, "Take these points and create a character!" The *DFRPG* makes such scratch-built adventurers highly optional (*Custom Professions, Dungeon Fantasy Adventurers*, p. 14) because creating them is intimidating for novices and time-consuming for everyone. Yet fantasy tales are filled with warrior-wizards, spellcasting rogues, and jacks of all trades, which means the 11 professions in *Adventurers* won't satisfy everyone.

A good solution – especially for groups of mixed gaming experience – is to build PCs from components finer than 250-point professional templates but coarser than individual traits. The approach described here involves adding together five 50-point "modules." These paint the character in broad strokes, and each allows a degree of customization – much like a template – to fill in fine details. A final check lets the player tweak the results and verify that everything is rules-legal.

The GM may require everyone to use this system or allow characters created using it to coexist with delvers built on standard professional templates.

1. STARTING POINT

The basic delver has no points in *anything*, like this:

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

Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 10 [0]; Per 10 [0]; FP 10 [0]; Basic Speed 5.00 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].

Advantages, Disadvantages, Skills, Spells: None!

2. MODULES

To create a 250-point hero, pick any *five* of the 50-point modules described here. You can choose most more than once, to favor particular areas (e.g., "I'm mostly a warrior but I dabble in magic."). The maximum number of times you can select a module appears under its name. See the module's description for the effects of repeated selections, which always include more points to customize with.

For each module, make the choices needed to customize it. Add the resulting attribute and secondary characteristic levels, advantages, disadvantages, skills, and spells to the blank character sheet above. Remember that attribute increases

also improve secondary characteristics. Pool all points that repeated selections of a module assign to a category (attributes, advantages, etc.) *before* customizing – a larger budget enables purchases of big-ticket items that are out of reach of those who pick the module fewer times.

When choosing and customizing modules, traits that don't come in levels (e.g., High Pain Threshold) can be selected just once. If you already have such a trait, don't take it again.

For traits that *do* come in levels, like attributes and advantages, add the levels. Unless a module specifically allows it, though, you cannot exceed the number of levels normally permitted to *everyone* rather than to members of specific professions:

ST, DX, IQ, HT, Will, and Per: 20.

HP: +ST/3, rounded up.

FP: +HT/3, rounded up.

Basic Speed: +2.00.

Basic Move: +3.

Advantages: Maximum noted in trait description; e.g., you can't normally go past Enhanced Dodge 1, Striking ST 2, Outdoorsman 4, or Magery 6.

For each skill, add points invested from all modules. In total, you may assign 1 point, 2 points, or a multiple of 4 points per skill. Use the *Skill Cost Table (Adventurers, p. 70)* to learn what level this buys relative to the controlling attribute. Use the final attribute level to determine skill level. Don't forget advantage bonuses, if any – see *Skills and Advantages (Adventurers, p. 71)*.

Brute Warrior

Maximum two choices

You're trained to fight using strength, toughness, and (probably) heavier weapons.

Attributes: ST +1 [10].

Advantages: 15 points distributed among ST [10/level], HT [10/level], HP [2/level], Fearlessness [2/level] *or* Unfazeable [15], Hard to Kill [2/level], Hard to Subdue [2/level], High Pain Threshold [10], Rapid *or* Very Rapid Healing [5 *or* 15], Recovery [10], Signature Gear [1/weapon], Tough Skin* [3/level], Trademark Move [1/move], Weapon Bond [1/weapon], *or* certain traits normally limited to knights (*Adventurers, pp. 28-29*): Armor Mastery [5], Sacrificial Block [1], Sacrificial Parry [1], Shield Mastery [15], *or* Shield-Wall Training [1].

Skills: 16 points in melee weapon skills (*Adventurers*, pp. 80-82). ● 9 points distributed among *additional* melee weapon skills, missile weapon skills (*Adventurers*, p. 83), or Armory (any) (IQ/A), Boxing (DX/A), Brawling (DX/E), Cloak (DX/A), Connoisseur (Weapons) (IQ/A), Fast-Draw (any) (DX/E), Forced Entry (DX/E), Intimidation (Will/A), Leadership (IQ/A), Lifting (HT/A), Shield (DX/E), Shield (Buckler) (DX/E), Strategy (IQ/H), Sumo Wrestling (DX/A), Tactics (IQ/H), Thrown Weapon (any) (DX/E), or Wrestling (DX/A). ● Most brutes buy skill with one high-ST melee weapon, add Shield if that's one-handed, and have Brawling, Wrestling, and a ranged skill for backup.

* As barbarian ability (*Adventurers*, p. 16). Maximum three levels.

Brute Warrior 2

Add another ST +1 [10]; 30 more points in the advantages above or Combat Reflexes [15], Enhanced Block 1-3 [5/level], Enhanced Parry 1-3 [5/level], Extra Attack 1 [25], or Weapon Master [20 to 45]; and 10 more points in skills.

Cerebral

Maximum two choices

You're unusually brainy. This gives no specific professional abilities, but is essential for spellcasters and useful for cunning rogues and non-magic-using sages.

Attributes: IQ +1 [20].

Advantages: 30 points distributed among IQ [20/level], Will [5/level], Per [5/level], Eidetic or Photographic Memory [5 or 10], Intuition [15], Language Talent* [10], Languages [3 or 6/language*], or Mind Shield [4/level].

* Languages cost only 2 or 4 points apiece with Language Talent.

Cerebral 2

Add another IQ +1 [20] and 30 points of advantages. The simplest implementation of Cerebral 2 is IQ +5 [100]!

Crusader

Maximum two choices

You're devoted to the cause of slaying Evil creatures, much like a holy warrior.

Advantages: Higher Purpose 1 (Slay Demons or Slay Undead) [5], Holiness 2 [10], and Rest in Pieces [1]. ● 26 points distributed among Will [5/level], Fearlessness [2/level] or Unfazeable [15], Higher Purpose (existing or new specialty) [5/level], Holiness [5/level], or Holy abilities (*Adventurers*, pp. 20-21, 26-27). ● If you also take *Priest* (p. 8), you may spend advantage points from either module to upgrade Holiness to Power Investiture; this costs 5 points/level.

Disadvantages: One of Honesty (12) [-10], Sense of Duty (Good Entities) [-10], or Vow (Own no more than horse can carry) [-10]. ● If you also pick *Priest*, you *must* take its disadvantage and select -10 points of other disadvantages on top of that (which may include one of these three or something altogether different).

Skills: Hidden Lore (Demons or Undead) (IQ/A) at IQ [2], Physiology (monster type) (IQ/H) at IQ [4], and Psychology (monster type) (IQ/H) at IQ [4]. ● Another 8 points distributed among melee weapon skills (*Adventurers*, pp. 80-82), missile weapon skills (*Adventurers*, p. 83), or any of Boxing (DX/A), Brawling (DX/E), Cloak (DX/A), Esoteric Medicine (Holy) (Per/H), Exorcism (Will/H), Fast-Draw (any) (DX/E), Intimidation (Will/A), Religious Ritual (IQ/H), Shield (DX/E), Shield (Buckler) (DX/E), Strategy (IQ/H), Tactics (IQ/H), Theology (IQ/H), Thrown Weapon (any) (DX/E), or Wrestling (DX/A).

Crusader 2

Add another 40 points of advantages and 10 points of skills.

Finesse Warrior

Maximum two choices

You're trained to fight using agility, cunning, and situational awareness – usually with lighter weapons.

Advantages: 30 points distributed among DX [20/level], Basic Speed [5/+0.25], Basic Move [5/level], Ambidexterity [5], Combat Reflexes [15], Enhanced Block [5/level], Enhanced Dodge [15/level], Enhanced Parry [5/level], Extra Attack [25/level], Perfect Balance [15], Peripheral Vision [15], Signature Gear [1/weapon], Striking ST [5/level], Trademark Move [1/move], Weapon Bond [1/weapon], Weapon Master [20, 25, or 30], or certain traits normally limited to swash-bucklers (*Adventurers*, p. 37): Armor Familiarity [1], Daredevil [15], Every One's a Critical [15], Great Void [10], or Springing Attack [10].

OPTIMIZATION?

Veteran gamers might review characters this system generates and think, "How inefficient!" It's sometimes possible to buy the same overall capability more cheaply by shuffling points; e.g., going from IQ 10 [0], Per 11 [5], Will 12 [10], 2 points apiece in nine IQ-based skills, and 4 points apiece in two others (41 points) to IQ 11 [20], Per 11 [0], Will 12 [5], 1 point in nine IQ-based skills, and 2 points in two others (38 points) yields the same attribute and skill levels yet saves three points. Advantages can likewise offer economies; e.g., Absolute Direction [5] and 1 point in Navigation gives skill at IQ+2 and a cool knack for 6 points, whereas 8 points in skill buys only Navigation at IQ+2.

The GM decides whether this is allowed. Some gamers believe that altering backstory (e.g., "Well-trained, not smart.") for efficiency is "wrong." Just as many see inefficiency as "wrong." As the professional templates in *Adventurers* tend to optimize, it's fairest to permit optimization if using those alongside this system. But the GM motivated by fairness should be ready to help do the math – not all players are *good* at optimization.

Skills: 16 points in melee weapon skills (*Adventurers*, pp. 80-82). ● 4 points distributed among *additional* melee weapon skills, missile weapon skills (*Adventurers*, p. 83), or any of Acrobatics (DX/H), Armory (any) (IQ/A), Bolas (DX/A), Boxing (DX/A), Brawling (DX/E), Cloak (DX/A), Connoisseur (Weapons) (IQ/A), Fast-Draw (any) (DX/E), Jumping (DX/E), Lasso (DX/A), Leadership (IQ/A), Net (DX/H), Shield (DX/E), Shield (Buckler) (DX/E), Strategy (IQ/H), Tactics (IQ/H), Thrown Weapon (any) (DX/E), or Wrestling (DX/A). ● Most finesse fighters buy skill for a lighter melee weapon, like Rapier or Staff, add Cloak or Shield if that's one-handed, and have a ranged skill for backup.

Finesse Warrior 2

Add DX +1 [20]; 20 more points in the advantages above, which can now include the swashbuckler's Enhanced Time Sense [45] or Extra Attack 2 [50]; and 10 more points in skills.

Leader

Maximum one choice

You're cut out to lead, whether that means an adventuring party or a gaggle of NPCs. Not all groups need a dedicated leader – ask the GM! This module allows 50 points to be distributed unusually fluidly among advantages and skills.

Advantages: Up to 40 points distributed among IQ [20/level], Will [5/level], Born War-Leader [5/level], Charisma [5/level], Fearlessness [2/level] or Unfazeable [15], Penetrating Voice [1], or certain traits normally limited to knights (*Adventurers*, pp. 28-29): Rallying Cry [5], Sacrificial Block [1], Sacrificial Parry [1], or Shield-Wall Training [1].

Skills: Remainder of 50 points distributed among Detect Lies (Per/H), Diplomacy (IQ/H), Gesture (IQ/E), Heraldry (IQ/A), Interrogation (IQ/A), Intimidation (Will/A), Leadership (IQ/A), Propaganda (IQ/A), Public Speaking (IQ/A), Savoir-Faire (IQ/E), Strategy (IQ/H), Tactics (IQ/H), or Teaching (IQ/A). ● Remember bonuses from the selected advantages – notably, Born War-Leader benefits Leadership, Savoir-Faire, Strategy, and Tactics.

Lore-Master

Maximum one choice

You're bookish – a common trait of spellcasters, who frequently study *supernatural* lore. This module allows 50 points to be distributed unusually fluidly among advantages and skills.

Advantages: Up to 40 points distributed among IQ [20/level], Eidetic or Photographic Memory [5 or 10], Language Talent* [10], Languages [3 or 6/language*], or Wild Talent [20/level].

Skills: Remainder of 50 points distributed among Alchemy (IQ/VH), Cartography (IQ/A), Connoisseur (any) (IQ/A), Current Affairs (IQ/E), Diagnosis (IQ/H), Hazardous Materials (IQ/A), Heraldry (IQ/A), Hidden Lore (any) (IQ/A), Musical Composition (IQ/H), Occultism (IQ/A), Pharmacy (IQ/H), Physiology (any) (IQ/H), Psychology (any) (IQ/H), Research (IQ/A), Speed-Reading (IQ/A), Teaching (IQ/A),

Thaumatology (IQ/VH), Theology (any) (IQ/H), or Writing (IQ/A).

* Languages cost only 2 or 4 points apiece with Language Talent.

Mage

Maximum two choices

You possess magical talent and have learned how to use it. To have a wizard's deep grasp of the arcane other than spells, take *Lore-Master* (above) as well.

Advantages: Magery 1 [15]. ● 20 points distributed among IQ [20/level], FP [3/level], Energy Reserve (Magical) [3/level], Gizmos [5/level], Improved Magic Resistance [5/level], or Magery [10/level]. ● If desired, some or all of these 20 points can be put into more spells instead.

Spells: 15 points distributed among wizardly spells. ● Add final Magery level to spells.

Mage 2

Add another 35 points of advantages – which can now include Wild Magic [21/level], and which you *can* devote to more spells instead – and 15 points of spells.

A good war leader wreaks more destruction than a great warrior.

– Griukuk Kzaash, Knight

Master Archer

Maximum two choices

You're a keen-eyed expert with the bow – a narrow focus, but one valuable in almost any adventuring party! To have the scout's wilderness expertise, add *Outdoorsy* (p. 7).

Advantages: Heroic Archer [20]. ● 20 points distributed among DX [20/level], Acute Vision [2/level], Night Vision [1/level], Signature Gear (Bow) [1], Weapon Bond (Bow) [1], Weapon Master (Bow) [20], or certain traits normally limited to scouts (*Adventurers*, p. 35): Multi-Aim [6/level], Strongbow [1], or Telescopic Vision 1-2 [5/level].

Skills: Armory (Missile Weapons) (IQ/A) at IQ-1 [1], Bow (DX/A) at DX+2 [8], and Fast-Draw (Arrow) at DX [1].

Master Archer 2

Add another 40 points of advantages, which can now include Extra Attack 1 [25], and double the investment in all three skills: Armory [2], Bow [16], and Fast-Draw [2].

Medic

Maximum one choice

You're adept at bandaging, extracting arrowheads, treating fever, and other mundane healing. To perform magical healing, take *Priest* (p. 8) instead or as well. This module allows 50 points to be distributed unusually fluidly among advantages and skills.

Advantages: Up to 40 points distributed among IQ [20/level], Empathy [15], Healer [10/level], Resistant to Disease [1/level], or Resistant to Poison [1/level].

Skills: Remainder of 50 points distributed among Alchemy (IQ/VH), Diagnosis (IQ/H), First Aid (IQ/E), Pharmacy (IQ/H), Physiology (any) (IQ/H), Poisons (IQ/H), Psychology (any) (IQ/H), Surgery (IQ/VH), or Veterinary (IQ/H).
● Remember that Diagnosis, First Aid, Pharmacy, Physiology, Psychology, Surgery, and Veterinary get a bonus equal to Healer level.

*Forty leagues from town, only
skills matter; job titles decorate
grave markers.*

– Llandor the Gray, Scout

Monk

Maximum two choices

You're attuned to *chi* and schooled in the martial arts.

Advantages: Chi Talent 1 [15] and Trained by a Master [30].
● 10 points distributed among Enhanced Parry (Unarmed) [5/level] or Chi abilities (*Adventurers*, pp. 30-31). ● If desired, some or all of these 10 points can be put into more skills instead.

Disadvantages: Disciplines of Faith (Chi Rituals) [-10].

Skills: 5 points distributed among Acrobatics (DX/H), Autohypnosis* (Will/H), Blind Fighting* (Per/VH), Body Control* (HT/VH), Breaking Blow* (IQ/H), Breath Control* (HT/H), Esoteric Medicine (Chi)* (Per/H), Immovable Stance* (DX/H), Judo (DX/H), Karate (DX/H), Kiai* (HT/H), Light Walk* (DX/H), Mental Strength* (Will/E), Mind Block* (Will/A), Parry Missile Weapons* (DX/H), Power Blow* (Will/H), Pressure Points* (IQ/H), Push* (DX/H), or Throwing Art* (DX/H).

* Add final Chi Talent level to these skills.

Monk 2

Distribute another 50 points among higher Chi Talent [15/level]; further Enhanced Parry or Chi abilities; FP [3/level], Enhanced Dodge [15/level], Extra Attack [25/level], or Wild Talent [20/level]; or skills.

Nature Priest

Maximum two choices

Your rapport with Nature is strong enough to let you work druidic magic – though your knowledge of the associated rites and lore is limited.

Advantages: Power Investiture 2 (Druidic) [20]. ● 20 points distributed among IQ [20/level], FP [3/level], Energy Reserve (Druidic) [3/level], Green Thumb [5/level], Power Investiture (Druidic) [10/level], Spirit Empathy [10], or Druidic abilities (*Adventurers*, pp. 23-24). ● If desired, some or all of these 20 points can be put into more spells instead.

Skills: Esoteric Medicine (Druidic) (Per/H) at Per-2 [1], Herb Lore (IQ/VH) at IQ-3 [1], Naturalist (IQ/H) at IQ-2 [1], Religious Ritual (Druidic) (IQ/H) at IQ-2 [1], and Theology (Druidic) (IQ/H) at IQ-2 [1].

Spells: 5 points distributed among druidic spells. ● Add final Power Investiture (Druidic) level to spells.

Nature Priest 2

Add another 35 points of advantages – which you *can* devote to more spells instead – and distribute 15 more points among skills and spells.

Outdoorsy

Maximum two choices

You're comfortable in the wilderness. This is a narrow focus, but one an adventuring party needs if action happens outdoors – ask the GM!

Advantages: Outdoorsman 2 [20]. ● 10 points distributed among HT [10/level], Per [5/level], Basic Move [5/level], Absolute Direction [5], Acute Senses (any) [2/level], Animal Empathy [5], Animal Friend [5/level], Green Thumb [5/level], Outdoorsman [10/level], or Temperature Tolerance* [1/level].

Skills: 20 points distributed among Animal Handling (any) (IQ/A), Boating (DX/A), Camouflage (IQ/E), Cartography (IQ/A), Climbing (DX/A), Disguise (Animals) (IQ/A), Fishing (Per/E), Hiking (HT/A), Knot-Tying (DX/E), Mimicry (Animal Sounds or Bird Calls) (IQ/H), Naturalist (IQ/H), Navigation (IQ/A), Pharmacy (IQ/H), Prospecting (IQ/A), Riding (Horse) (DX/A), Running (HT/A), Seamanship (IQ/E), Skiing (HT/H), Survival (any) (Per/A), Swimming (HT/E), Tracking (Per/A), Veterinary (IQ/H), or Weather Sense (IQ/A). ● Try to choose skills that get bonuses from the selected advantages!

* As barbarian ability (*Adventurers*, p. 16). Maximum three levels.

Outdoorsy 2

Add another 40 points of advantages – which *must* improve Outdoorsman 2 [20] to Outdoorsman 4 [40] and *may* include the barbarian's Discriminatory Smell [15] ability (*Adventurers*, p. 16) – and 10 points of skills.

Physical

Maximum two choices

You're in good shape. This gives no specific professional abilities but is almost essential for dedicated warriors and action-oriented rogues.

Attributes: ST +1 [10]; DX +1 [20]; HT +1 [10].

Advantages: 10 points distributed among ST [10/level], HT [10/level], HP [2/level], FP [3/level], Basic Speed [5/+0.25], Basic Move [5/level], Fit [5], Hard to Kill [2/level], Hard to Subdue [2/level], High Pain Threshold [10], Lifting ST* [3/level], Rapid Healing [5], Recovery [10], Resistant to Disease [1/level], Resistant to Poison [1/level], or Striking ST [5/level].

* As barbarian ability (*Adventurers*, p. 16). Maximum three levels.

Physical 2

Add another 50 points of advantages, which can now include DX [20/level], Very Fit [15], or Very Rapid Healing [15]. Rogues often invest the full 60 points of advantages in DX, for a final DX +4.

Priest

Maximum two choices

You're a formally invested wielder of clerical magic. While trained in basic religious lore, you aren't especially talented at mundane healing – that's *Medic* (pp. 6-7).

Advantages: Clerical Investment [5] and Power Investiture 2 [20]. • 25 points distributed among IQ [20/level], Will [5/level], FP [3/level], Energy Reserve (Holy) [3/level], Power Investiture [10/level], Spirit Empathy [10], or Holy abilities (*Adventurers*, pp. 20-21, 26-27). • If desired, some or all of these 25 points can be put into more spells instead.

Disadvantages: One of Honesty (12) [-10], Sense of Duty (Coreligionists) [-10], or Vow (No edged weapons) [-10].

Skills: Esoteric Medicine (Holy) (Per/H) at Per-2 [1], Exorcism (Will/H) at Will-2 [1], Religious Ritual (IQ/H) at IQ-2 [1], and Theology (IQ/H) at IQ-2 [1].

Spells: 6 points distributed among clerical spells. • Add final Power Investiture level to spells.

Priest 2

Add another 35 points of advantages – which you *can* devote to more spells instead – and distribute 15 more points among skills and spells.

Rogue

Maximum three choices

You live by your wits! You don't *have* to be a criminal – you might just be cunning and sneaky by nature.

Advantages: 30 points distributed among DX [20/level], IQ [20/level], Per [5/level], Basic Move [5/level], Combat Reflexes [15], Danger Sense [15], Flexibility or Double-Jointed [5 or 15], Honest Face [1], Luck or Extraordinary Luck [15 or 30], Night Vision [1/level], Peripheral Vision [15], Perfect Balance [15], or certain traits normally limited to thieves (*Adventurers*, p. 39): Catfall [10], Expert Backstabbing 1-10 [2/level], Gizmos 1-3 [5/level] High Manual Dexterity 1-6 [5/level], Sensitive Touch [10], or Silence 1-2 [5/level].

Skills: 20 points distributed among Acrobatics (DX/H), Acting (IQ/A), Carousing (HT/E), Climbing (DX/A), Counterfeiting (IQ/H), Disguise (IQ/A), Escape (DX/H), Fast-Talk (IQ/A), Filch (DX/A), Forced Entry (DX/E), Forgery (IQ/H), Gambling (IQ/A), Garrote (DX/E), Holdout (IQ/A), Jumping (DX/E), Lip Reading (Per/A), Lockpicking (DX/A), Merchant (IQ/A), Mimicry (Speech) (IQ/H), Observation (Per/A), Panhandling (IQ/E), Pickpocket (DX/H), Poisons (IQ/H), Scrounging (Per/E), Search (Per/A), Sex Appeal (HT/A), Shadowing (IQ/A), Sleight of Hand (DX/H), Smuggling (IQ/A), Stealth (DX/A), Streetwise (IQ/A), Traps (IQ/A), Urban Survival (Per/A), or Ventriloquism (IQ/H). • Stealth is practically universal but not mandatory – but whatever you choose, select skills that get bonuses from your advantages.

Rogue 2

Add another 40 points of advantages (total 70) – which can now include Ridiculous Luck [60] – and 10 points of skills (total 30).

Rogue 3

Add a *further* 40 points of advantages (total 110) – which by now should include some extra DX and IQ – and 10 points of skills (total 40).

Trust me, professional titles more often veil proficiency than reveal it.

– Jag Fairchild, Bard

Social

Maximum two choices

You're socially adept, which is of value to those who represent an adventuring party in town – and to rogues who enjoy swindling and priests who like to preach.

Advantages: 30 points distributed among IQ [20/level], Appearance [4, 12, or 16], Born Entertainer [5/level], Charisma [5/level], Cultural Adaptability [10], Empathy [15], Honest Face [1], Language Talent* [10], Languages [3 or 6/language*], Penetrating Voice [1], Rapier Wit† [5], Voice [10], or Wealth [10, 20, or 30]. • If desired, some or all of these 30 points can be put into more skills instead.

Skills: 20 points distributed among Acting (IQ/A), Carousing (HT/E), Connoisseur (any) (IQ/A), Current Affairs (IQ/E), Dancing (DX/A), Detect Lies (Per/H), Diplomacy (IQ/H), Fast-Talk (IQ/A), Gambling (IQ/A), Gesture (IQ/E), Heraldry (IQ/A), Interrogation (IQ/A), Intimidation (Will/A), Leadership (IQ/A), Merchant (IQ/A), Panhandling (IQ/E), Propaganda (IQ/A), Public Speaking (IQ/A), Savoir-Faire (IQ/E), Sex Appeal (HT/A), Streetwise (IQ/A), or Teaching (IQ/A). • Try to choose skills that get bonuses from the selected advantages!

* Languages cost only 2 or 4 points apiece with Language Talent.

† As swashbuckler ability (*Adventurers*, p. 37).

Social 2

Add another 40 points of advantages and 10 points of skills.

Spellsinger

Maximum two choices

You can work musical magic like a bard. This does *not* include social facility, mundane lore, or roguish skills – just music and magic.

Advantages: Bardic Talent 2 [20]. • 20 points distributed among IQ [20/level], FP [3/level], Bardic Talent [10/level], Born Entertainer [5/level], Energy Reserve (Magical) [3/level], Voice [10], or Bard-Song abilities* (*Adventurers*, p. 18). • If desired, some or all of these 20 points can be put into more spells instead.

Skills: Musical Instrument (any) (IQ/H) at IQ-1 [2] and Singing (HT/E) at HT+1 [2]. • Add final Bardic Talent level to these skills – and remember that Born Entertainer and Voice improve Singing.

Spells: 6 points distributed among wizardly spells from the Communication and Empathy, Knowledge, Mind Control, and Sound colleges. • Add final Bardic Talent level to spells.

* To select Bard-Song abilities, Musical Instrument or Singing must be at 14+ after advantage modifiers.

Spellsinger 2

Add another 40 points of advantages – which you *can* devote to more spells instead – and 10 points of spells.

3. PROBLEMS

At this point, your character is worth 250 points. You *could* stop here! But it's fun to customize further – and to get points for that, you must choose some disadvantages and quirks.

Disadvantages

You may have up to -50 points total in disadvantages, subject to these conditions:

- If *none* of your modules include disadvantages, you may pick up to -50 points in problems.

- If *any* of your modules include disadvantages, you may add *new* ones (or worsen self-control numbers on existing traits) to bring your total to -50 points; e.g., if you chose *Monk* (p. 7) and *Priest* (p. 8), you already have -20 points in disadvantages, so your limit is another -30 points.

- You cannot select disadvantages that conflict with your advantages. Most important, Social Stigma (Excommunicated) is forbidden alongside Holiness or Power Investiture. This also goes for negative Appearance or Wealth if you have the positive kind, Combat Paralysis if you have Combat Reflexes, Frightens Animals if you have Animal Empathy or Animal Friend, Ham-Fisted if you have High Manual Dexterity, Hard of Hearing if you have Acute Hearing, Low Pain Threshold if you have High Pain Threshold, Phobias if you have Fearlessness or Unfazeable, Unfit or Very Unfit if you have Fit or Very Fit, and so on.

- You cannot pick incompatible disadvantages: Loner and Chummy, Fat and Skinny, and so on. When in doubt, read the descriptions!

Common and widely accepted foibles for adventurers include Compulsive Carousing [-5*], Overconfidence [-5*], Sense of Duty (Adventuring Companions) [-5], and Codes of Honor and Vows worth -5, -10, or -15 points. Armed treasure-hunters are also prone to Bloodlust [-10*] and Greed [-15*] (for obvious reasons!), and to antisocial traits such as Loner [-5*], Obsession [-5* or -10*], Stubbornness [-5*], and Social Stigmas [-5 or -10] – just be careful not to create a monster! Those scarred by past adventures may end up with Phobias [-5*, -10*, or -15*].

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

Quirks

You may define up to five quirks, worth -1 point apiece, as usual; see *Quirks* (*Adventurers*, p. 68).

4. FINAL CUSTOMIZATION

Spend points from the disadvantages and quirks added at the last step on the final details you want for your character, bearing two important restrictions in mind:

1. You can add advantages, skills, or spells reserved for specific professions only if your modules specifically allow it. Otherwise, these special traits are *off-limits*.

2. No matter how similar your modules are to standard professional templates that are permitted to exceed attribute, secondary characteristic, or advantage level maxima that apply to everyone else, you cannot do this. In this system, increased flexibility in ability *choice* replaces the possibility of exceeding ability *limits*.

Character Advancement

When using this system, *Spending Bonus Character Points* (*Dungeon Fantasy Exploits*, pp. 92-93) needs changes: Anybody can improve traits already on their character sheet, but entirely *new* abilities must come from one of the delver's modules instead of a professional template. *Exceptional Abilities* (*Exploits*, p. 93) does *not* apply – that's the price of flexibility. If using *Training Expenses* (*Exploits*, p. 93), read “from one's professional template” as “from one's modules.” The GM may permit characters to acquire new modules in play, but only in their entirety (50 points apiece), never piecemeal; if training costs money, the fee is *at least* \$4,000/module.

Attributes and Secondary Characteristics

You can increase these to the usual limits for anyone; see *Adventurers*, pp. 8-12.

Advantages

If you already have an advantage from a module, go ahead and increase its level, possibly to its usual maximum.

You may also add *new* traits from Chapter 4 of *Adventurers* – but never things reserved for specific races or professions. Some ideas:

- Alert delvers live longer! Consider some of Acute Senses (any) [2/level], Combat Reflexes [15], Danger Sense [15], Night Vision [1/level], and Peripheral Vision [15].

- Brave adventurers often boast Fearlessness [2/level] or Unfazeable [15].

- Get insurance! Signature Gear [1/item] for equipment, Hard to Kill [2/level] for your *life*.

- Non-casters may want Magic Resistance [2/level], especially if they have mediocre HT and Will.

- Successful treasure-hunters often have Luck or Extraordinary Luck [15 or 30], Serendipity [15/level], or Wealth [10, 20, or 30].

EXAMPLE: SERGEANT GORE

Victoria wants to play a fantasy commando and veteran of the Undead Wars: mercenary sergeant Emily Gore. Reviewing the modules, she selects **Brute Warrior** and **Physical** because Gore is a hard-boiled fighter, **Leader** for the military experience, **Medic** to patch up the fallen, and **Rogue** for “unconventional warfare.”

Starting with **Physical** to build a strong foundation, Victoria adds the required ST +1 [10], DX +1 [20], and HT +1 [10]. Rather than sink all 10 remaining points into *just* ST or *just* HT, she opts for Striking ST 1 [5] and Fit [5], which provide similar benefits.

From **Brute Warrior**, Victoria takes the fixed ST +1 [10]. For the 15 points in advantages, High Pain Threshold [10] and Tough Skin 1 [3] suit someone who can take a hit; Weapon Bond [1] grants an easy +1 with Gore’s starting weapon; and Shield-Wall Training [1] sounds like something any real soldier should have. Gore’s melee skills are Axe/Mace at DX+3 [12] and Shield at DX+2 [4]. Victoria decides to leave IQ-based skills to **Leader** and use the last 9 points for Brawling at DX+2 [4] (for a damage bonus!), Crossbow at DX+1 [2], Fast-Draw (Arrow) at DX [1], and Wrestling at DX [2].

Turning to **Leader**, Victoria goes heavy on advantages: Born War-Leader 4 [20] to be a *great* sergeant, Will +2 [10] to resist Fright Checks and necromancy, Rallying Cry [5] to help the troops shake off fear, Penetrating Voice [1] to boost that, and Sacrificial Block [1] and Sacrificial Parry [1] to aid allies physically. The remaining 12 points buy Intimidation at Will+1 [4] plus three skills that receive +4 from Born War-Leader: Leadership at IQ+4 [2], Strategy at IQ+3 [2], and Tactics at IQ+4 [4].

Victoria decides Gore gravitated to **Medic** because she was smart rather than a gifted healer, and adds IQ +2 [40]. The last 10 points buy First Aid at IQ+1 [2], plus Physiology (Undead) at IQ [4] and Psychology (Undead) at IQ [4] to go with her background story.

Rogue comes last. Realizing that Gore doesn’t have much DX, Victoria uses the advantage points for DX +1 [20], and then adds Expert Backstabbing 2 [4] and Night Vision 6 [6] to reflect experience with ambushes and night raids. For skills, she picks Stealth at DX+2 [8] for sneaky missions; Observation at Per [2] for scouting; Filch at DX [2], Forced Entry at DX+1 [2], and Scrounging at Per+1 [2] for “procuring supplies”; and Carousing at HT+1 [2] and Gambling at IQ [2] because they seem soldierly.

For disadvantages, Victoria takes Code of Honor (Soldier’s) [-10] to fit Gore’s background; Chummy [-5] and Sense of Duty (Adventuring Companions) [-5] because she’s used to working with a unit; Bloodlust (12) [-10] because fighting undead taught her to slice and dice until enemies stop twitching; Greed (12) [-15] because she *is* a mercenary; and Compulsive Carousing (12) [-5] because it seems fun.

Victoria also defines five quirks: “Insists on a written contract” (again, Gore *is* a mercenary), “Intolerant of the undead” (*nobody* likes the undead, so the GM rules it’s merely a quirk to hate them more than usual), “Tends to over-plan” (her military past talking), “Thinks ‘honorable duels’ are for saps” (she greatly prefers ambushes), and “Wears a fake eye-patch” (which has no bad effects, making it a cosmetic quirk).

With the 55 points this gives, Victoria decides on DX +1 [20] to boost combat skills and HT +1 [10] for toughness. She improves the Tough Skin she bought to its limit – Tough Skin 3 [9] – for another 6 points. And Combat Reflexes [15] fits a career warrior nicely. Gore has most of the skills she needs, but soldiers trudge a lot, so Victoria adds Hiking at HT [2]. That leaves 2 points, which she turns into \$1,000 for superior weapons and armor.

See *Sergeant Emily Gore* (p. 12) for what this looks like after cleanup.

Skills

You may improve the skills you have.

You may also add new skills from Chapter 6 of *Adventurers* – though never those reserved for specific professions. Recommendations include:

- *Important!* If you reached this step without combat skills, *add them*. Spellcasters who like Missile spells and jets shouldn’t overlook Innate Attack (DX/E).
- Every hero should know a few of Climbing (DX/A), First Aid (IQ/E), Gesture (IQ/E), Hiking (HT/A), Knot-Tying (DX/E), Observation (Per/A), Scrounging (Per/E), Search (Per/A), and *especially* Stealth (DX/A).
- Cartography (IQ/A) for mapping, Meditation (Will/H) for praying for help, and Riding (DX/A) for mounts are handy, if less common.
- If nobody else has Carousing (HT/E), Merchant (IQ/A), Streetwise (IQ/A), or Urban Survival (Per/A) for town – or

Naturalist (IQ/H), Navigation (IQ/A), Survival (Per/A), or Weather Sense (IQ/A) for the wilds – consider stepping up.

Races

If you have the desire – and points! – to do so, buy a racial template from Chapter 3 of *Adventurers*. See *Understanding Racial Templates* (*Adventurers*, p. 42) for details. This may allow you to exceed the normal limits on certain traits; e.g., all dwarves have HT+1, Lifting ST 2, and Tough Skin 1, so a dwarf could justify HT 21, Lifting ST 5, and Tough Skin 4.

Extra Money

If you aren’t Dead Broke, you may trade points for cash as explained in *Extra Money* (*Adventurers*, p. 95). If you do, your point total will be less than 250 points. The GM sets the maximum trade-in, but this is self-limiting: A hero *could* sacrifice 55 points for another \$27,500 – but \$ per point, Wealth is a better deal once you reach Very Wealthy [30].

Modules

If disadvantages and quirks leave you 50 points to play with and none of these other options are appealing, add a *sixth* module whose name, description, or abilities inspire you!

5. CLEANUP

At the end, double-check the following:

- Contributions to a given trait from modules and customization are added up.
- Secondary characteristics reflect the base calculated from attributes, modified by direct purchases; see *Adventurers*, pp. 9-12.
- No trait that comes in levels exceeds that trait's usual limit, except by the amount added by a racial template. When in doubt, check trait descriptions in *Adventurers*.
- No advantages conflict with each other (e.g., Magic Resistance and Magery).
- No advantages conflict with disadvantages (e.g., Acute Hearing and Hard of Hearing).
- No disadvantages conflict with each other (e.g., Fat and Skinny).
- You have no more than -50 points in disadvantages.
- You have no more than five quirks.
- Skill and spell prerequisites have been met.

- Total points invested in each skill are used to buy the correct level on the *Skill Cost Table* (*Adventurers*, p. 70). Skill levels reflect final controlling attribute level and any advantage or disadvantage adjustments.

- Everything adds up to 250 points, minus any points traded for extra cash.

If there are *any* problem traits or trait levels, remove them and spend the points on something else; see 4. *Final Customization* (pp. 9-11) for ideas. If transferring points would solve two problems at once, consider doing so. For instance, if you somehow ended up with IQ 21 [220], Magery 2 [25], 3 points in a skill, and 1 point in a spell that requires Magery 3, you could reduce IQ to its maximum of 20 [200] and use 11 of the 20 points this liberates to raise the skill to the 4-point level (1 point) and purchase Magery 3 [35] (10 points), putting the remaining 9 points in other traits.

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.

USING THESE RULES IN GURPS

There are a few things to look out for when using this system with *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*. First, some *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game* traits differ from *GURPS* ones, if only in name:

Expert Backstabbing: Striking ST (Only on surprise attack, -60%), renamed.

Improved Magic Resistance: Magic Resistance (Improved, +150%), renamed.

Languages: Spoken and written comprehension are available separately, but only at Native. Replace “[3 or 6/ language]” with “[2-6/language].”

Lockpicking: Switch from DX/A to IQ/A.

Multi-Aim: Enhanced Tracking (Multiple Lock-Ons, +20%), renamed.

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].”

Rest in Pieces: Holy warrior Shtick, renamed.

Signature Gear: Doesn't buy gear but “insures” a bought item of *any* value. Replace with “Signature Gear [Varies].”

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

Tough Skin: Damage Resistance (Tough Skin, -40%), renamed.

Wild Magic: Wild Talent (Focused, Magical, -20%; Retention, +25%), renamed.

The *DFRPG* usually avoids skill specialties: Boating is always (Unpowered); Hazardous Materials, (Magical);

Navigation, (Land); Pharmacy, (Herbal); Savoir-Faire, (High Society); and so on. The GM may let players pick other options!

The *DFRPG* borrows from diverse *GURPS* sources: Trademark Move is just suggested in passing on p. 27 of *Dungeon Fantasy 2*. Energy Reserve comes from *Dungeon Fantasy 3*. Armor Familiarity, Armor Mastery, Sacrificial Parry, Shield Mastery, Shield-Wall Training, and Strongbow are defined in *Dungeon Fantasy 11*. Every One's a Critical and Springing Attack are from *Dungeon Fantasy Denizens: Swashbucklers*. Born Entertainer is described in *Power-Ups 3: Talents*. And Great Void, Rallying Cry, and Sacrificial Block hail from *More Power to Dungeon Warriors!* in *Pyramid* #3/61.

Traits don't always function the same way, either. The GM must choose between the *DFRPG* and *GURPS* interpretations in each situation. For instance, the *DFRPG* sometimes specifies different maximum levels from *GURPS*; e.g., extra HP up to +ST/3 and FP up to +HT/3, rounded up. More radically, its imagining of the bard differs enough that *Spellsinger* (pp. 8-9) isn't portable – replace it with suitable cross-profession bard lenses from *Dungeon Fantasy 3*.

As for references to the *DFRPG*, section title and/or context should clarify to *GURPS* players what's being discussed; e.g., the *Skill Cost Table* on p. B170 is the same as that on p. 70 of *Adventurers*, and racial templates can come from *Dungeon Fantasy 3* instead of Chapter 3 of *Adventurers*.

SERGEANT EMILY GORE

248-Point Human Mercenary

Sergeant Gore is a seasoned mercenary and survivor of the Undead Wars. Her eyepatch and scars make it clear she's *tough* – and her voice *carries*.

Gore wields a fine, balanced dwarven axe that lets her parry *and* attack on the same turn. Its balance plus her Weapon Bond give her effective skill 18, while its fine edge and her Striking ST let her deliver more damage than expected (2d+2 cutting). Her large shield doesn't penalize these attacks, thanks to Shield-Wall Training; its DB 3 gives final Parry 16, Block 14, and Dodge 11. Blows that hit must contend with Tough Skin *and* armor: DR 5 (DR 7 on the head, DR 9 on the skull).

The sergeant prefers surprise attacks. Medium encumbrance (-2) lowers her Stealth skill to 13 – not bad! – and she'll exploit her Night Vision to turn darkness to her advantage. Sneak attacks get bonus damage from Expert Backstabbing.

ST 12 [20]; **DX** 13 [60]; **IQ** 12 [40]; **HT** 12 [20].
Damage 1d/2d-1; BL 29 lbs.; HP 12 [0]; Will 14 [10]; Per 12 [0]; FP 12 [0].
Basic Speed 6.25 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0]; Move 3.
Dodge 8*; Parry 13* (Axe); Block 11* (Shield).

Advantages

Born War-Leader 4 [20]	Rallying Cry [5]
Combat Reflexes [15]	Sacrificial Block [1]
Expert Backstabbing 2 [4]	Sacrificial Parry [1]
Fit [5]	Shield-Wall Training 1 [1]
High Pain Threshold [10]	Striking ST 1 [5]
Night Vision 6 [6]	Tough Skin 3 [9]
Penetrating Voice [1]	Weapon Bond (Axe) [1]

Disadvantages and Quirks

Bloodlust (12) [-10]
Chummy [-5]
Code of Honor (Soldier's) [-10]
Compulsive Carousing (12) [-5]
Greed (12) [-15]
Sense of Duty (Adventuring Companions) [-5]

Insists on a written contract. [-1]
Intolerant of the undead. [-1]
Tends to over-plan. [-1]
Thinks "honorable duels" are for saps. [-1]
Wears a fake eye-patch. [-1]

Sergeant Gore in GURPS

To interpret Emily's abilities, see p. 11. Her gear is from the **DFRPG**. If using the **Basic Set**, her DR 2 armor becomes heavy leather on the torso, arms, and legs, plus leather gloves and boots; her DR 4 headgear is a legionary helmet. Per pp. B283-284, that's \$470, 25 lbs.; she spends \$167 less and carries 14 lbs. less (which doesn't change her encumbrance). Ignore the coin denominations but keep their \$ value.

*“Lead from the front,
attack from behind” has
always served me well.*

*– Emily Gore,
Mercenary
Sergeant*

Skills

Axe/Mace-16/18† [12]	Leadership-16§ [2]
Brawling-15 [4]	Observation-12 [2]
Carousing-13 [2]	Physiology (Undead)-12 [4]
Crossbow-14 [2]	Psychology (Undead)-12 [4]
Fast-Draw (Arrow)-14* [1]	Scrounging-13 [2]
Filch-13 [2]	Shield-15 [4]
First Aid-13 [2]	Stealth-15 [8]
Forced Entry-14 [2]	Strategy-15§ [2]
Gambling-12 [2]	Tactics-16§ [4]
Hiking-12 [2]	Wrestling-13 [2]
Intimidation-15/16‡ [4]	

* Includes +1 for Combat Reflexes.

† Use higher skill for starting axe (+1 for Weapon Bond, +1 for balanced).

‡ Higher skill reflects Penetrating Voice when shouting.

§ Includes +4 for Born War-Leader.

Equipment

\$2,000, 86.74 lbs. (Medium encumbrance)

Axe, Balanced, Dwarven, Fine. 2d+2 cut (reach 1), 2d+4 when backstabbing. \$900, 4 lbs.

Bolts, Cutting Point, Fine ×12. Damage becomes 1d+5 cut. \$72, 0.72 lb.

Canteen, Full. 1 quart water. \$10, 3 lbs.

Clothing. \$0, 2 lbs.

Coins. 2 silver, 4 copper. \$44, 0.12 lb.

Crossbow (ST 13). 1d+4 imp, Acc 4, Range 260/325, Shots 1(4), Bulk -6. \$150, 6 lbs.

First Aid Kit. +1 to First Aid. \$50, 2 lbs.

Heavy Cloth Armor, Everything *but* head. DR 2 (total DR 5). \$412, 33 lbs.

Large Shield. DB 3; 1d cr (bash), 1d+1 when backstabbing. \$90, 25 lbs.

Personal Basics. \$5, 1 lb.

Pouch. Holds first aid kit, personal basics. \$10, 0.2 lb.

Pouch. Holds rations. \$10, 0.2 lb.

Rations, 6 meals. \$12, 3 lbs.

Segmented Plate Armor, Head only. DR 4 (total DR 7). \$225, 6 lbs.

Shoulder Quiver. Holds bolts. \$10, 0.5 lb.

SIMPLE SPELL COMPONENTS

BY PETER V. DELL'ORTO

Uncle Seamus eyed the orc guards. They were close enough to attempt Mass Sleep, but if any of them resisted, the whole complex could soon be alerted.

"A wise wizard knows when his spells could use a little extra boost," he confided quietly to his companions.

Uncle Seamus reached into his pouch, drew forth a hefty handful of sand, and began to concentrate.

Weird mixtures, eye of newt, dragon's teeth, and pinches of bat guano are part and parcel of stories about magic. These components can be perfectly normal, such as sand for sleep or sulfur for fire magic. Or they can be vanishingly rare, such as hen's teeth, eye of death tears, or literal angel dust.

Players love to add bonuses to their abilities. The GM loves to drain delvers of their hard-earned cash to give them a reason to delve more. And spells have so few ways to get bonuses; spellcaster tools like staves and wands only mitigate penalties, and paut and power items just offset the personal fatigue cost of casting them.

Spell components also provide a way for delvers to turn their loot into just a little more skill when it really counts, to eke out a little more distance on a Resisted spell, to succeed in casting another spell with a few too many spells already "on," or to overcome Magic Resistance. Really wealthy casters might use them on every spell. This is fine, as broke delvers are adventure-hungry delvers.

But keeping track of finicky spell components – otter's noses, scales of feathered serpents, pinches of sulfur, and other strange items – is a bookkeeping chore. The spell-component system described here bridges that gap, allowing components to have in-game flavor and effects but out-of-game ease of tracking.

BENEFITS

Spell components are consumables that provide a one-time bonus to the *effective skill* of a spell or group of spells. They are manufactured by NPCs, using secret, time-consuming procedures, and sold by wizards' guilds, churches and shrines, and circles of druids. Like other consumables, spell components are single-use.

USING SPELL COMPONENTS

Spell components must be in hand to grant any benefit. Pulling out one (or more) doses of spell components takes

a single Ready maneuver (assuming the desired number of doses are all in one container). This also requires a free hand – casters using a two-handed staff or a wand-and-shield combination take note.

Spell components are spent when the spell is cast – as soon as the dice are rolled, they disappear. The components are fully consumed by using them for magic; nothing remains to salvage or recover. They are also used up if the attempt to cast the spell *fails*. However, if the casting is interrupted or stopped, the components are not expended.

Spell components can be used with spells or with any item that lets an individual *cast* a spell – such as *Casting Items* (*Dungeon Fantasy Magic Items*, p. 10) or scrolls (*Dungeon Fantasy Adventurers*, p. 117, and *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 4: Sages*, pp. 14-16). Items that cast a spell for the wielder – such as *Charged Items* (*Dungeon Fantasy Magic Items*, p. 15) or items with spell-like effects – *cannot* take advantage of spell components.

Components add a temporary boost to a spell.

TYPES

Spell components come in three varieties. The variety is specified when the component is processed; some items might come in various forms (Fire-college sulfur vs. wizardly sulfur),

so the buyer should inquire before purchasing. The cost listed is in addition to the base cost of the item.

Single-Spell Component: Provides a bonus to a single, specific spell (plus its variations, such as Mass and Explosive). Generically named for its specific spell. \$10, 0.05 lb.

College Component: Provides a bonus to *any* spell from a single, specific college. Named for its college. \$30, 0.05 lb.

General Component: Provides a bonus to any spell of a particular caster type – druidic, holy, or wizardly. Bards use wizardly components. \$100, 0.05 lb.

Note that only general components are limited by the type of caster. Otherwise, the spell and college (not the type of magic) are all that matters. Both druids and wizards could use spell components for Entombment or Earth spells, for example, but could not share druidic and wizardly components with each other.

EFFECTS

Spell components provide a bonus to effective skill with a spell. The amount of bonus depends on how many doses are used. They have a diminishing effect after the second dose.

Effects: +1 for one, +2 for two, +3 for four, +4 for eight, +5 for 16, +6 for 32, +7 for 64, +8 for 128, +9 for 256, and +10 for 512. There is no further benefit for using additional doses.

Casters can mix types as long as they all relate to the spell being cast.

Example: A wizard could use two doses of Sleep spell components, one dose of Mind Control spell component, and one dose of wizardly components for a total of four doses and +3 to a Sleep spell.

NEW ABILITIES

Two new abilities are available for use with spell components.

Master of Components

1 point

You're especially versatile when it comes to repurposing spell components; you must specialize in a specific college. For that specific college only, you can use *single-spell* component from within the college as a *college* component. For example, a Master of Components (Air) could use Lightning components (or any other Air spell's components) as components for any *other* Air spell. You don't actually change the components, only utilize them differently – other casters who lack this advantage can use them only for their original purpose.

Fast-Draw

DX/Easy

Spell components can be fast-drawn. Add this specialty:

Spell Components: Lets you ready spell components of any type. Failure means you drop the spell component. Critical failure means you spill the contents of the entire container everywhere!

Modifiers: -1 per dose after the first readied simultaneously.

EXAMPLES

Here are some materials commonly used as components for the various colleges available to spellcasters in *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game* and *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* campaigns. For other suggested ingredients and their associated uses, see *GURPS Magic*, p. 222; *GURPS Thaumatology*, pp. 99, 247-252; and *The Material Difference* in *Pyramid* #3/66: *The Laws of Magic*.

Air: Dust of slain air elementals; powdered lapis lazuli or sunstones (recalling the sky and sun); snippets of copper wire (for electricity spells).

Animal: Scales, fur, or shed skin from specific animals for Animal Control spells; fur, teeth, and feathers (especially shed or molted).

Body Control: Bone or skin flakes from sapient species; miniature voodoo dolls.

Communication and Empathy: Silver dust.

Earth: Soil; ground gargoyle hearts or earth-elemental stones; clay; powdered metal.

Fire: Sulfur powder; ash; ground pumice.

Food: Enchanted spices; minute portions of poisons.

Gate: Ground gemstones; rare parts of extradimensional beings (eye of death tears, sphere of madness sweat, demon ichor).

Healing: Powders of medicinal herbs; incense burned around the subject; stalks of healing flowers; pieces of saints' relics (fibers of their clothes, hair, skin, or bones).

Illusion: Wool.

Knowledge: Powdered herbs (gingko biloba, for example); gemstone dust; dust from ancient libraries; powdered brains.

Light and Darkness: Ash or oil residue for darkness spells; minute bits of enchanted fuel for light spells.

Making and Breaking: Sawdust; metal shavings; coal dust from forges.

Meta-Spells: Meteoric-iron-tinged dust for Dispel Magic or Counterspell; ground gemstones, remains of broken magical items, and other "magic" themed materials rendered into fine powders.

Mind Control: Fine-grained sand (especially for single-spell versions for Sleep and Daze); so-called fairy dust – sparkly, glitter-like dust.

Movement: Drops of quicksilver; blood from rabbits, frogs, or birds; feathers or pixie dust for spells that give air movement.

Necromantic: Bones; dust of undead creatures; dried petals of flowers that had been strewn on graves.

Plant: Mistletoe; powdered mushrooms; special beans, lentils, and seeds; small clods of rich soil.

Protection and Warning: Tiny bells; seashell chimes; ground bones of monsters with 360° vision.

Sound: Cotton or felt for silencing spells; shells, bells, or wood rattles for noise spells.

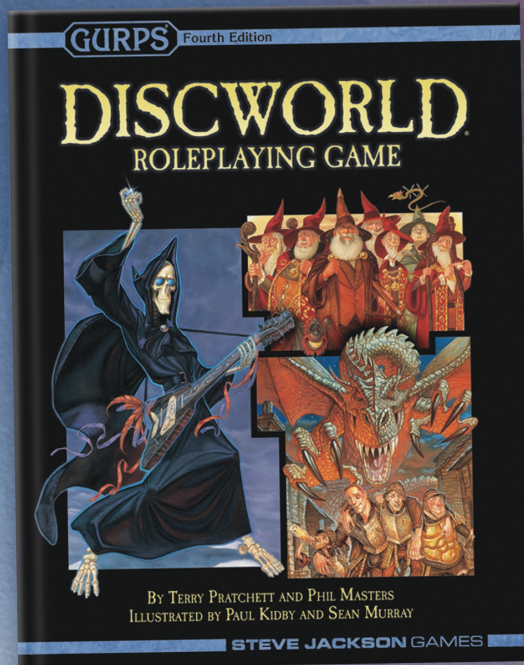
Water: Sea salt; ground seashells; sand.

Weather: Odd chemical mixes meant to call down storms.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

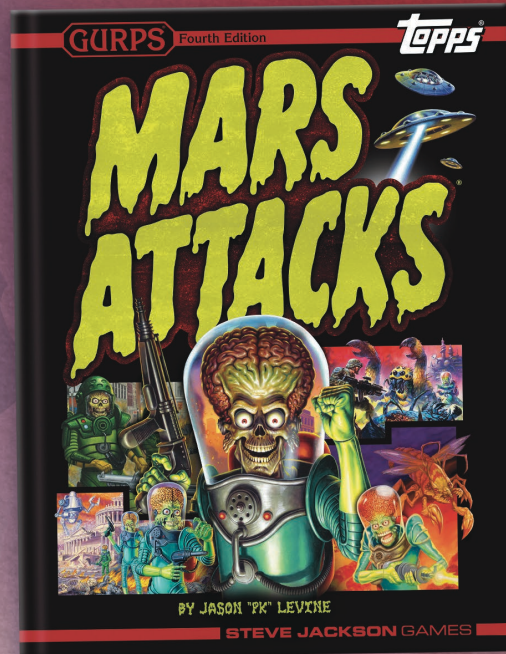
Peter V. Dell'Orto was raised in New Jersey. He started roleplaying in 1981, with *Dungeons & Dragons*, and has played *GURPS* since *Man to Man*. He has been active as a *GURPS* playtester, editor, and contributing author since 1996. Peter is the author of numerous *GURPS* articles for *Pyramid* magazine, and author or co-author of several *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* supplements – including *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 12: Ninja*, *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Denizens: Barbarians*, *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1*, and *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 3: Born of Myth & Magic* – as well as *GURPS Martial Arts*. Peter has run the same hack-and-slash *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* game for over five years and more than 80 sessions mostly using one town and one megadungeon. You can read about it on his blog *Dungeon Fantastic* at dungeonfantastic.blogspot.com.

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EIDETIC MEMORY

MONSTERS AS TREASURES

BY DAVID L. PULVER

Many monsters guard treasure, but others can be treasures in their own right! More than just a source of spell components or leather hides, these creatures have innate properties that, like the legendary unicorn's horn, are precious enough to be the primary reward for adventurers who overcome them. In some instances, these properties involve harvesting the monster's body – but not always! Some creatures are more useful alive than dead . . .

The more valuable treasure-monsters are often rare creatures. Lucky adventurers may simply stumble on them in a dungeon or wilderness, but they could also be the object of a deliberate quest that requires following up rumors, travelers' tales, and clues found in old tapestries, dusty scrolls, or ancient books discovered during prior delving.

Some NPCs become obsessed with tracking down a particular treasure-monster. Like Ahab's search for the white whale, this can be a source of drama if they draw in the PCs, either as rival adventurers seeking the creature, or as patrons hiring the party to help locate it. Such hunters might have a particular desire for its valuable properties or be motivated by scientific curiosity or academic prestige.

When the monster *is* the treasure, adventurers – most especially spellcasters – must be more careful than usual in their combat tactics. Blasting it to bits with lightning, turning it to stone, or setting it afire will often ruin its value! Ambitious hunters may seek to capture monsters alive, perhaps in the hope of breeding them, selling them as livestock, pets, or experimental subjects, or exhibiting them in a royal zoo or temple sanctuary. Or, such monsters could be considered sacred to particular religions, races, or druidic orders, who

*People find gold in fields,
veins, river beds and pockets.
Whichever, it takes work to
get it out.*

– Art Linkletter

might post guards or patrols to protect them, pay extra for live specimens, or swear horrific vengeance against adventurers who disturb them.

COCKAMANDER

A cockamander looks like a turkey-sized hen or rooster with fiery red feathers (and on males, a crest), eyes that glow like hot coals, and a long, lizard-like tail. It has bat wings and a high body temperature; a wisp of smoke sometimes emerges from its beak!

The cockamander is an alchemical hybrid of an ordinary hen and the magical salamander (see *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 5: Allies*). It is part animal and part fire spirit. Cockamanders were created using a variation of the process that produced the cockatrice. Unlike cockatrices, which are usually used by mages and alchemists as guardians, the cockamander was created mainly as a means of producing magical weapons, specifically explosive and incendiary eggs (see p. 17). As with many created creatures, cockamanders eventually escaped from the magical laboratory and into the wild.

The cockamander is bad-tempered and aggressive. It attacks by breathing a jet of essential fire; it likes to cook its food. A cockamander can also cause its skin to ignite in a fiery halo, although this takes a second to activate and cannot be sustained for long. It will sometimes do this while fluffing up its wings and shrieking to intimidate foes.

Cockamanders can be encountered individually (usually seeking food) or in nests with a male and female. They lay eggs year round, although only in springtime will the eggs be fertilized (assuming the cockamander hen has found a mate). There are typically 2d unfertilized eggs in a nest.

Males like to collect shiny orange or yellow objects, such as gold and copper coins, which they give to females to line their nests with. A typical nest may have 20-120 coins.

ST: 5	HP: 10	Speed: 6.00
DX: 12	Will: 12	Move: 5 (Ground)/10 (Air)
IQ: 6	Per: 11	
HT: 12	FP: 10	SM: -3
Dodge: 9	Parry: N/A	DR: 3

Beak or Claw (13): 1d-4 piercing or cutting plus damage from its aura if activated. Reach C.

Breathe Fire (13): 2d burning. Range 5/10; no range penalties. Costs 1 FP.

Flaming Aura: 1d+1 burning. Damages anyone who touches the cockmander, or vice versa. Ready maneuver to activate. Costs 1 FP/second to maintain.

Traits: Bad Temper (12); Claws (Sharp); DR 20 (Limited, Heat/Fire); Flight (Maximum Duration, 3 seconds; Winged); Infravision; No Fine Manipulators; Phobia (Oceans); Pyromania (12); Resistant to Metabolic Hazards (+3); Sharp Beak; Vulnerability (Cold/Ice x2); Weakness (Immersion in water or temperatures below freezing; 1d/30 minutes); Wild Animal.

Skills: Brawling-13; Innate Attack (Breath)-13.

Class: Hybrid.

Notes: A cockmander hen a day or two from laying unfertilized eggs will have the Fragile (Explosive) disadvantage; on a critical failure on a HT roll after a major wound, or failed HT roll to avoid death, it will detonate in a 3d crushing explosion! Young chicks are ST 2, HP 2, SM -5, and their breath and flaming aura do only 1d-2 burning.

VIRTUOUS MAID

Also called the unicorn zombie, these rare undead resemble girls in tattered burial shrouds, with a 6" horn that emerges from their forehead; glowing red eyes; and sad or hurt expressions. They are the risen revenants of virtuous maidens who were lied to, taken advantage of, or betrayed by a would-be paramour, and who killed themselves or were killed to silence them.

Virtuous maids are material undead. In dungeons, they are typically found in an inexpensive coffin or burial niche, as they were not extremely wealthy in life or were disgraced. They have little rich treasure, but may possess a few grave goods: a comb, brooch, doll, or the like. However, the area of their tomb may contain the mangled corpses of adventurers they have slain and whatever treasure or items those people were carrying at the time.

They can sense the presence of intruders and will rise to greet them. As they drift toward those who disturb their tombs, they ask, "Will you ever leave me? Will you acknowledge me? Will you be true?"

Ignoring a virtuous maid, trying to debate with her, or any other response or action beside agreement results in her face growing angry, her fingers turning into sharp claws. If the intruders get close, the creatures attack, hissing, "Betrayers . . . abandoners . . ." They fight anyone who stays, but they do not pursue those who leave the tomb.

If someone agrees (regardless of the sex), the maid repeats her proposal twice more. On a third agreement, the maid extends her arms. If the subject allows the virtuous maid to touch, she does so, using Permeation to enter the person's body.

She then remains quietly there, inside the body but not possessing the subject, until someone tries to *lie* to the person. At that point, she uses her Detect Lies skill. If successful, she climbs out of her host's body, materializes with her horn glowing, hisses, "Liar! Betrayer!", and attacks in a berserk frenzy until she has torn apart the transgressor. If the original host does not object to this assault, she returns, looking a bit happier, and climbs back inside. If she is attacked by the host, she turns her rage against that person as well.

ST: 17	HP: 34	Speed: 7.00
DX: 14	Will: 15	Move: 7
IQ: 10	Per: 12	
HT: 14	FP: N/A	SM: 0
Dodge: 10	Parry: N/A	DR: 2

Ghostly Talons (15): 2d(2) cutting. Reach C.

Traits: Acute Hearing 2; Berserk (6) (Only if lied to); Bloodlust (9); Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; Fragile (Unnatural); Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Insubstantiality (Affect Substantial; Usually On); Intolerance (Liars); Lifebane; Magic Resistance 4; Permeation (Flesh and Wood); Silence 3; Striking Strength 2; Temperature Tolerance 10; Unaging; Unliving; Unnatural Features (Horn); Walk on Air.

Skills: Brawling-15; Detect Lies-17.

Class: Undead.

EXPLOSIVE AND INCENDIARY EGGS

The real treasure of the cockmander is its magical eggs. Like domestic fowl, cockmanders were bred to produce eggs outside of the normal spring mating season. On average, the female cockmander lays every month or so, in clutches of three to eight (1d+2) eggs. If a cockmander hen has mated with a rooster, its fertilized eggs are black with red spots and warm to the touch; they will hatch into male or female cockmander chicks (50% chance of each). Otherwise, unfertilized eggs are solid black or red. A typical nest has 2d unfertilized eggs scattered at random near it. Roll 1d to see what each egg is: even is black; odd is red. Stepping or falling on one will set it off on a failed DX-2 roll.

The eggs weigh 0.17 lb. each. The usual market value is \$100 each, although prices may be higher if the GM rules they are rare.

Fertilized eggs are stable. Black eggs are explosive. If shattered against a hard surface or stepped on, they explode in a blast inflicting a 3d burning explosion! Red eggs release a burst of essential fire if shattered or stepped on, filling a one-yard radius with the effect of the Essential Flame spell (*GURPS Magic*, p. 75) for 10 minutes.

Properly packing explosive or incendiary cockmander eggs to ensure that they won't detonate if the bearer falls over, is struck by a powerful blow, etc. may require a Hazardous Materials (Magical) or Packing-2 roll. Critical failure sets off one or more eggs!

Notes: Note that a virtuous maid's occupation of a host is not, technically, Possession, as she does not control him. The maid can hear but not see from inside a body; her Lifebane aura also extends out from the body, which can be annoying. The GM may wish to use the rules for Parasitic Possession (p. B76) when determining if damage, etc. affects the maiden while she is inside a host's body. Virtuous maids do not increase their host's weight when they permeate the body. The horn is not used as a weapon by the creature, but can be attacked; it has DR 4, but is -8 to hit. Treat it much as a hand; injury over HP/3 cripples it, snapping it off. Should this happen, the creature will attack whoever maimed it, relentlessly pursuing the horn until she can reattach the horn (which she can do by touching it to the wound). Until then, she loses her Detect Lies power and has -3 to IQ.

HORN OF VIRTUE

Unicorn zombies are sought out because some sages and alchemists are aware their white horn concentrates the innocence they held in life. If a virtuous maiden is destroyed, its body decays to a skeleton, but the horn remains. If the horn is taken from its body or snapped off, it has magical properties.

First, it can be powdered to make an elixir. Anyone who ingests it must make a HT-5 roll or gain the Truthfulness (6) disadvantage. This is a lingering effect, lasting 2d *months*; on a critical failure on the HT roll, it is permanent.

Second, it can be used as a weapon. It is used as a stake, but does +2 damage. If driven into the body of someone who has told what they believe is a lie within the last hour, it turns black and releases a poison: Toxic Attack 1d (Only vs. recent liars; Cyclic, 7 cycles, 1 second; Resistible, HT-4; Symptoms 1/2 HP, Mute). The victim's tongue turns black, and if injury exceeds half his HP, he becomes mute.

Third, it may be useful as an ingredient for any other enchantment or magic item thematically related to truth, innocence, or vengeance, at the GM's discretion.

The virtuous maiden's horn sells for \$10,000 to interested parties.

PARAGRIFF

A paragriff somewhat resembles a small griffon, but is about the size of a house cat. It has the head, neck, wings, and talons of a brilliantly colored jungle parrot, macaw, or parakeet, and the four legs and hind body of an ordinary cat. Paragriffs are small but fierce fighters, especially when defending their nest. However, they also prize shiny trinkets, especially gold and gems. They are more likely to swoop in with their claws or beaks to snatch away a hat with a brooch in it, earrings (ouch!), gem-tipped wands, purses (if they hear the clink of coins), coins, or other shiny handheld objects.

Paragriffs can speak, but, unless they become familiars, do not really comprehend language. Although only of high

animal intelligence, they often mimic voices or repeat phrases they have learned; this can fool adventurers listening through doors into thinking the next room is full of orcs, humans, or other sapients.

ST: 4 **HP:** 6 **Speed:** 6.00
DX: 13 **Will:** 10 **Move:** 9 (Ground)/12 (Air)
IQ: 5 **Per:** 12
HT: 11 **FP:** 12 **SM:** -3
Dodge: 10 **Parry:** N/A **DR:** 1

Claws (14): 1d-5 cutting. Reach C.

Sharp Beak (14): 1d-5 large piercing. Reach C.

Traits: Acute Vision 2; Catfall; Combat Reflexes; Curious (12); Flight (Winged); Fur; Kleptomania (12); Laziness; Mimicry; Night Vision 4; One Arm (Tongue; No Physical Attack; Short); Photographic Memory (Voices Only); Striking Strength 1.

Skills: Aerobatics-12; Brawling-14; Filch-12; Flight-12; Stealth-12.

Class: Hybrid.

Notes: Paragriffs live in mountains, but their love of shiny things can draw them into dungeons, especially those on mountaintops or in ruined towers.

Paragriff Familiar

38 points

Mages may have paragriff familiars; see **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 5: Allies** for full rules for **Dungeon Fantasy** familiars. As usual, the familiar version is more intelligent and somewhat hardier, and grants various traits. Paragriff familiars do not need the Telepathic lens, as they can talk. Like all familiars, they're built on 62 points (25% of starting character total).

Paragriff familiars share some of the traits of both cat and macaw familiars, along with a griffon's traditional love of shiny objects.

Paragriff Familiar: Ally (Paragriff) [9]; Catfall (GBF, -40%) [6]; Claws (Sharp) (GBF, -40%) [3]; Mimicry (GBF, -40%) [6]; ER 6 (Drains Familiar, -50%) [9]; Special Rapport (Familiar) [5]. 38 points.

ST: 4 [-60] **HP:** 9 [10] **Speed:** 6.00 [-5]
DX: 13 [60] **Will:** 10 [0] **Move:** 9 (Ground)/
IQ: 10 [0] **Per:** 12 [10] 12 (Air) [0]
HT: 12 [20] **FP:** 12 [0] **SM:** -3
Dodge: 10 **Parry:** N/A **DR:** 1 [5]

Claws (15): 1d-4* cutting. Reach C.

Sharp Beak (15): 1d-4* large piercing. Reach C.

Advantages: Acute Vision 2 [4]; Catfall [10]; Claws (Sharp) [5]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Enhanced Move 0.5 (Ground) [10]; Extra Legs (Four Legs) [5]; Flight (Winged, -25%) [30]; Fur [1]; Mimicry [10]; Night Vision 4 [4]; Photographic Memory (Voices only, -80%) [2]; Teeth (Sharp Beak) [1]; Striking ST 1 [5].

Disadvantages: Curious (12) [-5] Familiar [-22]; Horizontal [-10]; Kleptomania (12) [-15]; Laziness [-10]; One Arm (Tongue; No Physical Attack; Short) [-30].

Skills: Aerobatics (H) DX-1 [2]-12; Brawling (E) DX+2 [4]-15; Filch (A) DX-1 [1]-12; Flight (A) HT [2]-12; Stealth (A) DX-1 [1]-12; Survival (Mountain) (A) Per [2]-12.

Class: Hybrid.

* Claws and beak include +1 damage for Brawling.

† See *Modifying Beings With One or Two Arms* under *Extra Arms* (p. B53).

Further Traits

Masters of a paragriff familiar can buy Combat Reflexes (GBF, -40%) [9]; Extra Arm 1 (Tongue; GBF, -40%; No Physical Attack, -50%; Short, -50%) [2]; Flight (Controlled Gliding, -45%; GBF, -40%) [8]; and Night Vision 3 (GBF, -40%) [2].

DEEP CHIMERA

This deep-spawned horror, also called an amphimera, is a truly terrifying sight. It has three heads: that of a hammer-head shark, an electric eel, and a squid (complete with some of its tentacles). Its lower half is even worse, a bizarre hybrid of spiny blowfish and crab. It has powerful snapping pincers and crab legs, and a round, bloated body covered with sharp spines. In other words, it combines five sea creatures into one.

Like crabs, the deep chimera is amphibious. It can live in fresh or salt water and sometimes finds its way into sea caves and underground rivers, making its way in this manner into the dungeon depths. It then takes up residence in deep subterranean pools, periodically emerging from these murky waters in search of fresh food. The deep chimera often preys on larger dungeon monsters, but is happy to eat smaller creatures (such as adventurers) as snacks. It often drags prey back into its pool, whose sandy or rocky bottom may be covered with skeletons of its victims and any loot they were carrying at the time of their demise.

In addition to its powerful attacks, its defenses are potent. It can slowly regenerate damage and regrow lost body parts. Its electric-eel heritage allows it to generate a protective electrical aura. When it is enraged, it crackles and hisses, and blue sparks dance from spine to spine on its body! Its blowfish spines are poisonous, coated with a deadly paralytic nerve poison. The victim remains fully conscious, but is paralyzed and unable to breath, and chokes to death. The poison is also found in lethal concentrations in the liver and surface of the skin, so few creatures wish to eat it . . . except humans! The flesh of a deep chimera is said to be an incredible delicacy, and to have health benefits – capable of curing cancers and other deadly diseases.

IMPRINTING A PARAGRIFF

A paragriff's feathers are exceptionally colorful and prized by collectors (\$200, 0.5 lb.), but its real value lies in its eggs. While adult paragriffs are wild and untamable, hatchlings can imprint on other caregivers. Newly laid paragriff eggs are ready to hatch in 1d-1 weeks (if 0 is rolled, they'll hatch in 1d days instead) if they have been kept warm.

On a successful "Good" or better reaction roll, a newly hatched paragriff may imprint itself upon someone who feeds it raw meat after birth. An imprinted paragriff is easily tamed due to its high IQ, and makes a useful ally; it can learn to speak and transmit messages (up to a sentence or so) or carry small objects.

Paragriff eggs that are capable of hatching can sell for \$5,000 each. A captive adult paragriff female sells for \$3,000 and a mated pair for \$4,000.

Imprinted and trained paragriff pets are loyal but mischievous and curious. They tend to repeat their owner's catchphrases regularly and steal random things to please them, much to the annoyance of everyone in the vicinity. Intelligent dungeon dwellers with the empathy to raise pets may use paragriffs for small tasks. For instance, an orc chief may have a couple of paragriffs as scouts and messengers, or a thief may employ them to distract marks or snatch small bags.

ST: 26	HP: 26	Speed: 6.50
DX: 14	Will: 12	Move: 6 (Ground)/6 (Water)
IQ: 3	Per: 10	
HT: 12	FP: 12	SM: +2
Dodge: 9	Parry: N/A	DR: 2

Crab Pincers (14): 2d+2 cutting. Any hit counts as a grapple, regardless of whether it penetrates DR. Reach C-2. Treat as a weapon (Striker), not as a body part.

Eel Bite (14): 3d+3 cutting. Reach C.

Electric Aura: 1d(5) burning, with no incendiary effect + roll vs. HT at -1 per 2 points of penetrating damage or stunned (roll vs. HT at same penalty every turn to recover). This harms anyone who *touches* or *is touched by* the deep chimera in close combat or via a metal weapon. The deep chimera cannot maintain this electric aura indefinitely; it drains its Energy Reserve by one point each turn.

Long Spines (14): 1d impaling + follow-up poison (HT-3 to resist). Failure inflicts the paralysis and choking conditions (pp. B428-429) on the victim for a number of minutes equal to the margin of failure. Reach C.

Be not penny-wise: riches have wings, and sometimes they fly away of themselves; and sometimes they must be set flying to bring in more.

– Francis Bacon

Shark Bite (14) 4d-2 cutting. Reach C.

Squid Beak (14): 2d+2 large piercing. Can only bite a grappled victim, but a hit lets the chimera *worry*, rolling beak damage every turn as a *free action*. Reach C.

Squid Tentacles (14): No damage, but on further turns can squeeze (*Choke or Strangle*, p. B370) as ST 23 (assumes two arms; +2 per extra arm used) or win a Quick Contest of ST 28 (assumes two arms; +2 per extra arm) against the best of opponent's ST, DX, or best grappling skill to pull him to one of its mouths.

Traits: 360° Vision; Amphibious; Bad Temper (9); Bloodlust (12); Dependency (Water; Daily); Discriminatory Taste; Doesn't Breathe (Gills); Energy Reserve 8; Extra Arms 4; Extra Attack 3; Extra Head 2; Extra Legs (Six Legs); Fearlessness 3; Night Vision 5; No Fine Manipulators; Pressure Support 1; Regeneration (Slow); Regrowth; Resistant to Poison (+3); Stretching 3 (Limited, Extra Arms Only; Reduced Time 2); Subsonic Hearing; Vibration Sense (Water); Wild Animal.

Skills: Brawling-14; Intimidation-12; Wrestling-14

Class: Hybrid.

Notes: Listed ST is for central body; the individual attacks reflect the ST of each body part. The Extra Attacks must each use a different mode (tentacles, pincers, shark bite, eel bite, or squid beak). It likes to simply rush out of ambush (from within a pool, say) and overwhelm foes with its powerful Extra Attacks.

NEEDLEMAN

The needleman is a demonic horror. These creatures are thin, wiry, muscular humanoids, 7' tall, with four arms that end in needle-like fingers that drip dark ichor. They have pale white skin, yellow eyes, and a toothy grin, revealing needle-sharp fangs. They normally wear little save sandals

and loincloths, and if venturing out in the world, like wide-brimmed hats. Their torsos and arms are always partially covered with complex red and black tattoos, which they ink in their own flesh using their needle-like fingers: intricate whorls, glyphs, symbols, and demonic landscapes. Prolonged study of their tattoos can induce madness (Fright Check at -2).

Needlemen come from a hellish subdimension known for its closed, suffocating caverns; thus, they dislike fresh air and wind. They prefer to live underground in dungeons, tombs, or cellars. They are vampiric, sucking blood from victims both for sustenance and to generate the magical ink they use to power their mystical tattoos. The ink is produced in a gland under each arm, one holding red ink, the other black.

Usually they drain their victims dry, but if they can capture someone with especially fine skin (or existing beautiful body art), they may be impressed enough to mark the victim's face and body with tattoos of their own: sigils of mystical import. These slave-tattoos bind the person to their service as a spell; the demons keep the victims until the creatures tire of them and suck them dry. Some tattoo artists voluntarily submit to a needleman, accepting servitude and an exchange of blood in exchange for learning the monster's skills and a promise, sometimes kept, that they will be freed after six years. These apprentices, sometimes called inkermen, occasionally act as Judas goats to help recruit victims.

Needlemen cast spells by tattooing themselves or others. Their tattoo magic is limited to Regular spells with a duration of a minute or more that are cast on living subjects. These are ordinary spells, except the needleman can only draw on its Energy Reserve (representing the ink in its body) to power them. The spells also have Artist (Body Art) as a prerequisite, and require rapid tattooing of magical symbols and designs on the subject (which is often the needleman itself). The needleman can create a tattoo in seconds; this is simply the casting time. The tattoos are visible as signs of the spell after casting until their duration expires, then fade.

A FISHY FEAST

Deep chimeras are horrific monsters, but they are also prized by hunters! If the beast was blown up or blasted, less of the flesh is available (GM's option).

Fishmarket: The blowfish toxins in their bodies normally make their torso flesh a deadly poison, but the heads and, especially, the crab legs are quite delicious without any special preparation being needed. There is roughly 200 lbs. of crab, shark, eel, and squid meat that can be salvaged, selling at \$5/lb. However, a Cooking or Poisons roll may be needed when butchering a mangled corpse to avoid contamination with the body's toxic parts.

Chimera Fugu: The internal organs and flesh from the blowfish body are the real prize, but require proper seasoning by a master chef who has familiarity with its hazards. If successful, the result is a heavenly dish of surpassing delicacy that also provides those who partake of it +2 to on HT rolls to resist disease for the next week. (A failure by the cook, however, exposes them to the same poison as the creature's spines.) A deep chimera's *fresh*

sliced flesh sells to a master chef for \$25/lb. (and the torso yields some 300 lbs.).

Poison Barbs: The poison of the barbs dissipates rapidly with exposure to oxygen, and so can't be salvaged; a Naturalist roll will reveal this.

Liver: In addition to being edible as above, the deep chimera's liver can be used as an ingredient of healing potions and universal antidotes; selling this (20 lbs.) to an alchemist is worth \$5,000. Roll vs. Physiology to locate the organ and Surgery to extract it in usable condition; failure spoils it.

Electric Glands: Located along the spine of the eel-head's neck are organs that generate its electrical current. If removed, these can sell to enchanters as components in making lightning-generating magical items. The full set of organs weighs 6 lbs. and is worth \$3,000 as spell components. Roll vs. Physiology to locate the electrical organs and Surgery to extract them in usable condition; failure spoils the set, and critical failure may result in electrical shock if its Energy Reserve isn't empty.

Needlemen cannot cast tattoo spells at range. They can cast them on other subjects only if the victims' skin is bare and they are grappled, unconscious, or restrained. Unless the subject has High Pain Threshold, he will further lose half the normal energy cost of the spell in FP due to the pain!

While needlemen consider themselves artists, they are also frustrated: their own skin regenerates quickly. As such, "permanent" tattoos they create on themselves fade within a week as their skin removes the ink. They are constantly re-inking themselves to restore their body art and magical spells. As long as it has been regularly drinking blood, a needleman's skin will usually be covered in magical tattoos it has created.

ST: 18 **HP:** 27 **Speed:** 6.50
DX: 14 **Will:** 14 **Move:** 6
IQ: 11 **Per:** 13
HT: 12 **FP:** 12 **SM:** 0
Dodge: 9 **Parry:** 11 **DR:** 2

Claws (16): 1d+2(2) cutting. Reach C, 1.

Vampiric Bite (16): 1d+2 cutting (plus drain 1 HP/second). Reach C.

Traits: Ambidexterity; Dark Vision; Energy Reserve 30 (Magical; Special Recharge); Extra Arms 2; Extra Attack 1; Magery 2 (Tattoo Magic); Phobia (12) (Open Spaces); Regeneration (Slow); Resistant to Metabolic Hazards (+3); Vampiric Bite (HP drained replenish Energy Reserve).

Skills: Artist (Body Art)-15; Brawling-16; Stealth-14; Wrestling-16.

Spells: Armor-12; Charm-12; Compel Truth-12; Enslave-12; Grace-12; Hold Breath-12; Might-12; Reflexes-12; Resist Pain-12; Sensitize-12; Shield-12; Soul Rider-12; Vigor-12. Spells are subject to the tattoo magic limits and benefits detailed above.

Class: Demon.

Notes: Usually attacks with supernaturally sharp needle-claws, but some carry swords or other weapons. They will have cast a number of tattoo-spells on themselves and their subordinates (e.g., Might, Resist Pain, or Reflexes). Soul Rider is often used on inkermen to spy through their eyes.

*Show me a man with a tattoo
and I'll show you a man with
an interesting past.*

— Jack London

HELMET THIEF

The initial sighting of this odd dungeon critter may seem to be nothing more than a couple of fallen warriors' abandoned helmets (perhaps belonging to few nearby chewed up and headless corpses). Adventurers may be surprised when one or more helms they were reaching for suddenly leap at them with a horrifying ear-splitting shriek, propelled upward by a coiled spring of muscle ending in a clawed foot!

NEEDLES AND SKIN

The needles of a needleman are much prized by tattoo artists; a craftsman can use them to create fine-quality equipment, giving +2 to Artist (Body Art). The needle-claws sell for \$1,000 to tattoo artists.

The glands are valued by mages, who can use the ink in the creation of a variety of magical glyphs and symbols, especially those associated with Symbol Drawing, demon summoning, or creation of gates leading to demonic realms. Removing the glands intact (\$2,000, 0.25 lb.) requires a Surgery skill roll.

If needlemen discover an artist using such gear, they will hunt them down; their fate will not be pleasant.

A needleman does not regenerate when dead. As a result, if it is skinned, the tattoos on its body will not disappear. Use Survival skill to remove the skin intact. With proper preparation, the tattoos might themselves be worked into an enchanted leather jacket that embodies whatever active tattoo spells were visible upon it at the time of death. Value is \$1,000 to \$3,000 to an enchanter.

Most of its body mass is a combined body-head about the size of a human skull. It has baby-soft light-colored skin, small eyes, and a big mouth with sharp teeth and a long prehensile tongue. Its torso has two arms, which it usually folds under it. It moves by hopping using a single powerful, flexible, retractable leg with spring-like sinews ending in a clawed talon. The retraction of this limb into the body also pumps an internal bladder that generates its powerful shriek.

The creature's name comes from its habit of scavenging helmets to use as an external shell, much as a hermit crab does with the shells of snails. In the wild, these creatures may have used seashells on the beach, hollow gourds, or even skulls to protect their soft bodies, but those living in dungeons instead scavenge the helms of fallen warriors. If necessary, the monster may use a cooking pot or even a simple hat as less effective protection. To "put on" a helmet, the beast gnaws away at the corpse to sever the head, uses its powerful tongue to pull the head free, and then crawls inside the helmet.

Belying its small size, a helmet thief is a fierce predator! It attacks using a sonic scream or helmet head butt to disable and injure its victims, then chews the remains. It can jump about like a jack rabbit, and the helmet it wears serves to protect all its vital parts. Sometimes it hides inside treasure chests or sacks, especially in damp, chilly dungeons. In rare instances, a helmet thief may fasten itself to the stump of a seated decapitated corpse (e.g., on a throne or chair) and sit upon its shoulders. It does this simply to get a good view of the surroundings, but its sudden leap to the attack may be especially disturbing . . .

Other names for these creatures include screaming leapers and jack-in-a-pot.

ST: 6 **HP:** 6 **Speed:** 5.50
DX: 11 **Will:** 10 **Move:** 5
IQ: 4 **Per:** 10
HT: 12 **FP:** 12 **SM:** -4
Dodge: 8 **Block:** 10 (see below) **DR:** special

Head Butt (11): 1d-1 crushing. Reach C. Can only be used if wearing helmet.

Sonic Scream (12): 2d corrosion damage. Treat as a jet with reach C-2. Costs 1 FP.

Traits: Injury Tolerance (Homogenous; No Head; No Neck); No Fine Manipulators; Penetrating Voice; Protected Sense (Hearing); Scanning Sense (Sonar); Super Jump (4 yards); Ultrasonic Speech; Wild Animal.

Skills: Brawling-12; Innate Attack (Beam)-12; Shield-14; Jumping-13.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: DR depends on the helmet, which normally covers its body but not its leg; DR 5 is typical. However, the creature can swiftly retract its leg and turtle up to avoid a hit; treat this as a Block using Shield skill, with the helmet having DB 1 and HP based on its weight.

SINEW AND HELM

The helmet thief offers two treasures to discerning adventurers.

First is the helmet it wears as a shell. While this may be just a battered old pot helm – or even a simple stove pot – a surprising number are high-quality greathelms or even magical helms. The screaming leaper is always interested in upgrading to a new helmet if the old one is damaged. Some sages have theorized the creatures use their sonic scream as a form of sonar to test the quality and thickness of a corpse's helmet, rejecting those not up to par.

Second, the coiled sinew that the jack-in-a-pot uses for locomotion is an amazing feat of natural engineering. These elastic, energy-storing tissues are valued by crossbow and siege engineers, as they can be used to create a fine crossbow or siege engine that does an extra +1 damage without increasing ST. A Naturalist roll may be required to realize this; use Surgery to extract the sinews without damaging them. The material sells for \$1,000 to bow makers or siege engineers.

GRUTEL

These fierce 6'-tall humanoids have powerful bodies, copper-colored skin, and long red hair. The grutel (singular: grute) have brutish faces with pointed ears, in a way somewhat resembling a weird hybrid between elf and hobgoblin. Their mouths are full of nail-like teeth. Their large, red eyes glitter with madness. Their dry, cracked voices croak or whisper; their sore throats are slaked only with fresh blood or orcish blood-wine.

Grutel's faces may be unpleasant, but their worst feature is their skin, or lack of it. Their bodies are exposed muscles and raw meat, foul-smelling and often maggot-infested and rotting. However, a grute's flesh is sensitive to the touch; despite being fierce warriors, they have low pain thresholds. The skin also itches constantly, forcing them to periodically scratch out chunks of rotting flesh or pull out maggots with their sharp nails. Grutel do not wear much clothing, as it irritates their skin, but do often wear belts of human, elf, or orc skin.

This condition does not improve their disposition. Grutel are sadistic brutes who enjoy passing on their own misery to everyone else. Despite their unhealthy aspect, grutel are well-equipped to do this, as they are also supernaturally resilient.

Their bones, teeth, and fingernails are made of iron and nearly unbreakable, and their muscles and organs are very tough.

Grutel are not entirely ugly; they possess one beautiful physical feature: a waterfall of coppery-red hair, which often falls to their ankles. From behind, a grute might be mistaken for a lovely re-headed maiden (as long as it is downwind). Grutel are vain regarding their locks, and use their claws as combs. The secret of their success is that young grutel wash their hair in the blood of their enemies, ripping out their victims' hearts and squeezing them out over their heads. A good blood shower always makes a grute feel better, and sometimes they are even inspired to talk to any surviving captives.

According to their legends, they are the children of a smith-god, Teu, who forged their bones in his volcano-workshop and gave them fine-spun copper for their hair, and of a virgin hunter-goddess, Gru, who clothed them with fresh meat. However, the two gods were so pleased with what they had wrought that they stopped to get drunk before finishing the job. As they slept off their celebration, a nameless trickster god stole the salt their parents had collected to preserve their flesh. Now the grutel are condemned to rot . . . unless they take fresh flesh and blood to restore themselves, which, thanks to the curse, must come from other sentient beings.

Grutel are a barbaric race who live much like orcs or ogres, but they are smaller in number, usually living in small bands. They make tedious, bloodthirsty epic poems and declaim them in harsh whispers. Their myths claim they were driven from the surface world by humans and elves; certainly their ghastly appearance and brutal nature do not make them pleasant neighbors.

Their iron-sharp claws and teeth are natural weapons, but they are also decent metal-smiths. They sometimes operate underground forges to create weapons and simple tools, especially near lava pools or using young enslaved dragons or fire elementals. Larger grute tribes have a few clerics or shamans who worship their patron smith and huntress gods (usually in barbaric rites involving skinning or burning victims).

Grutel have been known to get along with ogres and occasional ally with them or trade them weapons for captives, but relations with other races are poor. They find orcs and hobgoblins quite attractive and sometimes take them as slaves or mates rather than eating them outright. In addition to loathing humans and elves, they especially dislike corpse-eaters, as they are sometimes mistaken for them.

Their greatest hatred, however, is reserved for dwarves. According to their legends, dwarves were created by a rival smith god, the same one who had sent the trickster to steal their parents' salt. Dwarves sometimes buy the bones of grutel for use in their forges.

*Know how sublime a thing it is
to suffer and be strong.*

– Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

ST: 13 **HP:** 13 **Speed:** 6.00
DX: 13 **Will:** 12 **Move:** 6
IQ: 8 **Per:** 12
HT: 11 **FP:** 11 **SM:** 0
Dodge: 10 **Parry:** 11 **DR:** 5 (skull)

Copper Hair Lash (12): 1d crushing. Reach 1.
Fine Thrusting Bastard Sword (14): 2d+2 cutting (reach 1, 2) or 1d+4 impaling (reach 2).
Iron Bite or Talons (14): 1d cutting. Reach C.

Traits: Appearance (Hideous); Bloodlust (9); Bully (12); Combat Reflexes; Disturbing Voice; Injury Tolerance (Unbreakable Bones); Low Pain Threshold; Night Vision 4; Odious Racial Habit (Wash themselves in blood, and burn, skin, or eat prisoners); Sadism (12).

Skills: Armoury (Melee Weapons)-10; Brawling-14; Broad-sword-14; Interrogation-10; Poetry-9; Tracking-11; Two-Handed Sword-14.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: They're often armed with a fine bastard sword and DR 5 pot helm, both made from the iron bones of their parents or comrades. Grutel are twice as heavy as their strength would indicate (usually 360 lbs.) thanks to their dense iron skeleton and long copper hair. Injury Tolerance (Unbreakable Bones) means limbs or extremities take twice as much injury to cripple; see *GURPS Powers*, p. 53, for more details.

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

HAIR AND BONES

A dead grute's flesh rapidly rots away, leaving behind an iron skeleton (about 180 lbs. weight) of very high-quality ore and its hair. Some grutel bands practice death rites that involve melting and re forging the skeletons and hair of their own dead to make simple shawls, helms, and swords (called "deathblades"). They sometimes use skulls as cups.

Grutel skeletons are also much prized by the smiths of other races, who will buy them for as much as \$20/lb. (averaging \$3,600 for an entire skeleton). Dwarves, in particular, know how to reforge them into ore of meteoritic-iron quality, suitable for making potent weapons and armor. However, grutel consider it sacrilege for other races to use their bones in this way. It is said that a grute's tongue can taste if iron came from their own race's bones; their rage is even greater than normal if they discover it.

A grute's copper-gold hair is much prized by wig- and tapestry-makers, who weave it into other hair to provide extra strength and beauty. A full mane of grutel hair weighs about 18 lbs. and sells for \$1,800.

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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ALL WET

BY CHARLES SAEGER

We all know that delvers go to see strange new dungeons, meet exotic new monsters, and kill them. (Oh, and take their stuff.) But dungeons are on land. Water covers two-thirds of our own world and likely quite a bit of most fantasy worlds. So, what happens when delvers go into the ocean?

That's right. They find strange new sea caves, meet exotic new sea monsters, and kill them. And take their stuff, of course. So, in that light, here are 10 more monsters to trouble delvers who think they're tough because they can cast Breathe Water.

*Give adventurers another reason
to fear the sea.*

DEEP ONE

Deep ones are fish-man dwellers of the sea. They can stand like men, jump like frogs, and swim like fish. Their voices are croaks, and their hands are webbed claws. Their eyes, which never blink, top off their narrow, fish-shaped heads.

Deep ones can come to land, and do so to mate with humans. The offspring that come from these matings start out as human, but begin to turn into deep ones well into adulthood. While changing, they will acquire a new deep-one trait each month; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards always comes last. Once they have fully changed, they go to live with the others in the sea. Deep ones vary much as humans do, and retain the skills they learned before the transformation.

ST: 14 **HP:** 14 **Speed:** 6.50
DX: 12 **Will:** 14 **Move:** 6
IQ: 11 **Per:** 11 **Weight:** 180 lbs.
HT: 14 **FP:** 14 **SM:** 0
Dodge: 9 **Parry:** 11 **DR:** 2*

Claws (16): 1d cutting. Reach C.
Club (16): 2d+1 crushing. Reach 1.

Traits: Amphibious; Chauvinistic; Dark Vision; Disturbing Voice; Doesn't Breathe (Gills); Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Peripheral Vision; Pressure Support 3; Speak Underwater; Super Jump 1 (18'); Temperature Tolerance 3 (Cold); Unnatural Features (Narrow head, rubbery skin, shrunken ears, unblinking eyes).

Skills: Brawling-16; Broadsword-16; Jumping-15; Religious Ritual (Deep One)-11; Swimming-15.

Class: Elder Thing.

Notes: Unwilling to negotiate other than to set up mating. DR is natural. Deep one clerics exist and worship big, weird

elder gods. See *Monster Modding*, in *Pyramid #3/108: Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game III*, pp. 8-9, for spells and abilities for deep one priests.

DIRE KRAKEN

The dire kraken is the baddest monster of the sea. Those few who have lived through the kraken's strike can't settle on whether it looks more like a crab, an octopus, or a squid, but it's always big, often bigger than the boats it sinks in its wake. Its nine tentacles have spikes on the end, but it often does the most damage when it goes back down, as a whirlpool shows up in its wake.

ST: 130 **HP:** 130 **Speed:** 6.00
DX: 12 **Will:** 12 **Move:** 12
IQ: 4 **Per:** 10 **Weight:** 65 tons
HT: 11 **FP:** 11 **SM:** +7 (30 hexes)
Dodge: 9 **Parry:** 13 **DR:** 20

Bite (21): 14d+13 crushing. Reach C.

Talons (21): 7d+15 impaling. The talons are on the end of their tentacles, which can grab with ST 67. Reach C-30 (x9).

Whirlpool Spin: When the kraken goes back down, it leaves a whirlpool in its wake. Treat as the Whirlpool spell (*GURPS Magic*, p. 187), with the middle where the kraken's head was and a radius of 60 yards, but it isn't magical. Regardless of weight, anything floating in the whirlpool's radius must make rolls to avoid being sucked into the funnel. The whirlpool grows out to its full radius over a minute, and then starts ebbing the second afterward, first growing and then shrinking one yard at a time.

Traits: Cold-Blooded (50°); Doesn't Breathe (Gills); Double-Jointed; Enhanced Move 2 (Water Move 48); Extra Arms 7 (Extra-Flexible; Weak, ST 65); Extra Attack 8; High Pain Threshold; Night Vision 5; No Fine Manipulators; No Legs (Aquatic); Pressure Support 2; Temperature Tolerance 2 (Cold); Wild Animal.

Skills: Brawling-21; Survival (Open Ocean)-12; Swimming-14; Wrestling-21.

Class: Dire Animal.

Notes: It's the biggest thing around.

GIANT PIRANHA

There are many tales about how vicious piranhas are, with many levels of truth. Regardless of how dangerous a school of typical piranhas truly is, the big ones are deadly all on their own.

ST: 14 **HP:** 14 **Speed:** 6.00
DX: 12 **Will:** 10 **Move:** 7
IQ: 3 **Per:** 10 **Weight:** 300 lbs.
HT: 12 **FP:** 12 **SM:** -1
Dodge: 9 **Parry:** N/A **DR:** 2

Bite (16): 1d+3 cutting. Reach C.

Traits: Bloodlust (12); Discriminatory Smell; Doesn't Breathe (Gills); Ichthyoid; Night Vision 3; Striking ST 4 (Bite only); Wild Animal.

Skills: Brawling-16; Swimming-14.

Class: Giant Animal.

Notes: Evil wizards like to fit magic items that shoot death rays onto the backs of giant piranhas. Nobody knows why they do this, but these death rays do 5d tight-beam burning damage with range 10/100. They have Acc 3, but the piranhas aren't smart enough to aim, and often only have a default Innate Attack (Beam)-8, so that doesn't matter.

LERNAEAN HYDRA

A Lernaean hydra is a big water snake with many heads. The number of heads varies from hydra to hydra, though there are most often nine. The number of heads varies because when one head is cut off, two more grow in its stead. Cauterizing the wound right after cutting off the head keeps the heads from growing back. As they live in the water, putting fire to their neck stumps is tough.

The hydra fights with its poisonous bite, and it easily withstands most poison.

ST: 18 **HP:** 18 **Speed:** 6.50
DX: 13 **Will:** 14 **Move:** 8
IQ: 4 **Per:** 12 **Weight:** 400 lbs.
HT: 13 **FP:** 13 **SM:** +1 (3 hexes)
Dodge: 9 **Parry:** N/A **DR:** 4

Bite (15): 1d+2 impaling + follow-up 4d toxic (resisted at HT-4). Anyone who takes more than half his HP in hydra poison damage is in moderate pain (p. B428). There are usually nine heads, and up to three (or one-third of the heads, whichever is more) can bite someone in one hex. Reach C, 1.

Traits: Amphibious; Born Biter; DR 30 (Limited, Toxic); Doesn't Breathe (Gills); Enhanced Move 1 (Water Move 16); Extra Attack 8; Extra Head 8; Immunity to Poison; Night Vision 5; Pressure Support 1; Regeneration (Heads only; see notes); Supernatural Durability (Main head must be severed); Temperature Tolerance 2 (Cold); Vermiform; Wild Animal.

Skills: Brawling-15; Stealth-12; Survival (Fresh-Water Lake, River/Stream, or Swampland)-12; Swimming-13.

Class: Dire Animal.

Notes: The hydra may have any number of heads when it first shows up. Roll 3d-2 for a random head count if desired. Each head provides 2 ST and 2 HP; the example stats above are for a nine-headed hydra. If someone destroys one of the hydra's heads, two more grow in its spot right away, unless someone applies fire to the wound. The heads reach full size after three seconds.

It takes 6 HP (or at least a third of full hydra HP) of fire damage to cauterize the wound and stop both new heads from growing. The creature gets the Extra Attack for each new head right away, but it takes a day for it to gain the extra ST from the additional heads; biting damage changes with the increase in ST. To kill the hydra, you must cut off all of its heads before they have a chance to regrow.

MERFOLK

Merfolk appear human from the waist up, and as fish from the waist down. Mermen are ugly, with their seaweed hair, but mermaids are comely. Mermen can go deeper into the sea to fight the deep ones, however.

ST: 12 **HP:** 12 **Speed:** 5.50
DX: 11 **Will:** 10 **Move:** 5
IQ: 10 **Per:** 10 **Weight:** 125 lbs.
HT: 11 **FP:** 11 **SM:** 0
Dodge: 8 **Parry:** 10 **DR:** 0

Melee Net (13): May entangle or ensnare the target (p. B411). Acc 1, Range 14.

Punch (13): 1d-1 crushing. Reach C.

Trident (13): 1d+2(0.5) impaling, reach 1* in one hand; 1d+3(0.5) impaling, reach 1, 2* in two. Ignores -2 to hit when striking to disarm. Target has -1 to Dodge, +1 to Block or Parry.

MERFOLK AS PLAYER CHARACTERS

Players in an underwater game may want to play as denizens of the deep. Merfolk who leave their communities do not take a conch shell with them, but may purchase a net and trident as part of their starting gear.

Merfolk

25 points

Mermen are the same size as men of the same ST, though they lack legs. Merfolk can buy up to three levels of Pressure Support and Temperature Tolerance (Cold), and up to five levels of Night Vision.

Advantages: Doesn't Breathe (Gills, -50%) [10]; Night Vision 3 [3]; Pressure Support 2 [10]; Speak Underwater [5]; Temperature Tolerance 2 (Cold) [2].

Disadvantages: Appearance (Unattractive) [-4]; No Legs (Aquatic) [0]; Unnatural Feature (Seaweed hair) [-1].

Features: Leg and foot armor isn't interchangeable with human leg and foot armor.

Notes: Mermaids are better looking than mermen, but cannot go as deep into the water. Change Appearance (Unattractive) to Appearance (Attractive) [4], lower Pressure Support to 1 [5], take away Unnatural Feature (Seaweed hair), and give them Honest Face [1] and Curious (12) [-5]. Point cost is unchanged.

Traits (Merman): Appearance (Unattractive); Doesn't Breathe (Gills); Night Vision 3; No Legs (Aquatic); Pressure Support 2; Speak Underwater; Temperature Tolerance 2 (Cold); Unnatural Feature (Seaweed hair).

Traits (Mermaid): Appearance (Attractive); Curious (12); Doesn't Breathe (Gills); Honest Face; Night Vision 3; No Legs (Aquatic); Pressure Support 1; Speak Underwater; Temperature Tolerance 2 (Cold).

Skills: Animal Handling (Aquatic)-11; Brawling-13; Net-13; Spear-15; Stealth-11; Swimming-13.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: A mer-person going into battle bears a melee net (\$20, 5 lbs.), a trident (\$80, 5 lbs.), and a conch shell (2 lbs.). Merfolk can call for help with the conch shell, and any merfolk or allies of merfolk within 32 yards (64 yards underwater) will come as soon as they can; to determine the assistance randomly, assume either 1d+1 merfolk or 1d-1 sharks (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 5: Allies*, p. 10) hear the call.

Nāgā guard particular bodies of water. They may grant boons to or call storms upon visitors.

NĀGA

Nāgā are big snakes with the heads of ugly men. (A female is a nāgī or nāgiṇī; nāga is singular, and "nāgā" is plural.) They guard a spot of water, like a lake or a bend of river. Nāgā are wicked, but sometimes they grant boons to those who are worthy or helpful. Otherwise, they are cranky and don't like others spoiling their lands and waters.

ST: 18	HP: 18	Speed: 7.00
DX: 12	Will: 12	Move: 7
IQ: 12	Per: 12	Weight: 200 lbs.
HT: 12	FP: 12	SM: +1 (3 hexes)
Dodge: 10	Parry: N/A	DR: 4

Fangs (19): 1d+2 impaling + follow-up poison 5d toxic (resist at HT-4). Critical failure to resist means a heart attack (p. B429). Taking more than 1/3 HP from the poison puts the victim in severe pain (p. B428). Reach C.

Spit Poison (17): 2d toxic damage (resist at HT). Critical failure to resist means a heart attack (p. B429). Taking more than 1/3 HP from the poison puts the victim in moderate pain (p. B428). Acc 3, Range 10.

Storm: The nāga can summon a storm in a 10-yard radius around itself. Anyone in the storm takes 1d crushing damage each second from the hard rain and wind, with double knockback. Furthermore, all missile combat is at -5 owing to bad vision. The nāga is immune to its storm, but must concentrate on it. The storm takes 1d seconds to come and

lasts 1d seconds after the nāga stops concentrating. A nāga can summon this storm whether indoors or outdoors.

Traits: Amphibious; Appearance (Monstrous); Attentive; Bad Temper (12); Bully (12); Constriction Attack; Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; Higher Purpose (Punish defilers of the nāga's land); Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Indomitable; Infravision; Injury Tolerance (No Blood, No Vitals); Intolerance (Birds of prey); Magic Resistance 5; Night Vision 5; Sense of Duty (Nature); Speak Underwater; Subsonic Hearing; Temperature Tolerance 2 (Cold); Terrain Adaptation (Sand, Swamp); Vermiform.

Skills: Aquabatics-18; Brawling-19; Innate Attack (Breath)-17; Stealth-15; Survival (Island/Beach, Swampland)-12; Swimming-13; Wrestling-17.

Class: Faerie.

Notes: A nāga can grant a boon. Specifically, it can cure anyone of poisoning, or it can ensure that the requester either becomes pregnant or impregnates his partner on the person's next sexual encounter. Make a reaction roll. The nāga grants the boon on a "Good" or better reaction, but strikes on a "Neutral" or worse reaction. The nāga expects offerings, and a good offering will grant a bonus to the roll. Some nāgā have Alternate Form (Human) and will disguise themselves as people.

NIX

Nixen are water faerie. A female is a nixe or a nixie, but as nixen are shapeshifters, they may have no true gender. In their human shape, nixen look like slight-but-comely humans of either gender. Nixen can also shift shape into that of a fish or a snake. Nixen like to lure wayfarers into the water and make them drown.

ST: 10	HP: 10	Speed: 6.00
DX: 12	Will: 12	Move: 6
IQ: 10	Per: 10	Weight: 125 lbs.
HT: 12	FP: 12	SM: 0
Dodge: 9	Parry: 9	DR: 2

Kick (10): 1d-2 crushing. Reach C, 1.

Nix Song (15 vs. Will): Apply standard range modifiers to the nix's roll. If the nix wins, the victim is under the faerie's control for one minute for each point by which the target lost the Contest. This is hearing-based; the nix doesn't need to see the target, but the target must be able to hear the nix's song. The nix will try to lure its victim into the water to drown. This gives another resistance roll – if the victim wins, he breaks free.

Punch (12): 1d-3 crushing. Reach C.

Traits: Alternate Forms (Fish, Person, and Snake); Amphibious; Appearance (Attractive); Dependency (Water; Daily); Doesn't Breathe; Night Vision 5; Sense of Duty (Nature); Speak Underwater; Temperature Tolerance 1 (Cold); Unhealing (Partial, Heals when in water); Unnatural Feature (Split ear for a nix; Wet skirt for a nixe).

Skills: Area Knowledge (Nearby body of water)-16; Sex Appeal-12; Singing-15; Stealth-12; Swimming-14; Survival (Island/Beach)-14.

Class: Faerie.

Notes: Nixen often keep gold or other treasure in their body of water for unknown reasons. They lure those who come looking for the treasure to drown. Nixen may have other musical skills, especially playing a violin (\$200, 1 lb.), which only works when above water.

OCTOPUS-FOLK

Octopus-folk are particularly intelligent octopuses that walk on four of their tentacles and uses the other four as arms. In those arms, octopus-folk usually wield two swords and two shields. Octopus-folk are as at home on land as they are underwater. They are as smart as orcs, almost as smart as humans, and have cities under the sea.

ST: 10 **HP:** 8 **Speed:** 6.50
DX: 14 **Will:** 10 **Move:** 5
IQ: 9 **Per:** 10 **Weight:** 25 lbs.
HT: 12 **FP:** 12 **SM:** -1

Dodge: 9 **Parry/Block:** 11 **DR:** 1

Beak (16): 1d-2 large piercing + follow-up poison, HT-2 to resist stunning; roll again every 100 seconds. Reach C.

Broadsword (16): 1d cutting or 1d-2 crushing. Reach 1. Can attack twice.

Ink Squirt (10): If an octopus-person is in trouble, it can squirt a line of ink at its foe. This works as Obscure 10 (p. B72), which the octopus-person always aims at the face so the skill roll is at -5 (at 10 instead of 15). Acc 3, Range 10.

Grapple (16): Constriction attack. Can attack twice if not holding both of the broadswords.

Traits: Amphibious; Chameleon 3; Constriction Attack; Doesn't Breathe (Gills); Extra Arms 4 (Extra-Flexible; Long, +1 SM); Extra Attack 1; Extra Legs (Four Legs); Night Vision 6; Pressure Support 2; Wild Animal.

Skills: Aquabatics-15; Brawling-16; Broadsword-16; Innate Attack (Breath)-15; Shield-16; Stealth-16; Swimming-12; Wrestling-16.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: Wields two faerie broadswords (\$500, 2 lbs. each) and two small shields (DB 1; \$54, 10.8 lbs. total).

SEA HAG

A sea hag is an ugly, evil, hunchbacked old woman who lives near a body of water. When wayfarers wander to a shoreline, sea hags like to reach up, grab their legs, and pull them underwater. Afterward, they eat them. As sea hags scare animals, few animals live near the coves or river bends where sea hags dwell.

ST: 16 **HP:** 16 **Speed:** 6.00
DX: 12 **Will:** 15 **Move:** 6
IQ: 14 **Per:** 15 **Weight:** 120 lbs.
HT: 12 **FP:** 12 **SM:** 0

Dodge: 9 **Parry:** 10 **DR:** 1

Bite (14): 1d+1 cutting. Reach C.

Claws (14): 1d+2 crushing. Reach C.

Evil Eye: She's got the look that kills! Her evil eye automatically hits whatever target she looks at. If in doubt, make

a Per roll for the sea hag, applying modifiers from the *Size and Speed/Range Table* (p. B550), with another +10 if her target is in plain sight. Anyone at whom she looks must resist with HT; Magic Resistance applies. On a successful resistance roll, her target takes 1d damage (no damage on a critical success). On a failed roll, her target takes 6d damage, and suffers a heart attack (p. B429) on a critical failure. This ignores DR and any Injury Tolerance, and is both magical and vision-based. Range 2/20.

Traits: Amphibious; Appearance (Hideous); Bad Temper (12); Doesn't Breathe; Frightens Animals; Hunchback; Infravision; Magic Resistance 5 (Improved); Odious Racial Habit (Eats other sapients); Terror.

Skills: Aquabatics-13; Brawling-14; Swimming-14; Wrestling-14.

Class: Faerie.

Notes: Truly evil. Willing to negotiate. Wrestling ST 18. Sea hags like bald sailors for some reason, and instead of trying to kill them, will attempt to become their lovers. Hags often have Magery 2+ and know spells at skill 14+.

GURPS Banestorm offers other variations of some of these creatures.

WATER BEETLE

This beetle is as big as a child and lives in the water. A water beetle can go on land, though it does its hunting in the water. It bites with big, creepy mandibles that crush its victims.

ST: 10 **HP:** 10 **Speed:** 5.00
DX: 10 **Will:** 10 **Move:** 5
IQ: 1 **Per:** 10 **Weight:** 150 lbs.
HT: 10 **FP:** 10 **SM:** -1

Dodge: 8 **Parry:** N/A **DR:** 5

Mandibles (12): 1d+1 cutting. Bite counts as a grapple on SM 0 or smaller victims; inflicts damage every turn as a free action on grappled targets. Reach C.

Traits: Acute Taste/Smell 4; Acute Touch 4; Amphibious; Bad Sight (All); Discriminatory Smell; Extra Legs (Six Legs); Doesn't Breathe (Oxygen Absorption); Gluttony (12); Horizontal; Injury Tolerance (No Neck); Night Vision 9; No Fine Manipulators; Striking ST 4 (Bite only); Wild Animal.

Skills: Brawling-12; Swimming-12; Wrestling-12.

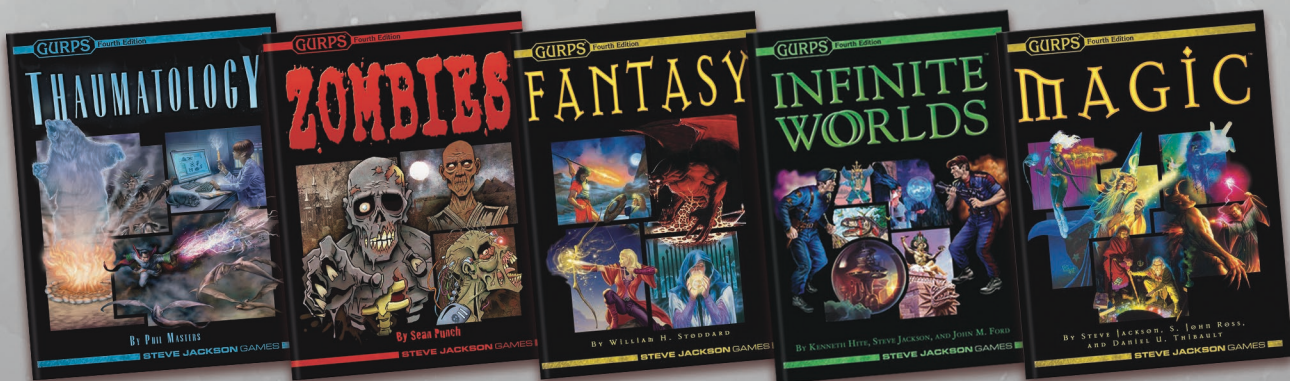
Class: Giant Animal.

Notes: They aren't smart, but will stay in the water to fight and seldom chase anyone when on land.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Charles Saeger hides out as a Midwestern library science grad student, but really, he's a Midwestern library science grad student. He blogs his *GURPS* games and other gaming material at gurpshexytime.blogspot.com.

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DESIGNER'S NOTES

DUNGEON

FANTASY TRAPS

BY CHRISTOPHER R. RICE
WITH JASON "PK" LEVINE

Dungeon Fantasy Traps was the culmination of my views on providing hazards other than monsters in dungeons. It pulled from a couple previous sources for some traps: **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 16: Wilderness Adventures**, *It's a Trap!* (from *Pyramid* #3/60: *Dungeon Fantasy III*), and **GURPS**

Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons. The rest of the traps, puzzles, and other hazards were inspired from movies (Indiana Jones), old-school gaming (hello, Grimtooth!), video games (Vagrant Story), and other bits and bobs of pop culture (the burrowing spider was my take on the German S-mine).

DELVE. PRAY. ACQUIRE.

Dungeon Fantasy Traps is my love letter to the genre that got me started as a gamer and later on a Game Master. I was following the *Dungeon Fantasy* Kickstarter when Steve Jackson Games announced they were going to provide some additional PDFs as stretch goals. When I saw one of the possibilities was a book about traps, all I could think was "I could write that!" I'd sent out an email previously to ask if they were farming any work out to freelancers. It didn't hurt my chances when backers in the Kickstarter update thread literally asked for me by name. I don't recall exactly when Jason "PK" Levine, the Assistant **GURPS** Line Editor, sent me an email inquiring if I would coauthor the book with him, but I do remember hitting the reply button so hard that I broke my mouse.

We briefly dickered about how to break up the work, since this was going to be our first collaboration, and we both came to the same conclusion: I'd create the content, and he'd edit it. What happened next was me writing about four to five

traps per day; I filled our word count a mere 11 days later. About a month after that, our first draft went out. We would have been even faster, but private issues unrelated to writing arose and caused some problems. Regardless, we worked very well together – I trusted PK to fix any issues with my prose and game balance (of which I was proud that there were very few!). He trusted me to design novel ways to creatively inconvenience, kill, or torment "paper people."

PK mostly handled the second draft and integrated the comments from Sean "Dr. Kromm" Punch. Meanwhile, I was helping Matt Riggsby by reviewing the second *Dungeon Fantasy* adventure and doing some other writing.

Overall, the whole experience was pretty amazing. It was my first Kickstarter (of many, hopefully!), and being able to just let the content flow without worry about format or editing was a novel and interesting experience. PK was a real joy to work with, and I hope we can do something else in the future.

For even more dungeon dangers that didn't make it into Traps, check out Deathtraps in Pyramid #3/106: Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game II.

JOINING FORCES FOR EVIL

Dungeon Fantasy Traps wouldn't exist without *trust*. After having the honor of playing in Christopher's *GURPS* game, I knew that I could trust him to be devious and evil enough to conceptualize and create these traps and tricks . . . and he similarly trusted me to take his precious babies and mangle them in whatever way I saw fit to make them as balanced and easy to use (in play) as possible. The good Dr. Kromm was a big help in the latter department as well; any time we'd let things get too complicated, he'd kick it back for streamlining. For example, *Malicious Marble Madness* originally required the GM to keep track of the party's cumulative distance traveled down the hall as well as the number of discs disturbed – until we realized that we could cut half of that out with a few minor adjustments.

One of our earliest decisions was that this book needed to be more than a catalog; it should expand everything that *Dungeon Fantasy Exploits* had to say about traps and tricks. To that end, we grew Evil Runes from a single approach to a near-infinite combination of triggers, reset times, and effects. Some of what *Exploits* might have considered “tricks” (like weird enchantments) were folded into the *Traps* chapter, so that we could expand *Tricks* to include fake-outs, riddles, and puzzles – things that GMs (and authors) have been including in dungeons since the beginning. However, having added those, it was very important for me that there be a mechanical way for

characters to figure these riddles out even when the *players* were stumped. At first, it didn't seem like there was an appropriate skill for this, but when I saw *Dungeon Fantasy Adventurers* allow Poetry to “reveal clues hidden in graffiti, inscriptions, or scrolls,” I realized that it was perfect for what became the *Puzzling Through Riddles* box.

One theme that came up a lot when creating *Traps* was “variety.” In particular, we knew that some professions already excelled at defeating traps, hostile magic, and curses – the scout or thief, the wizard, and the cleric or holy warrior, respectively – so it was important to provide at least one trap that played to a different template's strengths. Including the “heavy fighters” was as simple as the *Monster Mash* section, along with anything that could be fought or evaded with a parry. (The barbarian does double-duty here, as certain traps can be overcome via heavy lifting.) But there's also room for the bard (*Malicious Marble Madness*), druid (*Hopping Mad* on p. 31, and *Spider's Snare*), and martial artist (anything that can be bypassed with Light Walk or Spider Climb) to shine.

While dangerous monsters are a key part of any dungeon, I'd say that a good selection of traps is even more important. Once the players realize that they can't even take a simple hallway for granted, they'll realize how much their lives are truly on the line, and that sense of tension is key to a good *Dungeon Fantasy* game.

– Jason “PK” Levine

MO TRAPS, MO PROBLEMS

Traps was only so big, so a few things wouldn't fit no matter how much we scrimped on and shaved off of word count. I also ended up writing several entries I didn't send to PK for various reasons. Some of these outtakes became *Deathtraps* (in *Pyramid* #3/106: *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game II*), while we kept others in reserve for *this* article!

ANNIHILATING DOORKNOB

Not all Evil Runes are created equal. In fact, some are just not *fair*. This nasty trap can outright *kill* with just a touch! A contact-based Evil Rune is inscribed on a door-knob (typically on a reinforced door, so the trap cannot be avoided by bashing the barrier in) and affects anyone who touches it.

Detect: Per-based **Thaumatology**, or **Perception + Magery** for mages, or **Traps** at -10; add any bonuses or penalties for **Vision** (e.g., Acute Vision).

Disarm: DX-based **Thaumatology** at -3 or DX-based **Traps** at -6.

Avoid: A DX roll at -6 lets you avoid contact with the glyph on the doorknob.

Save: No.

Effects: Roll 4d and compare to the *larger* of the victim's **HT** or **HP**. If the amount equals or exceeds it, they and anything they were carrying are instantly turned to dust! If the amount is less, then the target takes that as injury instead. The trap's damage ignores DR.

Shots: Infinite.

Rearm: 1d seconds.

Steal: No.

HEAVEN AND EARTH

This oddly appointed room has pictures of angels and other divine servants standing, dancing, etc. on clouds, with images of mortals praying on their knees or face to the ground in supplication. There are several odd people-shaped depressions in the ground (at least two per party member) – some that would fit someone in a kneeling position, and others that could fit an entire body so that the person is hidden. These depressions change location and shape every time a new group or person enters the room.

Entering the room results in all exits slamming shut and the ceiling descending (at a rate of 3” per second) until it stops halfway. Next, the floor does the same, ascending just as fast.

The only way to stop the trap is to kneel in a depression when the ceiling descends and then lie flat (face-first) in one of the other full-length ones, when the floor ascends *or* to find the triggering mechanism that's hidden near an exit. The GM should use caution with this trap, as it can result in a total party kill!

Detect: Per-based **Traps** at -10.

Disarm: DX-based Traps at -5. Failure triggers it!

Avoid: Automatic (don't go in the room).

Save: No.

Effects: 19d-1 crushing to *everything* in the room.

Shots: Infinite.

Rearm: 1 minute.

Steal: No.

HOPPING MAD

Look at the bones! That's your first clue. This odd-looking circular depression in the ground (or floor), 12' in radius, contains numerous small holes, and rabbits can be seen exiting and entering them. The ground is covered in bones, tattered remains of clothing, dried blood, and similar grisly warnings. In the center of the circle is a pedestal with a bejeweled rabbit of solid silver, with rubies for eyes (or similar valuable item worth at least \$1,000). If the delvers ignore the statue (those with Greed roll at -3 – it's defended by rabbits!), then nothing happens. If *anyone* gets within a yard of it, the magic activates, and the rabbits go from cute to hoppy murder machines of fluffy death. See *Killer Kawaii* for their statistics.

Detect: Per-based **Naturalist** at -5 or **Perception** + **Power Investiture (Druidic)** at -2.

Disarm: No.

Avoid: Automatic (avoid the glittery temptation).

Save: No.

Effects: No damage, but summons a mob of bloodthirsty rabbits (below): two per nearby delver.

Shots: Constant.

Rearm, Steal: No. The magic that binds the rabbits can be dispelled using either **Dispel Magic** or **Remove Curse** (against skill 20 in either case).

PENROSE STAIRCASE

This cleverly constructed staircase hides the *real* stairs down with an optical illusion that can cause those it fools to travel around and around the same set of stairs – possibly for hours!

Detect: Per-based **Traps** at -9.

Disarm, Avoid: No.

Save: Per-based **Traps** at -4, made after every minute on the staircase. Success by 0-4 only reveals the trap; success by 5+ finds the actual stairs.

Effects: See above.

Shots: Constant.

Rearm, Steal: No.

THE UPSIDE-DOWN SWIMMER

Long ago, The Devil tried to convince a holy man, lost at sea, to accept his help. When the monk refused, The Devil cursed him to swim forever in the ocean – *upside-down*. Since then, these cursed waters have appeared in dungeons and lost places all over, taking the form of either a river which must be crossed to reach the other side, a lake with a small island full of (illusory) treasure on it, or a similar water-plus-temptation situation. The size varies, but five to eight yards across is common in dungeons, while outdoor waters are at least three times as wide.

Anyone entering the water must roll as for *Swimming* (*Dungeon Fantasy Exploits*, p. 21) at an extra -4 for the first person or group to do it, as the water flips them around so they're swimming upside-down!

KILLER KAWAII

Cuteness has always killed. In the case of this monster, that's literal.

Bloody Cottontail

This good-sized rabbit appears to be a normal, innocuous member of its species – except for its red-furred tail (often bright crimson, but any shade of red is possible). Created long ago by a demented wizard (some say it was the infamous Senvem Thars), bloody cottontails have slain more delvers than anything so cute and fluffy should be able to. They're dangerous, and like giant rats, they travel in packs. Given that they *love* going for the "soft bits" in armor (represented by their bite's armor divisor), even a heavily armored fighter should be cautious!

ST: 4	HP: 8	Speed: 7.00
DX: 14	Will: 12	Move: 10/15
IQ: 8	Per: 12	Weight: 20 lbs.
HT: 12	FP: 12	SM: -3

Dodge: 10	Parry: N/A	DR: 1
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Bite (16): 1d+1(2) impaling. Treat as a weapon, not a body part. Reach C.

Bite, Running (12): 1d+1(2) impaling. Treat as a weapon, not a body part. Reach C. Made as a Move and Attack; ignore the skill cap of 9.

Traits: Acute Hearing 4; Acute Taste and Smell 4; Appearance (Handsome/Beautiful; Impressive); Bad Temper (6); Compulsive Killing (12); Danger Sense; Dark Vision; Enhanced Move (Ground); Mind Shield 3; Peripheral Vision; Quadruped; Super Jump (18 yards); Striking ST 10; Vibration Sense (Air).

Skills: Brawling-16; Camouflage-12; Jumping-16; Running-13; Stealth-14; Survival (whatever is nearby)-12; Tracking-12.

Class: Hybrid (though nobody knows *what* they were crossed with!).

Notes: Jumping distance is 18 yards. *Particularly* dangerous versions ignore the penalty to attack the neck (normally -5) and have Magic Resistance 5.

Success means the swimmer can hold his breath for HT seconds (x1.5 with a successful **Breath Control** roll) before losing 1 FP/second; failure means he loses 1 FP now and every second thereafter. See *Suffocation* (*Dungeon Fantasy Exploits*, p. 70) for details.

Meanwhile, any creatures or other hazards in the water must be dealt with normally – or as normally as possible while upside down. Reaching the opposite bank or center island (which ends any “treasure” illusion) allows the swimmer to return to the air-breathing world.

Detect: Per at -5 or Per-based **Hidden Lore (Demons)** – or **Perception + Holiness** or **Power Investiture**, for clerics and holy warriors.

Disarm, Avoid: No.

Save: Will at -6 plus **Holiness**, if any, immediately upon entering the water, to reject the curse.

Effects: See above.

Shots: Constant.

Rearm, Steal: No.

NEW SPELL: MYSTICAL RUNES

As with the murder fluffs (see p. 31), adding a new spell to a book of traps (even if the spell was *about* traps!) seemed off-topic. This spell is similar to Evil Runes, but it’s nonpermanent and PCs can cast it.

Mystical Runes (VH)

Special

This spell creates mystical runes, which can harm those who read, see, or touch them (see below). The effect depends entirely on the type of spell placed within the runes. For example, Concussion (*Dungeon Fantasy Spells*, p. 15) runes that activate only when touched would cause crushing damage and possibly stun the target.

To get the total FP required for this spell, use the cost of the underlying spell *plus* 5 (if the runes must be studied to take effect), 10 (if they need only be seen), or 20 (if they need only be touched). Lack of a scribe’s kit (*Dungeon Fantasy Adventurers*, p. 112) gives -5 to cast this spell!

Portable objects (e.g., swords or books) have a limited capacity for holding the spell’s charge. The spell included in the runes may not have a FP cost *greater* than (object HP)/5. Walls, trees, and similar large, solid surfaces ignore this!

Duration: Permanent until dispelled, activated, or 1 day x spellcasting talent has passed.

Cost: Special; see above.

Time to cast: 1 hour + underlying spell’s casting time x 10; treat spells with a casting time of seconds as minutes for this spell.

Prerequisites: Clerical: PI 4. Druidic: PI 2. Wizardly: Magery 3 and the spells intended to be bound into the runes.

New traps means new fun for the whole party!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christopher R. Rice knows it’s a trap, but that’s okay, because he can throw PK at it first; he’ll survive. 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.ravenspennies.com), for more **GURPS** goodies. He’s the coauthor 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,” for being most excellent sounding boards.

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RANDOM THOUGHT TABLE

CAN YOU SPELL THRILLS WITH NO HILL?

BY STEVEN MARSH, *PYRAMID* EDITOR

Every so often I use Random Thought Table to sort out my own feelings on something. So this time, I'm not speaking authoritatively on a topic but more trying to probe around an issue.

THE ISSUE

I've been playing various dungeon-crawl games at conventions in recent years, and I've noticed one aspect that's been common to many of the games I've been part of. (I considered calling it a "problem," but – well – that's what I'm trying to sort out.) Namely, the party goes through the dungeon/crypt/forest/tower/whatever, handling whatever monsters come our way. We meet some slightly tougher than expected encounter, defeat it, and . . .

. . . well, then the GM thanks us all for playing and starts packing up the game. Sure, we might get a brisk denouement – "You return the amulet to the king and are rewarded accordingly" – but the actual climax of such adventures has almost invariably been . . . anticlimactic.

So, how much of a big deal is this, really?

DUDE, WHERE'S MY CRESCENDO?

As someone who normally prefers a narrative style of play, my first inclination is to be bothered by this development. Since I have visions of trying to recreate the Lord of the Rings series – or, really, any other "cinematic" experience – I have a hard time with being denied the satisfaction of a big battle scene.

Or, more correctly, I have a hard time knowing that it is the big battle scene. In hindsight, most of these adventures usually have one encounter that is clearly intended as a bigger-than-normal battle. But sometimes they don't; encounters just bleed into one another, until you clear out the target locale or locate the last part of the Thingamabob of Power.

Part of the trouble is that many games (in the non-roleplaying realm) traditionally have *some* sort of climax. When you're playing *7 Wonders*, you go into it knowing there are three ages; the third age is the last. As the number of cards in your hands dwindles, you know you're getting closer and closer to the finale. Your endgame plan better be in mind as you hit the third age, and you *definitely* need to get your ducks in a row once you're down to four or five cards. Similarly, if you're playing *Monopoly*, you know that the finale is getting near because the number of players who could possibly storm off in disgust has dwindled and the first rays of dawn are breaking through the curtains.

And in most roleplaying games – even those with a more simulationist or game-centered focus – there is still a fair amount of narrative thrust in the design of the scenario. In a sandbox game, the heroes might be trying to amass enough power to take on the Mega-Dragon's Tower. In a mission-based cyberpunk game, the "climax" of the adventure is often when the pieces of the intricate plan fall into place; watching the dominoes fall is its own satisfaction.

THE TROUBLE WITH PINNACLES

That's often *not* the case with dungeon-crawling games. Perhaps the biggest reason for this is an underlying assumption of the genre itself – one I'd never realized until one of the myriad conversations I had with *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game* mastermind Sean Punch.

Sean pointed out that – at their core – dungeon-crawl games are usually about resource management. In other words, you start out the adventure with certain limited quantities of things: HP, arrows, potions, rations, energy points, gold, and so on. You also have more ephemeral limitations like how much weight you can carry, how often you can rely on your Luck, or perhaps how much time you have.

For the dungeon-crawl genre to work, then, the players need to feel this tension between their desires for more success in their adventure and the need to consume limited resources. In fact, the balance of most dungeon-centric games *requires* this dynamic, since otherwise there's nothing to keep the heroes from using their most-powerful attacks every time, or vacuuming up all the treasure (to heck with weight limits)!

Conversely, if the GM is too clear about the narrative direction the adventure is taking, it's too easy to short-circuit this tension. If you are absolutely 100% certain that this encounter with Foober the Fabulous is the last fight of the adventure, you might as well unleash *everything* you've got at him, until he's a pulpy pile of bad-guy bits. There's no need to save what's left, because you can recuperate after a trip to town and a long night's rest.

So, part of the fun of a crypt-crawling tale is having to decide when to use your limited stuff.

THE ELEMENT OF SUPPLIES

Unfortunately, there can be some problems with relying on the players to make their own decisions in this regard.

First, it "rewards" *players* who can more accurately assess when to go for broke and when to hold their assets for a rainy day. Gamers who were looking forward to their moment in the spotlight may suddenly find themselves with their awesome once-a-day ability going totally unused as everyone else is packing up their gaming stuff. This isn't as much of a concern in competitive tabletop games, where that element of when to go for broke is often baked into the strategy. But it's a bit of a blow in a dungeon-fantasy roleplaying game, where players are (presumably) working together toward a common end.

Second, it encourages players who are willing to push the limits at the expense of their comrades. If you know that your allies will save your bacon if you throw everything you've got at any encounter that strikes your fancy, you might be tempted to do exactly that.

As a final consideration, it can greatly throw out of whack the GM's ability to design encounters that are fair and balanced (to the extent that such a thing is desirable). The GM may calculate that the heroes have a good shot at defeating the encounter with the golem-filled room if they use their special limited abilities, only to have it turn into a bloodbath for the good guys because they didn't realize *that* was the moment to use their best attacks and powers. This can be a particularly prickly problem against encounters that can deal a lot of damage all at once: "Hmm. Should Ted the Wizard use his last FP against this furry thing with the spikes on its – oh, never mind; Ted's dead."

On the other hand (which, really, is the first hand), if resource management is a component of the game – which dungeon crawls really assume, at their core – then the ability to tell when an encounter is climactic is an important skill . . . one which many dungeons may depend on. As a classic example – and spoiler alert for a 40-plus-year-old adventure, I guess? – the classic *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* adventure *Tomb of Horrors* has a climactic-feeling battle that specifically is *not* the end of the adventure; it's designed solely as another trap to sap the heroes of their resources (and, hopefully, encourage them to go home before encountering the *real* ultimate threat of the tomb).

So Now What?

As I said at the beginning, normally in this kind of Random Thought Table, I'd tie it all together now, with some conclusions and options you can use. But – really – I'm not quite sure if there's an issue here, or if the imperceptibility of a climactic encounter is just a quirk of the dungeon-crawling genre. So what, then, can we conclude, and how might we address this issue? Well, here are a few possibilities.

- *No Problem!* As noted, that's just the way it is. In the same way there isn't a problem with the lack of a big exciting end scene in taking a walk in the park, there doesn't necessarily need to be a neon-encircled "END BATTLE!" encounter to mark the finale of an adventure.

- *You've Got to Know When to Hold 'Em . . .* One way that can be totally in keeping with the genre is to allow knowledge-based skills to guide the *heroes* into understanding how "climactic" an encounter is likely to be. (In this case, "climactic" is a distillation of "how dangerous is it?") A good resource for making this determination can be found in Christopher R. Rice's *It's a Threat!* system of evaluating monsters' riskiness, from *Pyramid* #3/77: *Combat*. But even a 1-to-10 scale of, "Yeah, this encounter is a 7" would work well to ensure players' expectations are appropriate. Regardless, using any system of this sort would give the smarter heroes their moment in the spotlight.

- *That Was Exciting, Right?* In many adventures, there's an encounter that proves to be a tougher battle than the GM anticipated. If feeling cheeky and able to think on the spot, the GM can certainly retroactively declare *that* encounter was the climax (especially if the GM didn't have anything more exciting planned); if there's a reward or plot element that would have been delivered at the end of the adventure, present it right away, to drive home that it wasn't just random chance that made the scene so much hairier than a run-of-the-mill fight.

- *Different Strokes in Deadly Folks:* It's entirely possible to combine multiple approaches. That is, some adventures have the mustache-twirling obvious bad guy in the climactic battle, and some adventures are more naturalistic, ending once the heroes finish up their objectives regardless of whether there's a "big scene." The anticipation of the fact that there *could* be a big climactic battle (since there's one often enough to be interesting) may keep the heroes on edge. In some ways, this might be the ideal solution; variety is the spice of life, and having multiple approaches to adventures would keep the players constantly alert.

Of course, as I noted from the beginning, it's entirely possible that what I describe here isn't an issue per se. As ever, if you have any thoughts on this – or anything else in our fine pages here – we welcome your comments; see p. 3 for more. Part of *Pyramid* has always been about sorting out interesting ideas, all in pursuit of the best game support we can offer . . . even if, seemingly paradoxically, that *doesn't* always mean the most exciting game.

ABOUT THE EDITOR

Steven Marsh has been the editor of *Pyramid* for almost 20 years. Sometimes his bio is anticlimactic.

ODDS AND ENDS

ADDING A DASH OF DANGER

Are the heroes making mincemeat of the encounter you intended as the big climactic battle (see p. 34)? It's not too late! Consider introducing one of these complications into the fight before the baddies are reduced to pudding.

- *Reinforcements!* Are there any rooms the heroes didn't get to yet that contain adversarial elements willing to join the fight? Now may be a good time to add them to harry the heroes! (If the entire complement of that forthcoming encounter would be too much to include all at once, maybe only a couple of elements join the melee in progress.)

- *Darkness!* Or light . . . whichever. Something happens to radically alter the illumination situation, and now the heroes need to think on their feet as they adjust to not being able to see. (This works especially well if the opposition *can* see or maneuver in darkness.) The *Light and Vision* table

is helpfully on the back of the *Exploits* book of the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game* set, or see *Visibility* on p. 394 of the *GURPS Basic Set* (summarized on pp. B547-548).

- *Quake Me Up Before You Go-Go!* An earthquake or similar tremor gives a minor penalty (-1 to -3) to physical actions for 1d seconds as everyone is disoriented. A more malicious GM might inflict the possibility of random falling rocks (see *Falling Objects* on pp. 67-68 of *Exploits*, or call it 1d dice of damage and hope the heroes get out of the way!).

- *Healings . . . Nothing More Than Healings!* Perhaps the adversary has a healing potion or other quick-heal magical effect to get back up to fighting speed again. If the heroes have been making short work of the threat, this won't do *too* much in the long term – unless the heroes were only effective

because of their own one-shot effects – but it might still make the fight more memorable.

- *Time's a Wastin'!* Something forces the heroes to act more quickly than they might expect. Maybe an errant magical effect disrupts an underground river and the entire subterranean complex is in danger of submersion shortly. (This pairs well with the possibility of earthquakes, above.) Or perhaps some Magical MacGuffin or endangered ally adds an air of time-based tension to the proceedings. Regardless, this is a good option for when the heroes have some cheap-but-effective method of dispatching a threat on a long-enough timeline.

- *Hello, I Must Be Going!* The bad guy decides that discretion is the better part of valor and bravely turns its tail and flees. (Maybe there was a heretofore unknown-to-the-GM escape tunnel?) Presuming it's not instantaneous, this is a variant on the "race against time" – *especially* if the foe has something interesting that it threatens to escape with!

Random Things Found at the Bottom of the Treasure Chest

- A 3" piece of string that seems completely indestructible.
- The initial summons from a monarch the heroes know, addressed to the previous, less-successful (and now-dead) adventuring team assigned to this mission.
 - A hidden panel (leading to an empty compartment). *The panel itself* is part of a long-lost – and presumed to be mythical – magical ship; some divination magic might allow that piece to lead to its whole.
 - A smaller-than-average ferret that apparently doesn't excrete or need to eat or breathe (although it still sleeps).
 - Four pieces of the most delicious dessert ever encountered – apparently nonmagical, yet still fresh.
 - A coin that invariably lands on "heads" until the owner dies or gives it away . . . at which point it invariably lands on "tails" until the *next* owner dies or gives it away (and so on).

Yet while dungeon crawls gleefully knife realism and leave it to twitch . . . it's customary to track consumables such as arrows, healing potions, and torches – and traditional to cut corners to afford the weapons and tools your skills require. It's fun to pull off coups in resource management.

– *Dungeon Fantasy Adventurers*

ABOUT GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of **GURPS** players. We can be reached by email: info@sjgames.com. Our address is SJ Games, P.O. Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Resources include:

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Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Errata pages for **GURPS** releases are available at sjgames.com/errata/gurps.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition**. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

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