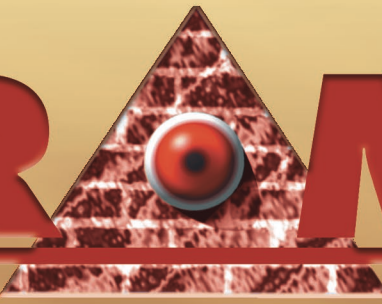


# PYRAMID<sup>®</sup>



Issue 3/115 May '18

## TECHNOMANCER



### REVISED TEMPLATES

Kelly Pedersen & David L. Pulver

### MERLIN DECLASSIFIED

David L. Pulver

### TECHNOMANCER NEEDS HUNTERS!

Kelly Pedersen

### EL PASO VICE

Paul Stefko

# 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

### COVER ART

Abrar Ajmal

*New Printings, Like Magic!* For just over a year, we've been bringing classic GURPS books back into print with our On Demand program. One of the items that we revived recently was **GURPS Technomancer**. Of course, a PDF has been available for years, but if you'd love to have a physical copy – especially now that there's a snazzy support issue of *Pyramid* – check out what we have to offer at [sjgames.com/gurps/ondemand](http://sjgames.com/gurps/ondemand).

# IN THIS ISSUE

When a great game setting comes along, it can be like magic. And when a *magical* setting comes along . . . well, that's pretty great. This issue of *Pyramid* has at its beating heart the joys of **GURPS Technomancer**, the modern-day magical setting where just about anything can happen – and twice before breakfast!

Not all the supernatural creatures of Merlin have its citizens' best interests at heart. That's why *Technomancer Needs Hunters!* Learn from Kelly Pedersen – long-time *Pyramid* contributor and **GURPS** playtester – how to combine the **GURPS Monster Hunters** series with **Technomancer**. Get suggestions for **Monster Hunters/Technomancer** hybrid campaigns, three new motivational lenses, tips for adapting **Monster Hunters** champions to the **Technomancer** world, and details on using wildcard skills with **GURPS Magic** spells. You'll also find two weapons and two monsters updated to **GURPS Fourth Edition** stats.

Slide across the hood of a mana-powered hotrod while your kicking theme song wails, and get into 1980s magical-cop-show excitement with *El Paso Vice*. Frequent *Pyramid* contributor Paul Stefko adds magic to the **GURPS Action** series, then brings it all together for use in the **Technomancer** world with new *magical* hero lenses (one for each **Action** template), three new spells, a new magical style, and recommendations for what rules to use to bring the wizardly weirdness to life. Then gear up with special paranormal equipment – including stats for tactical flying carpets – and jump into the action with specific campaign ideas.

David L. Pulver – author of **GURPS Technomancer** – expands the titular world in this month's meaty installment of *Eidetic Memory*. *Merlin Declassified* provides overviews of assorted companies that have combined magic and web-based technology. It furnishes additional historical details, including information on a natural Powerstone, the current state of weapons of mass destruction, and the unintended consequences of one desperate pharmaceutical company. It also offers 10 new spells and suggestions for golem armor.

As long as we're conjuring up Fourth Edition fun, Kelly Pedersen and David L. Pulver join forces to give you updated stats for many of the creature and character options presented in **Technomancer** with *Revised Templates, Come Fourth!* Unleash the power of chimeras, half-breeds, demons, and other supernatural entities.

This issue's Random Thought Table looks at a fundamental assumption of the **Technomancer** setting, what it has in common with other game worlds, and what can be unlocked with that lore to unleash new kinds of excitement . . . in the **Technomancer** world or other settings.

Whether you're a longtime fan of **Technomancer**, a neophyte looking to visit, or a thaumaturgic tinkerer seeking new elements to add to your own **GURPS** game, there's never been a better time to visit a world that's out of this world.

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# FROM THE EDITOR

## EXPERIMENTAL MAGIC

When is an update not an update?

This issue is an interesting experiment for *Pyramid* . . . and, to a certain extent, *GURPS*. Longtime fans of the *GURPS* line know that we have done conversion supplements in the past, designed to bring a *GURPS Third Edition* setting or genre up to Fourth Edition. Perhaps the quintessential example of this is *Transhuman Space: Changing Times*, which did the essential work of updating the core elements of that universe while extending it forward and leaving the door open to future supplements. What *Changing Times* did for the *Transhuman Space* setting, *GURPS Reign of Steel: Will to Live* did for the *GURPS Reign of Steel*. With those *Reign of Steel*-branded items, you have all you need to join the battle against our robot overlords.

But *GURPS* has continued to evolve, and the “state of the art” for the system has moved forward even as our commitment to the Fourth Edition has remained strong. So when I received a couple of articles that independently tied the *GURPS Technomancer* universe to *GURPS Action* and *GURPS Monster Hunters*, I was intrigued. Could we do a quasi-update to the setting, right here in the pages of *Pyramid*, and rely on *Action* and *Monster Hunters* to do the heavy lifting of what that world would need to be updated to Fourth Edition?

Well, we certainly tried.

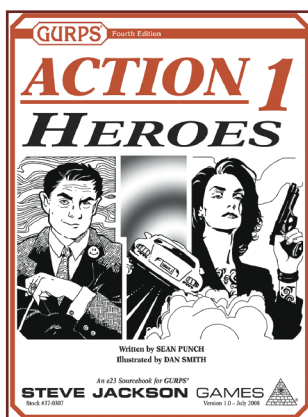
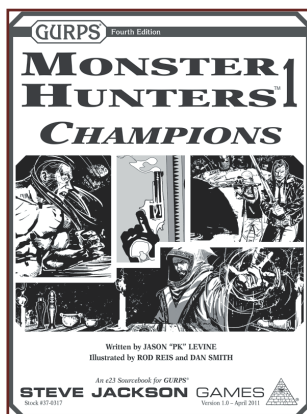
Here, then, is an issue that’s perfect for fans of *Technomancer*. The issue attempts to doing something different to help bring this setting to life in Fourth Edition, but the articles have

also been devised to allow those who aren’t fans of the setting to get something out of the experience. Discover magical lenses to add to an *Action* campaign (pp. 11-18), an assortment of new creature templates that can be dropped into various campaigns (pp. 30-34), or a couple of converted monsters (pp. 9-10) that should work great as adversaries for a *Monster Hunters* campaign.

We hope you’ll enjoy this visit to the *Technomancer* setting. If it’s your first time visiting, thanks for stopping by! And if you’ve been here before, welcome back for more *GURPS* newness – and go Fourth for adventure!

## CELEBRATE GOOD TIMES WITH GURPS!

As a final item of note, I usually try to keep these intros as “timeless” as I can, but this is too good to pass up. If you’re reading this sometime in May 2018, we’re making a Twenty Years of *GURPS* Bundle available for the rest of May at Warehouse 23. It celebrates two decades of *GURPS Lite* with a bundle of PDFs that span those 20 years. It’s over 75% off cover price, too! Get it at [warehouse23.com/products/SJG4918](http://warehouse23.com/products/SJG4918).



## WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW

So what did you think of our experiment? Should we do something similar for other worlds? Do you want more *Technomancer*? Or is there another lesson we should be learning? Let us know publicly at [forums.sjgames.com](http://forums.sjgames.com), or privately via email at [pyramid@sjgames.com](mailto:pyramid@sjgames.com).



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# TECHNOMANCER NEEDS HUNTERS!

BY KELLY PEDERSEN

The world of *GURPS Technomancer* has seen many benefits from the magic that suddenly appeared in 1945: healing spells cure wounds and diseases, technological magic allows sapient computers, and affordable enchantments bring the wonders of the arcane to the common person. But magic has its dark sides. Vampiric leukemia causes its victims to waste away in agony – and then rise to prey on their friends. Botched spells, accidents at mana-active nuclear plants, and deliberate invocations summon demons. And “black” government programs have made terrible mistakes, creating creatures like rogue dragons and the dreadful atomic lichs. *Technomancer*, in short, is a world with monsters. And a world with monsters needs people willing to *hunt* those monsters.

This is where the brave souls of *GURPS Monster Hunters* come in. Merlin offers an intriguing alternative to the standard *Monster Hunters* campaign. Magic and supernatural creatures are openly known here, meaning that the champions can be a lot more open about their activities – no skulking about after a successful mission, trying to avoid police questioning. And it can feel pretty cool to be an open member of an official monster-hunting organization. How many people can put “Special Agent in Charge, FBI Anti-Vampire Task Force” on their business cards?

Besides the refreshing openness, the setting also offers some nice toys for hunters to play with. Assault rifles enhanced with magical scopes that sense the undead through walls are just the tip of the iceberg. Depleted necronium bullets, mana disruptors, and ghost-dynamic lasers (*GURPS Technomancer*, p. 46) are all welcome additions to the team’s arsenal. Combined with the lack of secrecy, you can really go all-out on the cinematic action scenes, charging down Main Street in your levitating ghost-breaking van firing anti-spectral lasers at giant shades!

Several dramatic opportunities become available when the hunters are operating openly. If the group is part of an official government organization, politics and ambition on the parts of their superiors can make their missions more difficult. Private operations might have to deal with public scrutiny, red tape, or competing firms. And while the heroes might enjoy seeing themselves hailed in the news, they’ll probably regret giving all those interviews when the next batch of monsters takes notes.

## MERLIN

“Merlin-1” is the name given to the world of *GURPS Technomancer* by the Infinity Patrol of *GURPS Infinite Worlds*. Its inhabitants don’t refer to their world by this name; they just call it “Earth.” For a capsule description of Merlin-1, see *GURPS Infinite Worlds*, pp. 134-135.

### Technology Level

The *Technomancer* world is TL(7+1)^ with magic serving as a way of enabling superscience, but otherwise closely paralleling Earth’s technology. Magic does not *replace* TL7 and TL8 technology, but interacts with or enhances it.

## HOW TO HUNT

Since people know monsters are real, keeping their existence quiet is obviously unnecessary. For some groups, operating openly is part of the charm of *Monster Hunters* on Merlin! There are still good reasons to maintain *tactical* secrecy, however. Hunters might not be acting strictly legally – if you don’t have official backing, attacking creatures in broad daylight can get you charged with endangering the public, unlawful discharge of firearms, or desecrating

corpses. Even government-sponsored champions have reasons to keep quiet. While the fact that monsters are real might not set off a panic, learning a pack of them are preying on locals certainly can. And many creatures are smart enough to use information the hunters release against the team. A group that finds itself ambushed by vampires after openly advertising their whereabouts is going to be more cautious in the future.

## BACKUP

The availability of backup is the other change from the standard *Monster Hunters* style. In a more typical campaign, it's a rare or nonexistent luxury. On Merlin, you can call the police about vampires, and not only will they not laugh at you or report you to the local mental hospital, they'll show up armed with stakes and garlic. Of course, this can get out of hand. The hunters should do a good bit of the hunting themselves, rather than just calling the cavalry when things get a little tough. Several tricks can curtail backup without eliminating it.

Perhaps the backup is unhelpful. If the local police department is armed for weak vampires, they'll just be in the way when dealing with a major demon. Conversely, any help the team contacts could be overzealous, ready to inflict excessive collateral damage. Organizations can be subverted by the forces of darkness, making calling them in risky or downright detrimental. The heroes may *be* the backup, the ones sent in to deal with problems that regular forces can't handle. Finally, the campaign can visit, or be entirely set, in a region where no help is plausible – if the champions are trying to prevent monsters from preying on war-torn Somalia or Kosovo, they probably can't call on anyone besides themselves.

## THAT TECHNOMANCER MAGIC

The Technomancer setting is intimately tied to the standard *GURPS* spell magic system, as outlined in pp. B234-253 and *GURPS Magic*. The Ritual Path magic system of *Monster Hunters* needs to be replaced with the standard magic system to fit properly. See *The Hunters* (pp. 6-8) for how to adapt the *Monster Hunters* templates because of the magic change, but adventure parameters need some tweaking too.

Standard magic is typically quicker to unleash. Casters can produce effects in only seconds that would take their ritualist counterparts minutes or hours. The GM should expect spells to be used, and frequently. The counter to this is that casting magic in the standard system also has a higher personal cost – spending FP is not usually optional! Mages can quickly deplete their reserves. If fights happen without time to rest between them, a wise wizard will be a lot more parsimonious with the magic. However, if a champion has invested in wildcard College! skills (which the Witch template automatically does), they have the option of spending bonus points to produce energy for a single spell (see *Wildcard Wizardry*, p. 7), so the GM should prepare for a couple of super-charged spells every session.

The other major distinction between the systems is that Ritual Path magic is typically more flexible – casters can (theoretically) create any effects they have the Path skills for. Standard spells magic is much more limited, to just the list the mage knows. Witches (and sages with the right template choices) evade this restriction with wildcard College! skills (p. 7). But characters without that extra versatility will be restricted to the spells they've learned.

When dealing with intelligent foes, don't be afraid to have countermeasures in place occasionally. If the team includes a gunbunny, the master vampire should invest in Missile Shield.

Of course, don't shut down the champions' cool tricks at every turn; otherwise the players will rightfully complain. Be sure that some but not *all* of a hero's abilities are countered, or alternate foes who are immune with those who are vulnerable. And let people counter the countermeasures, too – if a vampire master has Missile Shield, a witch casting Dispel Magic ruins his day, and gives both the witch *and* his gun-toting companion a chance to shine.

## UPDATED WEAPONS

For a description of the manpack necrolaser, see *Technomancer*, p. 46. For information on the Dragonfang “machine pistol,” see *Technomancer*, p. 79.

### Weapons Table

Terms and notation are as defined on pp. B268-271.

TL	Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	RoF	Shots	ST	Bulk	Rcl	Cost	LC
7+1 <sup>^</sup>	Manpack Necrolaser	2(∞) tox*	12+2	550/1,650	20/4p	3	75(3)	10†	-8	1	\$120,000	1

\* Manpack necrolasers inflict 2 points of toxic damage, ignoring DR with the exception of ectoweave or depleted necronium armor.

TL	Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	RoF	Shots	ST	Bulk	Rcl	Cost	LC
7+1	Barrett Dragonfang*, .50 Browning	9d+2 pi+	3	1,100/4,250	30/10	10	30+1(3)	19	-4	3	\$1,250	2

\* A civilian semi-automatic model, the Dragonfang SP, has identical statistics with the exception that it is Wt. 23/3.3, Shots 10+1(3), RoF 3, LC3.

# THE HUNTERS

*Monster Hunters* templates need some adjusting to fit into the *Technomancer* setting. Additionally, the world has a larger variety of nonhumans for players to choose from.

## MORE MOTIVATIONS

The following lenses are appropriate for hunters in the *Technomancer* setting. Medical professional and researcher could be used in standard campaigns as well.

### Medical Professional

10 points

In *Technomancer*, many monster problems are actually public health issues – vampirism is an infectious disease, for instance, as are some forms of zombies. You're one of the people devoted to stopping these plagues. Your focus is on infectious creatures, but anyone being hurt requires a medical response. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, after all!

**Advantages:** 15 points chosen from among Per +1 or +2 [5/level], Contact Group (Hospital, health department, etc.; Skill-12, 15, or 18; 9 or less; Somewhat Reliable) [5, 10, or 15], Contacts (Doctor, public health official, etc.; Skill-12, 15, or 18; 12 or less; Usually Reliable) [4, 8, or 12], Healer 1 [10], Patron (Local health organization; Fairly powerful organization; 9 or less) or (National health organization; Very powerful organization; 6 or less) [10], or Resistant to Disease (+3) or (+8) [3 or 5]. • Add any traits not chosen here to your template's advantage options.

**Disadvantages:** One of Duty (12 or less; Extremely Hazardous) [-15], Enemies (Monster of the week; 9 or less; Unknown) [-15], Fanaticism (The Mission) [-15], Obsession (Collect specimens, below) [-15\*], or Sense of Duty (Humanity) [-15]. • Add Code of Honor (Professional) [-5] and Pacifism (Cannot Harm Innocents) [-10] to your template's disadvantage options.

## WHY ELSE DO WE FIGHT?

• Obsession (Collect specimens) [-15] (multiplied for self-control number; see p. B120) is for champions whose main purpose in monster fighting is scientific. You want to get specimens of any new monster – live is best, followed by an intact corpse, then tissue samples. You'll try to avoid means of attack that leave bodies unstudyable, such as fire or acid. Once you've got a few useful samples of a given species, you can ease off (the GM will apply a bonus to self-control rolls), though you never *object* to getting another live specimen. If you run across a variant creature, your obsession returns in full force! Add this disadvantage as an option for the operative lens.

• Sense of Duty (Peaceful nonhumans) [-15] works much like Sense of Duty (Humanity). Creatures that are naturally compelled to feed on other sapient beings never count as "peaceful!"

**Skills:** Diagnosis (H) IQ-1 [2] and Expert Skill (Epidemiology) (H) IQ-1 [2]. • Three of NBC Suit (A) DX [2]; First Aid (E) IQ+1 [2]; Electronics Operation (Medical), Hazardous Materials (Biological or Magical), or Research, all (A) IQ [2]; Pharmacy (Synthetic), Physician, or Poisons, all (H) IQ-1 [2]; Surgery (VH) IQ-2 [2]; Esoteric Medicine (H) Per-1 [2]; or spend 2 points to raise either Diagnosis or Expert Skill (Epidemiology) or any of the optional skills by one level.

\* Multiplied for self-control number; see p. B120.

For descriptions of several mainstream activist groups, see *GURPS Technomancer*, p. 115.

### Nonhuman Rights Activist

15 points

You're an advocate for the rights and reputation of the non-human races who *aren't* monsters. Since creatures running about eating people give the beings you're worried about a bad name, you've taken it on yourself to eliminate the public-relations problem. If you're a nonhuman yourself, your activities also show the world that your people are on the good side.

**Advantages:** You may purchase a racial template for a chimera or half-breed (see pp. 30-32). If this exceeds 20 points, spend optional advantage points from your template to make up the difference. If it is less than 20 points or if you don't purchase a racial template, spend the remaining points on traits chosen from among Charisma 1-4 [5/level], Claim to Hospitality (Fellow activists) [5], Contact Group (Activist group, nonhumans of a region, politicians of a region, etc.; Skill-12, 15, or 18; 9 or less; Somewhat Reliable) [5, 10, or 15], Contacts (Atoning monster, civil rights lawyer, etc.; Skill-12, 15, or 18; 9 or less or 12 or less; Usually Reliable) [2, 4, 6, 8, or 12], or Reputation +2 or +3 (As strong lobbyist for nonhuman rights; Nonhumans and civil rights activists; All the time) [5 or 7]. • Add any traits not chosen here to your template's advantage options.

**Disadvantages:** Either Fanaticism (The Mission) [-15] or Sense of Duty (Peaceful nonhumans, above) [-15].

**Skills:** Politics and Propaganda, both (A) IQ [2]. • Three of Current Affairs (People or Politics) or Savoir-Faire (High Society), both (E) IQ+1 [2]; Administration or Public Speaking, both (A) IQ [2]; Diplomacy or Law (Civil Rights of your nation), both (H) IQ-1 [2]; or spend 2 points to raise Politics, Propaganda, or any of the optional skills by one level.

## Researcher

15 points

You don't necessarily want to destroy monsters; you want to *study* them! Unfortunately, few creatures are very cooperative when it comes to letting you poke and prod them.

**Advantages:** 15 points chosen from among Contact Group (Corporation, university, government research agency, etc.; Skill-12, 15, or 18; 9 or less; Somewhat Reliable) [5, 10, or 15], Contacts (Magical theorist, monster biology specialist, monster sample purchaser, etc.; Skill-12, 15, or 18; 9 or less; Somewhat Reliable) [1, 2, or 3], Lightning Calculator [2], Natural Scientist 1 [10], or Tenure [5]. • Add any traits not chosen here to your template's advantage options.

**Disadvantages:** One of Duty (12 or less; Extremely Hazardous) [-15], Enemies (Monster of the week; 9 or less; Unknown) [-15], Fanaticism (The Mission) [-15], Greed (12) [-15], Obsession (Collect specimens, p. 6) (12) [-15], or Sense of Duty (Humanity) [-15]. • Add Callous [-5], Code of Honor (Professional) [-5], and Curious [-5\*] to your template's disadvantage options.

**Skills:** Current Affairs (Science & Technology) (E) IQ [1], Hazardous Materials (Biological) IQ [2], and Hazardous Materials (Magical) (A) IQ [2]. • Five of NBC Suit (A) DX [2]; Electronics Operation (Scientific) (A) IQ [2]; Bioengineering (Genetic Engineering or Tissue Engineering), Chemistry, Mathematics (Statistics), Paleontology (Paleoanthropology, Paleobotany, or Paleozoology), Physiology (Human or a specific nonhuman race), Psychology (Experimental), or Pharmacy (Synthetic), all (H) IQ-1 [2]; Biology, Surgery, or Weird Science, all (VH) IQ-2 [2]; or spend 2 points to raise a Hazardous Materials specialty or any of the optional skills by one level, or 6 points to raise them by two levels.

## TECHNOMANCER CHAMPION TEMPLATES

The character templates in *Monster Hunters* need some adjustments to fit into the setting.

### Magery Options

For all templates *except* the sage and witch, the following should be added to their list of optional advantages: Magery 0 [5]; Magery 1 [15] or Magery 1 (One College Only, -40%) [11], and 5 or 10 points in spells appropriate to the role.

Note that Magery in the Technomancer setting does add its level to Thaumatology skill and to spells (except wildcard College! skills).

### Specific Templates

The *crusader* and *psi* templates both depend on supernatural forces that aren't magic, which is out of theme. Removing them is simplest, but the GM who wants to keep

## WILDCARD WIZARDRY

One of the key features of the witch template in *Monster Hunters* is its flexibility. With all the Path skills, a witch can try any ritual. Duplicating this omnicompetence with the standard spell magic system is not easy. A point in every spell in the game would be prohibitively expensive, and even a wide selection would be very costly, and tedious to choose during character creation to boot.

### Wildcard College! Skills

Fortunately, *GURPS* already has a solution to this dilemma: wildcard College! skills, first described in *GURPS Magic*, p. 202, and greatly expanded in *GURPS Power-Ups 7: Wildcard Skills*, p. 16. Each college of the standard magic system is represented by a College! skill: Air College!, Technological College!, Weather College!, and so on. In *Technomancer*, cast a spell by rolling against the relevant wildcard skill at a penalty equal to half the prerequisite count. Magery *never* adds to College! skill levels, but it still serves as a prerequisite for casting specific spells (a caster with Magery 2 and Healing College! couldn't cast Instant Regeneration, since that has a Magery 3 prerequisite). Magery also has its usual effect on maximum energy for Missile spells and on other limits in *Magery and Effect* (p. B237).

In a *Monster Hunters* game, College! skills also provide bonuses similar to those of other wildcard skills (*Hyper-Competency*, *GURPS Monster Hunters 1: Champions*, pp. 28-29). Every 12 points in a College! skill gives one free point per session that can be spent to guarantee success on rolls for the College! skill. These points can also be exchanged for energy to power a single potent spell. Each point spent this way gives 25 FP.

The GM is free to specify spells that are not covered by the wildcard, such as new ones or ones that are secret in the setting. However, a few chances to see such effects in action may give wildcard casters the opportunity to add them to their repertoire.

### Wildcard Wizard

5, 10, or 15 points

In the *Technomancer* setting, buying College! skills requires a specific type of Unusual Background, Wildcard Wizard. This costs 5 points to access a single College! skill, 10 points to access two to four related colleges (Air, Earth, Fire, and Water, for example, or Illusion and Creation, Light and Darkness, and Sound), and 15 points if you can buy *every* College! skill.

these options has a few choices. They can be left in, as is. This introduces new types of powers to Merlin and should be exceptional. Add a 10-point Unusual Background to the required advantages and reduce the optional advantage points to compensate. Another option is to make crusaders and psis actually magic users, just in a very different way from traditional spellcasters. Exchange the Mysticism and Psionic power modifiers for the Magical, -10% limitation.

## Everyone Knows The Enemy

In the *Technomancer* setting, lore of vampires, demons, cryptids, and other things that go bump in the night isn't necessarily *Hidden Lore*. The general public knows all these things exist, and useful knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses is generally available. Therefore, the skills in *Know Thy Enemy* (*GURPS Monster Hunters 1: Champions*, p. 16) need some adjustment. The Hidden Lore skills should be replaced by Expert Skills that cover a wider variety of creatures. Cryptids and parasites (and lycanthropes, if introduced) are covered by Expert Skill (Magically Transformed Lifeforms). Demons, free-willed spirits, and ghosts are covered by Expert Skill (Spiritual Beings). Mummies, vampires, and zombies are covered by Expert Skill (Undead). Rogue psis don't exist, while understanding rogue witches requires no Hidden Lore. Outcast angels are not *known* to exist – if the GM decides to include them anyway, their Hidden Lore skill is still appropriate.

Since these are the same values, the point cost of powers won't change, just their behavior. They lose the limitations imposed by the original modifier, but become subject to mana levels and vulnerable to anti-magic effects. The most complicated option is to combine both the original power modifiers and the Magical limitation. This requires repricing the abilities, and they become subject to all the limitations of both modifiers. For Mysticism, the new modifier value becomes -20%, while for Psionic, it becomes -15%.

The *experiment* template is relatively unchanged. However, the abilities stem from magical experimentation whether in whole or combined with advanced biotech. This doesn't change their mechanical effects or the Bioenhancement modifier (while the abilities were *applied* with magic, they don't rely on mana to function), but it does adjust the flavor a little. In particular, the Unusual Biochemistry disadvantage applies to magical elixirs and potions as well as drugs, with the same chance of shutting down abilities.

The *inhuman* template should remove option 7 of its "subject matter expert" packages. If that person wants to be a minor spellcaster, choose from the Magery options outlined above. Appropriate monster templates on Merlin include demons, demonspawn, vampires, and dhampirs. The GM can permit outcast angels or lycanthropes if he wants to introduce those creatures to the setting. The changeling, ghost, mummy, and seelie from *Inhuman Options* in *Pyramid* #3/45: *Monsters*, pp. 4-7, are also appropriate, though the changeling and seelie will suggest some answers to one of the mysteries of *Technomancer*, the nature of fairies. All inhuman templates except the demonspawn, dhampir, and lycanthrope should have Dependency (Mana; Constantly) [-25] added to their racial disadvantages, and 25 points worth of attributes or advantages added to the template to compensate.

Remove all traits on the *techie* template that apply to psychotronics or psionics (unless the GM is adding them to the *Technomancer* setting). In addition to the general Magery options (above), include Magery 2 (Technological College Only, -40%) [17] in the advantage options.

Reduce the *sage's* Magery to 2 and remove Ritual Mastery from the advantage options. Add the 10 points gained to the first set of advantage options, changing it from 20 to 30 points. To this set of options, add the following: Energy Reserve 1-5

[3/level], Magery 3 [10] or Magery 3 or 4 (Knowledge College Only, -40%) [6 or 12], and Wildcard Wizard (p. 7) (One College) [5] or Wildcard Wizard (Related set of colleges) [10]. In the primary skills section, increase Thaumatology to IQ+1 [4]-17, remove the Path skills, and instead spend the 21 points on spells, which are (H) IQ [1]-16, (H) IQ+1 [2]-17, (VH) IQ-1 [1]-15, or (VH) IQ [2]-16 (all include +2 from Magery). If the sage takes one of the Wildcard Wizard options, that person may also purchase wild-card College! skills (see p. 7), at IQ-2 [6]-14 or IQ-1 [12]-15, with the points reserved for spells.

The *witch* template changes as follows. Reduce Magery to 3, remove the Ritual Adept advantage, and remove Ritual Mastery from the optional advantages. Add Wildcard Wizard (All Colleges) [15] to the required advantages. Add 30 points, for a total of 50, to the first set of advantage options. Change the Magery option to Magery 4 [10], and add Energy Reserve 1-10 [3/level]. In primary skills, change Thaumatology to IQ+4 [12]-20 and remove the Path skills, replacing them with the following: Choose two wildcard College! skills at IQ-1 [12]-15, choose two more at IQ-2 [6]-14, and choose four more at IQ-3 [3]-13, or exchange any or all of the last four College! options for regular spells, which are (H) IQ+1 [1]-17, (H) IQ [2]-18, (VH) IQ [1]-16, or (VH) IQ-1 [2]-17 (all include +3 from Magery).

## NONHUMAN HUNTERS

*Technomancer* has a number of nonhuman races who aren't "monsters" in the setting, and whose templates aren't costly enough to make good inhuman racial templates anyway. Playing a champion like this is a different play experience from the typical inhuman character. Being an inhuman defines you as a champion, whereas being a half-coyote is an adjunct to whatever your role is. Inhumans usually have some element of atonement to them, even if that's not their primary motivation, and they all have to deal with society's perception of them as monsters. The nonhuman races, however, aren't seen as horrible creatures, just weird. Cat people might have to deal with stereotypical assumptions from the man on the street, but they can openly walk into a restaurant or church without being greeted with screams.

*GURPS Fourth Edition* statistics for the chimeras and "half-breeds" that emerged in Trinity's Shadow are presented on pp. 30-32. Since most of these racial templates are modestly priced, it's easy to add them to the champion templates in *Monster Hunters 1*. Simply treat them as additional advantage or disadvantage options, depending on whether racial cost is positive or negative. The nonhuman rights activist background lens (p. 6) lets a player spend lens points as well. The GM may work with the player to remove advantages that the racial template makes redundant. For example, a spider-person commando could reduce ST because the racial template provides Lifting ST.



# THE HUNTED

Most monsters from *GURPS Monster Hunters 3: The Enemy* can be used in a Merlin-based campaign. Zombies work for necromantic zombies (*GURPS Technomancer*, p. 56), and chupacabras (*Technomancer*, p. 65) are known to haunt Mexico and the American Southwest. Humanity is still a threat – members of organizations like the Brothers of the Morning Star or the Condor Group (*Technomancer*, pp. 118-119) make excellent cultists and rogue witches.

*GURPS Fourth Edition* racial templates for other monsters, plus chimeras and halflings, can be found on pp. 30-34.

## MONSTERS OF MERLIN

Use the descriptions from *Technomancer* of creatures' creation, lifestyles, motivations, etc., with the statistics from *Monster Hunters*. Threats tougher than those described in *Technomancer* can be justified as "advanced," magically empowered, or just-plain-mean versions. Other monsters from Merlin need a bit more work and some may require an upgrade to challenge a team of hunters, but well reward the effort. What party of heroes would pass up the chance to fight dragons (*Technomancer*, pp. 57-59), chonchons (flying vampiric heads, *Technomancer*, pp. 55-56), or the mysterious and sinister seelie (*Technomancer*, p. 66)?

When using other beasts from *Monster Hunters* sources, give them some *Technomancer* twist. Creatures that need magic to exist should have Dependency (Mana; Constantly), making them vulnerable to magic-dead areas and anti-magic technology. But go beyond that! Intelligent monsters can use magi-tech devices just as well as people can. A master vampire with a ghost-dynamic laser grid in its lair is both an interesting challenge *and* one that feels unique to Merlin. "Pure" magic should be used heavily by smart villains, too. *GURPS Magic* provides lots of options for spells for the champions' foes to use against them, both subtle and very, very overt.

### Atomic Lich

An atomic lich appears as a human skeleton, charred by flame, that emits a faint glow in the dark. It is dangerously radioactive to anyone nearby.

The stats below represent a potent foe, one who has survived for a long time gathering magical power and minions. It should be a tough fight for any group, or a suicidal one for an unprepared band of hunters.

For more details on the creation and nature of atomic liches, see *GURPS Technomancer*, pp. 54-55.

<b>ST:</b> 18	<b>HP:</b> 26	<b>Speed:</b> 7.50
<b>DX:</b> 14	<b>Will:</b> 14	<b>Move:</b> 7
<b>IQ:</b> 16	<b>Per:</b> 14	<b>Weight:</b> 50-100 lbs.
<b>HT:</b> 16	<b>FP:</b> N/A*	<b>SM:</b> 0

**Dodge:** 11      **Parry:** 13      **DR:** 6 (Hardened 1)

**Fright Check:** -6

**Atomic Fist (14):** 1d+4 crushing + 1d-2(10) burning rad; Reach C. Made as a Deceptive Attack (-2 to defend against).

**Breathe Radiation (20 to cast, 14 to attack):** 20 rads; Reach C-2, +1 to reach for every energy spent. Made as a Deceptive Attack (-2 to defend against). Can't be parried, only dodged or blocked, and a shield must be lead-lined or otherwise radiation-resistant to block.

**Radiation Aura:** 4 rads, -1 rad per yard from the lich. Automatically effects everyone within 4 yards, no active defense possible.

**Spells:** At least 30 spells, half of which should be from the Necromantic college or the Radiation subcollege. Necromantic and Radiation spells are known at skill level 21, or 20 if Very Hard. Other spells are known at 17, or 16 for Very Hard.

**Traits:** Appearance (Monstrous); Combat Reflexes; Dependency (Mana; Very Common); Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; Energy Reserve 30; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Immunity to Radiation; Indomitable; Injury Tolerance (Damage Reduction 2; No Blood; No Vitals; Unliving); Magery 3 + Magery 2 (Necromantic and Radiation Spells Only); Supernatural Features (Body Temperature 120°F†; Glows in the Dark‡); Unhealing (Partial)‡.

**Skills:** Innate Attack (Breath)-18; Intelligence Analysis-15; Intimidation-18; Karate-18; Tactics-16; Wrestling-16.

• Atomic liches have a wide range of other skills. The original batch were volunteers in a CIA program and have skills appropriate for a highly trained intelligence agent.

**Notes:** Affected by True Faith and Necromantic spells that affect undead. Cannot use holy items. Neither has nor uses FP, but can burn HP for extra effort. Sterile.

\* Has 30 points of energy to spend on spells.

† Together, these traits give +4 to determine the lich's true nature (or +6 when using a thermographic camera or other heat sensor) and -4 to reactions when discovered.

‡ Can heal only in a radioactive environment (at least 10 rads/hour) or with magic such as Steal Vitality.

### Danger! Highly Radioactive

Radiation is a common threat on Merlin. Atomic liches leak it, NEMA reactors go critical and release both demons *and* fallout, necronium dust escapes from the ghost bomb the techie is building . . . The GM should be familiar with the rules for radiation (p. B435). *GURPS Disasters: Meltdown and Fallout* offers more rules and ideas. Another option, which greatly simplifies the rules for radiation exposure and is more cinematically friendly for long-term recovery, are the rules for radiation found in *GURPS After the End 1: Wastelanders* (Radiation Threshold Points, p. 24), and *GURPS After the End 2: The New World* (Radiation, p. 25). Anyone who dies of radiation must roll at Will-3. If they succeed, they rise again as a toxic zombie – on a critical success, a vampire.

## Don't Forget to Research!

Monsters being common knowledge can lead to complacency. "Oh, a vampire; everyone knows the drill," a team member might say. "Grab the stakes and the garlic." This attitude should come back to bite them, perhaps literally. Just because general information about a type of creature is available doesn't mean the specifics of this *particular* threat will match up perfectly. Numerous variations on monsters can exist, justified by magical mutation, previously unknown variants, or just normal adaptation. Feel free to introduce totally new monsters! Lycanthropes don't currently exist on Merlin, so it will be a surprise when the champions run across one – up until they can track it down to a contaminated batch of Transformation elixirs sold by a shady bio-magical firm.

## Killer Penguin

*Tekeli-li!*

– *Cry of the Magickal Killer Penguins*, Kenneth Hite,  
**Suppressed Transmission: The First Broadcast**

A killer penguin looks much like a regular penguin, albeit an unusually large one (5' high). Close examination reveals crude digits on its flippers. For further details, see **GURPS Technomancer**, pp. 65-66.

Killer penguins aren't that dangerous individually; a hunter is usually a match for two or three. The problem is, they're rarely found without company. Most have a group of other penguins nearby, and any discovered within 1,000 miles of the Antarctic coastline have the support of the full Penguin Collective. In those circumstances, equal numbers of penguins and hunters present good odds . . . for the penguins.

<b>ST:</b> 11	<b>HP:</b> 12	<b>Speed:</b> 5.25
<b>DX:</b> 10	<b>Will:</b> 11	<b>Move:</b> 2 (6 in water)
<b>IQ:</b> 9	<b>Per:</b> 10	<b>Weight:</b> 40-75 lbs.
<b>HT:</b> 11	<b>FP:</b> 10	<b>SM:</b> 0
<b>Dodge:</b> 8	<b>Parry:</b> 9	<b>DR:</b> 1 (Tough Skin)

**Fright Check:** +2

**Assault Rifle (13):** Inflicts 5d piercing. See **GURPS Monster Hunters 1**, p. 62, for full stats.

**Beak Strike (12):** 1d-1 large piercing. Reach C.

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

**Shapeshift Others (Killer Penguin) (12):** About 1% of penguins know this spell. Roll a Quick Contest between the highest Will among nearby penguins and the victim's Will; if the penguins win, the subject is forced to join the group mind. If within range of the Penguin Collective, the Quick Contest is instead made against the Collective's Will of 18, and it must be repeated every hour. Once joined with the group, all the target's knowledge is immediately shared. The victim can be freed only by taking them at least

100 miles from the nearest penguin group and out of the Collective's range. They'll still be in the form of a penguin, though; that must be dealt with separately.

**Spells:** A typical killer penguin knows three or four spells, usually from the Air, Water, or Weather colleges. Each tends to specialize; those operating in a group rely on others to cover what they lack. If they have time, they will always cast spells ceremonially, using the whole group's energy.

**Traits:** Amphibious; Bad Grip 1; Dependency (Mana; Constantly); Disturbing Voice; Fanaticism (Penguin Collective); Magery 1; Modular Abilities (Mental Uploading, 1 slot, up to 8 points; Only when within range of the Collective); Sharp Beak; Temperature Tolerance 3 (Cold); Unfazeable.

**Skills:** Brawling-12; Guns (Rifle)-15; Observation-12; Survival (Arctic)-14; Tactics-12.

**Notes:** *Collective Intelligence:* Killer penguins gain intelligence from numbers. If there is another nearby, both gain +1 IQ; five grants +2; 10 grants +3; 20 is +4; 50 is +5; and 100 is +6. This affects all their IQ-based skills, *definitely* including their spells. *Hive Mind Support:* When a penguin is within range of the Penguin Collective, roll 3d every turn of combat, or every minute of a stressful situation. On a 6 or less (increase the target number by the same bonus that group size gives to IQ), the hive mind takes notice. All penguins in the group gain +2 IQ (in addition to any bonus from group size) and Observation-18 and Tactics-18. The hive mind can also "upload" useful skills or spells into the individual's minds, requiring about 30 seconds of concentration by a penguin for every skill point received.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kelly Pedersen lives and works in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, which is definitely not a hotbed of magical research and development, and hardly any magical creatures menace its citizens. Nevertheless, he manages to have fun. He'd like to thank Nicolas Juzda in particular for help with this article – as always, a good chunk of its quality comes from that assistance.

*Technological Levels* and *Updated Weapons* provided by David L. Pulver. For David's Eidetic Memory and bio in this issue, see pp. 20-29.

**GURPS** Fourth Edition



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# EL PASO VICE

BY PAUL STEFKO

The action genre is all about spectacle: big guns, fast cars, good-looking stars, and explosions. Unlike Hollywood, role-playing games let us add something far more spectacular in the form of the fantastic: magic.

This article works the standard *GURPS* magic system into your *GURPS Action* game. This includes magical lenses for the archetypal templates in *GURPS Action 1: Heroes*, magic

items that mix high-tech with high fantasy, and even a few new spells.

Finally, a campaign frame shines the flash of 1980s cop dramas through the fantasy prism of Merlin, the setting of *GURPS Technomancer* (see *GURPS Infinite Worlds*, pp. 134-135). The officers of El Paso Vice work undercover to fight drug runners and other magical criminals in the heart of the Manabelt, and they look good doing it.

## MAKING MAGIC WORK

*GURPS Action 2: Exploits* warns against including magic in your campaign, and there are some good reasons. It's more complex than most skills and requires players to track energy costs, durations, casting times, etc. Here are some options for speeding up and smoothing out the experience of using magic at the table.

### ENERGY RESERVE

Few action heroes will want to burn through their FP casting too many spells. To encourage spellcasting, the GM should allow heroes to take levels of Energy Reserve. Mages who study a magical style would benefit from the Limited Energy Reserve perk (*GURPS Thaumatology: Magical Styles*, p. 27).

### POWERSTONES

Powerstones are the best solution to the energy problem in an *Action* game: cheap, portable gear that extends the hero's abilities but doesn't eclipse them. Groups may set aside part of their starting budget for shared stones. Individuals can also buy their own Powerstones as Signature Gear; one level buys a 20-point stone.

### HEROIC FORTUNE

Luck can be applied to spells, as can Daredevil in appropriate circumstances. Interesting moments of Serendipity might include stumbling into an aspected mana zone that suits your favorite spells, or a ley line or other static power source to refresh FP.

### MAGICAL IMPROVISATION

Action heroes are always trying new things. The magic rules make this difficult by requiring prerequisites for most spells. The GM may permit Wild Talent 2 (Emergencies

Only, -30%; Focused, Magical, -20%) [20] instead of the Wild Talent 1 [20] listed in each template in *Action 1*. Twice a session, a hero with this advantage could attempt a magical effect during an action scene and cast any appropriate spell at (IQ+Magery), regardless of prerequisites.

### MAGIC PERKS

See *GURPS Power-Ups 2: Perks* and *GURPS Thaumatology: Magical Styles* for the full rules on these perks. Any mage may take one magic perk for every 20 points in spells.

*Attribute Substitution:* Assassins, infiltrators, shooters, and wheel men will benefit from basing spells on DX. Investigators, shooters, wheel men, and wire rats get a boost from Per-based spells.

#### *New Perk: Trademark Spell*

You've practiced casting a single spell that has flexible effects in a formulated way. Write down specific values for every variable element of the spell: energy cost, area, time spent charging a Missile spell, etc. For example, if you have Magery 3, you could buy a Trademark Spell of "6-energy, 2-second Fireball." You do not need to specify variables that apply a penalty to skill, such as range or long-distance modifiers. In return for spending a point on such a specific casting, you get +1 to skill and +1 to any Will rolls to maintain concentration while casting your Trademark Spell.

The GM may allow you to "update" your Trademark Spell if limiting factors change – for example, if your skill (before the Trademark Spell bonus) becomes high enough to reduce energy or casting time; or if your Magery increases, allowing you to exceed the spell's normal limits.

*Charms:* In the absence of defined magical styles with alternate prerequisites, the GM may allow this perk to waive prerequisites on a spell-by-spell basis.

*Improvised Items:* This perk can extend each hero's spells to the whole group. Medics with this perk could hand out Major Healing Spell Stones before a firefight, for instance.

*No Gestures:* This perk is especially useful for assassins and shooters who use rifles or twin guns, infiltrators climbing walls, or wheel men behind the stick.

*No Incantations:* Infiltrators may find this perk helpful in maintaining stealth, while face men will get fewer strange looks from speaking gibberish.

## TRADING ENERGY

Heroes with plenty of FP, Energy Reserves, and/or Powerstones should be allowed to use the rules for *Trading Energy for Speed and Skill* on p. 39 of *GURPS Thaumatology*, as counterpart to the *Extra Effort in Combat* rules. Trading energy for speed is especially important to keep the heroes active during action scenes, instead of standing still and concentrating.

*Use extra energy to keep the action going.*

# MAGICAL HEROES

Just as different mundane action heroes have different mundane skills, different mystical action heroes will focus on different spells. Each template from *Action 1* now has a magical lens that enhances or complements its area of expertise. Each lens lists three spell packages which are self-contained with regard to prerequisites. Some spells may require non-spell prerequisites that already appear in the template.

To make a magical hero, take the following lens plus the lens for the character's template. This increases the cost of your template by 25 points. The GM can simply raise the starting point budget for protagonists in a magical campaign (see p. 18 for an example of this), or require additional disadvantages to offset these extra points.

### Magical Hero

15 points

Magery 1 [15]; or if you have Magery 0 from the Mageborn background lens (below), increase it to Magery 1 for 10 points and spend 5 extra points on the spells in your template lens.

### Magical Assassin

10 points

A magical assassin will not rely on magic to actually kill, since spells cannot easily match the range or power of a good

rifle. Instead, he learns spells that aid in stealth and mobility, enhance vision, or help erase evidence after he has made the kill.

**Spells:** One of the following 10-point spell packages. Each spell is (H) IQ-1 [1]-11, including the +1 from Magery.

1. Avoid, Fear, Foolishness, Forgetfulness, Hide, Hide Emotion, Insignificance, Persuasion, Sense Emotion, and Sense Foes.
2. Balance, Boost Dexterity, Clumsiness, Dark Vision, Grace, Infravision, Itch, Keen Vision, See Invisible, and Spasm.
3. Clean, Complex Illusion, Illusion Disguise, Imitate Voice, Perfect Illusion, Restore, Silence, Simple Illusion, Sound, and Voices.

### Magical Cleaner

10 points

The magical cleaner makes use of many spells: Clean to remove trace evidence; Shape Earth for disposing of evidence underground; Irradiate to eliminate microbes. (Note: in most settings, Radiation spells will be carefully regulated.)

**Spells:** One of the following 10-point spell packages. Each spell is (H) IQ-1 [1]-13, including the +1 from Magery.

1. Beast-Soother, Beast Summoning, Persuasion, Repel Vermin, Sense Danger, Sense Emotion, Sense Foes, Sense Observation, Spider Silk, and Vermin Control.
2. Clean, Extinguish Fire, Find Weakness, Ignite Fire, Purify Air, Restore, Seek Earth, Seek Water, Shape Earth, and Shape Fire.
3. Conceal, Create Fire, Heal Plant, Identify Plant, Ignite Fire, Irradiate, Plant Growth, Seek Earth, Seek Plant, and Shape Earth.

### New Lens: Mageborn

20 points

You were born with the ability to perform magic spells. While you may be a criminal, a spy, or a soldier, you are set apart by your magical aptitude.

**Advantages:** Magery 0 [5]. • Add Magery [10/level] to your template's advantage list.

**Skills:** Thaumatology (VH) IQ-3 [1]. • Choose another background lens from *Action 1* and add another 14 points chosen from that lens' skills; Occultism (A) IQ [2]; spells (especially those on the Magical lens for your template), either (H) IQ-1 [2] or (VH) IQ-2 [2]; Alchemy (VH) IQ-2 [2]; 2 more points in any lens skill to raise it by one level; or 6 more points to raise it by two.

**Social Traits:** If you meet the required skills and spells for a magical style, you may spend some of your template's advantage points on Magical School Familiarity and Magic Perks.

## Magical Demolition Man

10 points

Spells chosen by a magical demolition man are not devoted to creating explosions; mundane sources are more efficient. Instead, the demolition man uses magic to handle explosives more effectively. Spells help him keep his cool, set charges more accurately, and prevent unwanted detonations.

**Spells:** One of the following 10-point spell packages. Each spell is (H) IQ-1 [1]-13, including the +1 from Magery.

1. Alarm, Find Weakness, Ignite Fire, Measurement, Purify Air, Seek Earth, Seek Water, Tell Time, Test Load, and Weaken.
2. Bravery, Bright Vision, Dark Vision, Fear, Keen Vision, Night Vision, Sense Danger, Sense Emotion, Sense Foes, and Watchdog.
3. Interference (p. 14), Jam Radio (p. 14), Keen Hearing, Radio Hearing, Reveal Function/TL, See Radiation, Seek Machine/TL, Seek Power, Seek Radiation, and Stop Power.

## Magical Face Man

10 points

A face man's spells overlap his mundane skills. Some distract, while others heighten his ability to blend in. They are mostly tricks, however, never supplanting the need for his interaction skills.

**Spells:** One of the following 10-point spell packages. Each spell is (H) IQ-1 [1]-14, including the +1 from Magery.

1. Borrow Language, Illusion Disguise, Imitate Voice, Lend Language, Persuasion, Sense Emotion, Sense Foes, Simple Illusion, Sound, and Voices.
2. Colors, Copy, Dye, Illusion Shell, Independence, Inscribe, Know Illusion, Light, Restore, and Simple Illusion.
3. Daze, Fascinate, Foolishness, No-Smell, Odor, Perfume, Persuasion, Purify Air, Sense Emotion, and Sense Foes.

## Magical Hacker

10 points

The hacker is one of the least likely magical characters, but the spells below grant interesting tricks, including the ability to read magnetic storage or users' minds.

**Spells:** One of the following 10-point spell packages. Each spell is (H) IQ-1 [1]-14, including the +1 from Magery, unless otherwise noted.

1. Aura, Conceal Magic, Detect Magic, False Aura, Identify Spell, Mind-Reading, Mind-Search (VH) IQ-2 [1]-13, Sense Emotion, Sense Foes, and Truthsayer.
2. History, Memorize, Numerology\*, Pathfinder, Reveal Function/TL, Schematic/TL, Seek Machine/TL, Seek Power/TL, Seeker, and Trace.

3. Infravision, Keen Hearing, Keen Vision, Magnetic Vision, Radio Hearing, Reveal Function/TL, Seek Machine/TL, Seek Power/TL, Small Vision, and Stop Power.

\* Requires Mathematical Ability.

## Magical Infiltrator

10 points

The magical infiltrator gains new tools, amplifying normal abilities to overcome physical barriers, neutralize sentries, and obscure or confuse both guards and sensors.

**Spells:** One of the following 10-point spell packages. Each spell is (H) IQ-1 [1]-12, including the +1 from Magery.

1. Apportation, Hush, Lockmaster, Locksmith, Mage-Stealth, Silence, Slow Fall, Sound, Undo, and Wallwalker.
2. Beast-Soother, Daze, Foolishness, Mammal Control, Nightingale, Persuasion, Repel Mammal, Sense Danger, Sense Emotion, and Sense Foes.
3. Blur, Complex Illusion, Continual Light, Darkness, Gloom, Invisibility, Light, Remove Shadow, Simple Illusion, and Sound.

## Magical Investigator

10 points

The magical investigator's spells enhance mundane senses or grant magical ones. Magic is also useful for interrogation of witnesses. When the investigation gives way to action, spells can reveal or distract the enemy.

**Spells:** One of the following 10-point spell packages. Each spell is (H) IQ-1 [1]-14, including the +1 from Magery, unless otherwise noted.

1. Alertness (VH) IQ-2 [1]-13, Dark Vision, Hawk Vision, Infravision, Keen Hearing, Keen Vision, Rear Vision, See Invisible, Sense Foes, and Small Vision.
2. Aura, Conceal Magic, Detect Magic, False Aura, History, Identify Spell, Seek Earth, Seek Magic, Seeker, and Trace.
3. Daze, Dream Viewing, Foolishness, Hide Emotion, Mind-Reading, Mind-Search (VH) IQ-2 [1]-13, Sense Emotion, Sense Foes, Sleep, and Truthsayer.

## Magical Medic

10 points

A magical medic is more dedicated to supernatural ability than other heroes. Magic healing benefits from the reduced energy cost of high skill, and it is desired for its speed and efficiency over traditional medicine.

**Spells:** Lend Energy and Lend Vitality, both (H) IQ-1 [1]-14.  
● One of the following 8-point spell packages. Each spell is (H) IQ [2]-15. ● All spells include the +1 from Magery, unless otherwise noted.

1. Awaken, Body-Reading, Restore Memory, and Sense Life.
2. Major Healing (VH) IQ-1 [2]-14, Minor Healing, Recover Energy, and Stop Bleeding.
3. Resist Disease, Resist Poison, Share Vitality, and Vigor.

## NEW SPELLS

A few new spells are useful in a *Technomancer-Action* setting.

### Jam Radio

Regular

The caster blocks a single radio from receiving or transmitting any signals for the duration of the spell. Outside operators can overcome this interference by winning a Quick Contest of their Electronics Operation (Comm) skill against the caster's skill every minute. Those with Telecommunication (Radio) can substitute IQ for Electronics Operation.

This spell is part of the Energy subcollege of the Technological college.

*Duration:* 1 minute.

*Cost:* 2 to cast. 1 to maintain.

*Prerequisite:* Radio Hearing.

### Interference

Area

As Jam Radio, but this spell blocks all radio transmission into or out of the area. This spell is part of the Energy subcollege of the Technological college.

*Duration:* 1 minute.

*Base Cost:* 2 to cast. Half to maintain.

*Prerequisite:* Jam Radio.

### Redline

Regular

Doubles the subject vehicle's cruising speed without affecting its endurance. This has no effect on Move or Top Speed in vehicle combat. At the end of the spell's duration, make a HT roll for the vehicle. On a failure, users take -2 to all operation skill rolls until the vehicle is repaired.

This spell is both a Movement spell and part of the Machine subcollege of the Technological college.

*Duration:* 1 day or the vehicle's endurance, whichever is less.

*Cost:* 4. Cannot be maintained.

*Time to cast:* 1 minute.

*Prerequisite:* Quick March.

### Magical Shooter

10 points

The magical shooter focuses on spells that increase perception or dexterity, or spells that protect from danger. There is little in the way of offensive magic; that's what the guns are for.

**Spells:** One of the following 10-point spell packages. Each spell is (H) IQ-1 [1]-10, including the +1 from Magery, unless otherwise noted.

1. Alertness (VH) IQ-1 [2]-10, Dark Vision, Detect Magic, Hawk Vision, Keen Hearing, Keen Vision, Mage Sight, Night Vision, and Rear Vision.

2. Ambidexterity, Apportation, Balance, Clumsiness, Grace, Haste, Itch, Jump, Missile Shield, and Spasm.
3. Block, Detect Magic, Hardiness, Mage Sight, Mystic Mist, Nightingale, Sense Danger, Sense Foes, Sense Observation, and Watchdog.

### Magical Wheel Man

10 points

The magical wheel man supplements his transport skills with spells to boost speed, improve vehicle performance, or navigate routes. Many of his spells work on vehicles; remember the energy multiplier for casting Regular spells on large targets.

**Spells:** One of the following 10-point spell packages. Each spell is (H) IQ-1 [1]-12, including the +1 from Magery, unless otherwise noted.

1. Apportation, Grease, Great Haste (VH) IQ-1 [2]-12, Haste, Hinder, Lighten Burden, Quick March, Redline (above), and Slow.
2. Essential Fuel/TL, Preserve Fuel/TL, Purify Fuel/TL, Purify Water, Seek Fuel/TL, Seek Machine/TL, Seek Power/TL, Seek Water, Stop Power, and Test Fuel/TL.
3. Find Direction, Know Location, Measurement, Pathfinder, Seek Earth, Seek Pass, Seeker, Tell Position, Test Load, and Trace.

### Magical Wire Rat

10 points

Some magical wire rats use spells to boost technological eavesdropping. Others apply magic to their natural senses, mimicking listening devices. And some wire rats take the name literally, using small animals to infiltrate a target location and listening through the creature's senses.

**Spells:** One of the following 10-point spell packages. Each spell is (H) IQ-1 [1]-14, including the +1 from Magery, unless otherwise noted.

1. Infravision, Interference (above) (H) IQ [2]-15, Jam Radio (above) (H) IQ [2]-15, Keen Hearing, Keen Vision, Magnetic Vision, Radio Hearing, and Spectrum Vision (VH) IQ-2 [1]-13.
2. Beast Possession, Beast-Soother, Persuasion, Rider Within, Sense Emotion, Sense Foes, Sense Life, and Shapeshifting (small mammal or bird) (VH) IQ-2 [1]-13. • Two of Bird Control, Mammal Control, and Vermin Control.
3. Far-Hearing, Keen Hearing, Resist Sound, Sense Danger, Sense Emotion, Sense Foes, Sense Observation, Sound, Sound Vision, and Thunderclap.

# MAGIC ITEMS

Combine the high-tech toys of an action movie with the existence of magical enchantment, and you get a world of cutting-edge magic items for heroes to wield against the bad guys.

## DEPLETED NECRONIUM

On Merlin, radioactivity has both physical and magical properties. The development of nuclear power has had a number of unusual byproducts. One, necronium, has numerous applications, but its magic-dead form – depleted necronium, DN for short – has just one: DN ignores magical effects, including protective spells.

Ammunition and melee weapons that would normally be made of metal can be made of DN instead. Apply the listed cost factor (CF) to the normal weapon or ammunition costs. Depleted necronium can never be enchanted.

Spell-piercing depleted necronium (SPDN) ammunition is available for all small arms (under 20mm). It functions as normal armor-piercing ammo (**Action 1**, p. 33), with the addition of its spell-piercing properties. +99 CF.

Melee weapons made of DN are very heavy. Multiply both weight and ST requirement by 2 for all-metal weapons such as knives and swords, or by 1.25 for hafted weapons like axes where only the head is metal. The increase in required ST means DN is only useful for the very lightest weapons. +99 CF.

## “ELEMENTAL” FIREARMS

Elemental firearms use variants of Ignite Fire and Fast Fire to spark a powerful ignition, more quickly utilize the propellant, and increase projectile velocity. With Power and Speed enchantments, this effect can be used without concentration, allowing semiautomatic or full-auto fire.

Each shot fired using these enchantments requires some magical energy: 3 energy in a low-mana area, or 1 energy in a normal mana area. In high or very high mana areas, there is no

energy cost per shot. The user can choose whether to activate the elemental effects, but all shots fired in a single maneuver must use the same “setting.” The intricacies of enchantment mean an elemental firearm cannot apply its effect to depleted necronium ammunition.

Elemental firearms can be identified by the two inset rubies (one small, one large) required by the enchantment process. Many include dedicated Powerstones to pay energy costs, and these often are rubies as well.

When firing an elemental firearm using the enchantments, multiply damage and range by 1.5. *Any firearm*: +19 CF (plus the cost of any dedicated Powerstones).

## INFINITE MAGAZINE

**Action** campaigns featuring magic have a legitimate explanation for gunmen never having to reload: ammunition magazines enchanted with a variant of the Cornucopia spell to never run out of rounds. The ammunition is always of the same caliber and type, such as normal 9mm rounds or armor-piercing, match-grade .45 rounds.

To create an infinite magazine, take the base cost below and apply any cost factors for special ammo types on p. 33 of **Action 1** (but never SPDN!), then add the cost of an empty magazine. For example, an infinite magazine for a .40 auto pistol that fired armor-piercing rounds would cost \$2,950. *Base Cost*: \$1,459 (.40 or 9mm), \$2,431 (.45 or 5.56mm), \$2,918 (7.62mm), \$4,862 (.50AE), or \$19,448 (.50). A given magazine will only work in a single model of gun (or closely related models, at the GM’s discretion).

## SPECIAL AMMO

Several types of magical ammunition are available. Depleted necronium ammunition (above) cannot have any of these modifiers, and none of these function in no-mana areas.

## TACTICAL FLYING CARPET

Tactical flying carpets provide clandestine air support on nighttime SWAT raids. Their silent flight and dark fabric make them very difficult to detect, granting +3 to Camouflage in urban night environments. This one-man “carpet” is made of Kevlar and enchanted with a

permanent Flying Carpet spell (*GURPS Magic*, p. 146). A number of steel rings run along either side to tether equipment (including battery-powered floodlights).

Terms and notation are as defined in *Vehicle Statistics* (pp. B462-463).

### PILOTING/TL (CONTRAGRAVITY)

TL	Name	ST/HP	Hnd/SR	HT	Move	LWt.	Load	SM	Occ	DR	Range	Cost	Loc.	Stall	Notes
^	Tactical Flying Carpet	5	0/1	12	15/15	0.25	0.25	0	1	12/5*	–	\$95K	E	0	[1, 2]

### Notes

[1] Split DR. Use higher value against piercing and cutting attacks; use lower value for all other attacks.

[2] The pilot can only be dismounted if he deliberately jumps off or is knocked off by an obstacle or attack. The carpet otherwise acts as a stable platform for attacking, etc.

*Accurate*: Enchanted with the Accuracy spell, granting +1 to skill rolls to hit. *Any pistol, rifle, or SMG*: +29 CF.

*Essential Propellant*: Enchanted with the Essential Fuel spell. Add +2 to damage per three dice or fraction thereof. Add 20% to Range and ST (minimum +2 ST). Mutually exclusive with the extra-powerful and match-grade options. Once fired, the ammunition does not count as magical. *Any pistol, rifle, or SMG*: +3 CF.

*Penetrating*: Enchanted with the Penetrating Weapon spell, granting armor divisor (2). *Any pistol, rifle, or SMG*: +29 CF.

*Puissant*: Enchanted with the Puissance spell, giving +1 to damage. Unlike Essential Propellant above, the ammunition counts as magical for penetrating Force Dome, triggering vulnerability to magical damage, etc. May be combined with Essential Propellant or with the extra-powerful or match-grade options. *A Any pistol, rifle, or SMG*: +29 CF.

## UNDERCOVER SUITS

Undercover officers cannot rely on the normal protective vests worn by police expecting combat. Their roles require specific styles to blend in with the criminals

they are investigating. In a magical world like Merlin, though, such clothing can be enchanted to provide some protection.

These garments can be ordinary, formal, or high-fashion clothing as appropriate to the investigation. Each has the undercover modifier, granting +1 to Holdout skill. High-fashion outfits have the styled modifier as well, granting +1 to reaction and Influence rolls. These outfits are enchanted with Fortify and Deflect, granting DR 2 and +1 to all active defense rolls. \$5,510 (ordinary clothing), \$6,110 (formal clothing), or \$19,910 (high-fashion clothing); 2 lbs.

*One thing I've learned about vampires – they keep pulling new rabbits out of their cloaks. Big, fanged, carnivorous bunnies that'll eat your eyeballs if you're not paying attention.*

– Laurell K. Hamilton,  
*Bloody Bones*

# COPS IN TRINITY'S SHADOW

Merlin (known as “Earth” by its inhabitants) in the 1980s was a world on the brink of transformation. The 1970s had seen the Vietnam War end in peace with dubious honor as well as the rise of global magical terrorism. The specter of mutual destruction hung over the world powers as the United States and the Soviet Union created ever-more-terrifying weapons. But there was hope as well, faltering steps forward in the causes of civil rights and international cooperation. (For more information on Merlin, see the capsule description on pp. 134-135 of *GURPS Infinite Worlds* or the complete setting in *GURPS Technomancer*.)

To make sense of a world that seemed madder every day, America turned as it had for decades to television. Even that most popular of entertainment was changing, though. MTV, pay cable, and flashy illusion photography meant that television was more spectacular, more immediate, and more stylish than ever before.

In 1984, NBC premiered a new series called *El Paso Vice*, based on the real Vice Squad of the El Paso Police Department. For five seasons, detectives David “Davey” Crockett and Antonio “Tone” Stubbs dealt with drug runners, gambling dens, and prostitution rings, and they looked good doing it.

This campaign frame for *GURPS Action* lets you play in the world of glitzy TV cop shows, with their fast cars, big guns, and high stakes. Throw in the magic of the Manabelt, and you have one explosive cocktail.

## EL PASO-JUÁREZ

El Paso, Texas, lies along the Rio Grande, across the border from Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. In 1984, El Paso is home to 570,000 people; Juárez, just over one million. Together, they form the most heavily populated high-mana area on the planet

(El Paso-Juárez). They are also home to some of the most dangerous criminal outfits in North America, dominated by the Mexican-Colombian cartels.

El Paso-Juárez is a playground for American manufacturing, due to lax border policies and cheap labor. Those same policies that let goods and workers pass easily from one side of the river to the other allow illicit materials to cross over as well.

The Drug and Alchemy Enforcement Agency (DAEA), FBI, and Customs Enforcement all have strong presences in El Paso. Ultimately, however, it falls to the men and women of the El Paso Police Department Vice Squad to protect their city from the kingpins and the pushers alike.

## THE SQUAD

The real El Paso Vice Squad is a multiply decorated unit within the EPPD, tasked with investigating narcotics trafficking, prostitution, and illegal gambling. At its height (concurrent with the popularity of its televised counterpart), the unit consisted of 20 plain-clothes detectives, with twice that number in support personnel. Since many of its cases dealt with Mexican nationals and the cartels, the Squad also maintained a four-person Liaison Staff that facilitated exchanges of information with their analogs in Ciudad Juárez.

El Paso sits in the high-mana Manabelt of the American southwest, letting the average mundane citizen cast spells with proper education. Police are trained in a few useful spells at the academy, and many more are available in specialized courses. The officers of the Vice Squad in particular seek magical training, as spells give an undercover officer an edge where conspicuous tech cannot.



# EPPD SPELL TRAINING

9 points

*Style Prerequisites:* Legal Enforcement Powers; Police Rank 0+.

The El Paso Police Department teaches a number of spells to all officers as part of their academy training. These form the core of a practical magical style useful for police work.

The EPPD offers advanced training courses in several spell groups, from forensic magic to healing. Officers can take these as part of their professional development. Mageborn officers are strongly encouraged to do so, even if they are not assigned to units that deal in high-magic crime.

The EPPD also makes training available to other first responders, focusing on Healing spells as well as utility effects such as Purify Air. These individuals do not have access to the style's core techniques, so they do not qualify for Magical School Familiarity or style perks.

Most of the spells in this style have no Magery requirement and so may be cast by anyone in high-mana El Paso. Advanced spells are only available to mageborn officers.

*Required Skills:* Law (American Criminal).

*Required Spells:* Haste; Hide Emotion; Keen Vision; Night Vision; Sense Emotion; Sense Foes; Truthsayer.

*Perks:* Elixir Resistance (Drunkenness, Foolishness, Gullibility, Truth, or Weakness); Magical Weapon Bond; Spell Bond; Staff Bond; Trademark Spell (p. 11); Wizardly Dabbler; Wizardly Garb.

## Optional Traits

*Attributes:* Improved IQ.

*Secondary Characteristics:* Improved FP.

*Advantages:* Improved Magery; Police Rank.

*Disadvantages:* Code of Honor (Police); Duty (to the EPPD); Sense of Duty (Law-Abiding Citizens).

*Skills:* Area Knowledge (El Paso); Criminology; Forensics; Guns (Pistol, Rifle, or Shotgun); Running; Tonfa; Wrestling.

## Spell List

Basic spells have no Magery requirements and are available to all officers. Advanced spells are listed by the level of Magery they require. Prerequisites are unchanged.

### Basic Spells

Boost Strength	Keen Hearing	Seek Water
Create Water	Lend Energy	Shape Earth
Daze	Lend Vitality	Simple Illusion‡
Earth Vision	Mass Sleep†	Sleep
Extinguish Fire	Might	Sound
Foolishness*	Minor Healing	Sound Vision
Great Voice	Purify Air	Stop Bleeding
Haste	Purify Water	Thunderclap
Ignite Fire	Seek Earth	Voices
	Seek Power	

\* Requires IQ 12+.

† Requires IQ 13+.

‡ Requires IQ 11+ and the character must be able to see.

## Advanced Spells, Magery 1

Analyze Magic	Great Haste*	Major Healing
Block	Hardiness	Recover Energy
Counterspell	History	Seeker*
Detect Magic	Identify Spell	Stop Power
Dispel Magic	Mage Sight	Trace

\* Requires IQ 12+.

## Advanced Spells, Magery 2

Armor	Echoes of the Past	Missile Shield
Bladeturning	Images of the Past	Shield

# LIFE UNDERCOVER

Vice Squad officers spend a lot of time undercover, making contacts and setting up stings. Undercover cops get plenty of mileage out of Influence skills, Acting, Disguise, and other clandestine skills. The GM running undercover adventures will want to look at **GURPS Social Engineering**, especially the section on *False Identities*, pp. 37-39.

Officers going undercover receive a few standard pieces of equipment. First, they have one or more enchanted undercover suits that fit their cover. Second, they will be issued one full magazine of DN ammunition and one infinite magazine of normal ammunition for their sidearm of choice. Finally, they receive a 4-point Powerstone in a cheap jewelry setting.

Other equipment is issued as needed. Officers use spray cans of aerosol Sleep elixir to subdue suspects. Sunglasses enchanted with Night Vision help in nighttime operations. Raids are conducted with air support from tactical flying carpets.

*For more details about key sites in Trinity's Shadow, including El Paso and Ciudad Juárez, see GURPS Technomancer, pp. 123-125.*

# CRIME

The Vice Squad investigates crimes related to gambling, drugs and illegal potions, pornography, and prostitution. Many members focus on busting the street-level operators: dealers, bookies, and pimps. But the stars are the undercover officers, who make cases against whole organizations and take down the big dogs.

In Trinity's Shadow, magic opens countless new doors for crime. Here are some of the stranger things El Paso Vice tackles.

*Drugs and Alchemy:* The cartels still trade in marijuana, heroin, and cocaine. But now in the 1980s, "designer" drugs are sweeping the market. Spelljack, an alchemically treated form of cocaine, is especially popular. Unregulated alchemy is big business, too, from unlicensed potions of Health, Pain Resistance, or Sleep to dangerous combat elixirs.

*Gambling:* Underground clubs feature combat between exotic creatures like jackalopes and walking cacti (*Technomancer*, p. 127), or summoned elementals. Elixirs of Gambling and Luck empower cheating at mundane games.

*Pornography:* Illusion photography allows films to feature prominent celebrities and public figures without their consent. Create Servant can generate a physical simulacrum with Erotic Art-16; combined with Independence, this opens up an entire new world of sexual commerce. Since no actual person (living or dead) is performing the act, the law classifies this under statutes covering pornography and other “adult materials.”

*Prostitution:* The sex industry caters to many different tastes on Merlin. Whether you prefer high-class mage escorts, cat chimera playmates, or just a well-preserved zombie, someone will provide you an evening’s pleasure.

## THE VICE CAMPAIGN

El Paso Vice is a “Brotherhood in Blue” campaign as defined in *Action 1*, p. 5. Face men and investigators mix with shooters and wire rats. All are active-duty police officers with the law enforcement lens (or mageborn mimicking law enforcement) and must take Legal Enforcement Powers at the 5-point level. Duty is a required disadvantage.

To accommodate magical lenses and the cost of EPPD Spell Training, characters start at 285 points. A player who refuses to play a spellcaster should spend the additional 35 points on template advantages, particularly cinematic options

like increased Luck, Wild Talent, and Daredevil. (The GM may add Magic Resistance to the advantage options, partly to rationalize why the person wasn’t taught basic spells of the EPPD Spell Training style.)

Adventures will focus on a single case. Undercover operatives infiltrate a criminal operation and must gather information before calling for the roll-up. Inevitably, they discover that the scheme is bigger than they suspected, or something threatens to blow their cover, and the danger climaxes in a gunfight, car chase, or Mexican standoff with the person in charge. In the end, the criminals are in handcuffs or (regrettably) body bags, and maybe a building is on fire in the background.

Here in El Paso, though, everything is colored by high mana. Thugs pop combat elixirs before coming to rough the PCs up. Lieutenants are trained wizards able to sniff out lies and illusions. And the person in charge may actually be a bloated spider chimera at the center of a vast criminal web. The heroes save the day through skill, grit, and flashy spellslinging.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul Stefko is a writer and game designer living in Pittsburgh with his wife and a very stylish cat. He has written for Evil Hat Productions, Atlas Games, and Pelgrane Press, in addition to his work in the current and previous volumes of *Pyramid*. He probably wouldn’t do well undercover, but he’ll run plates and fetch coffee like nobody’s business.

*For an assortment of other suggestions for adding supernatural abilities to GURPS Action campaigns, see More Skill Sets for Specialists in Pyramid #3/112: Action II.*

**GURPS** Fourth Edition



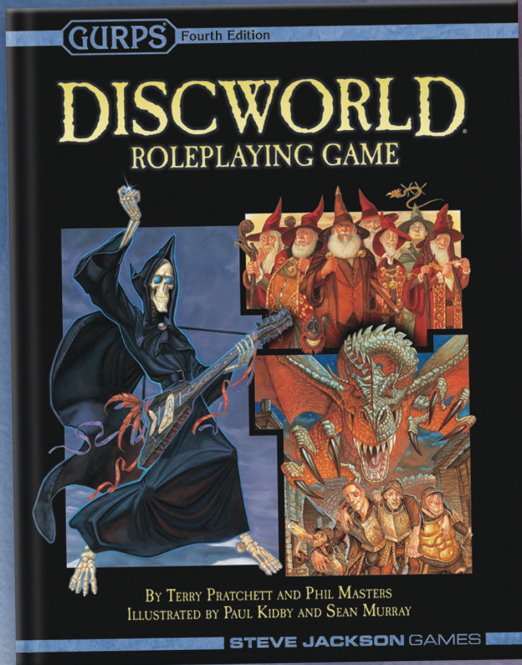
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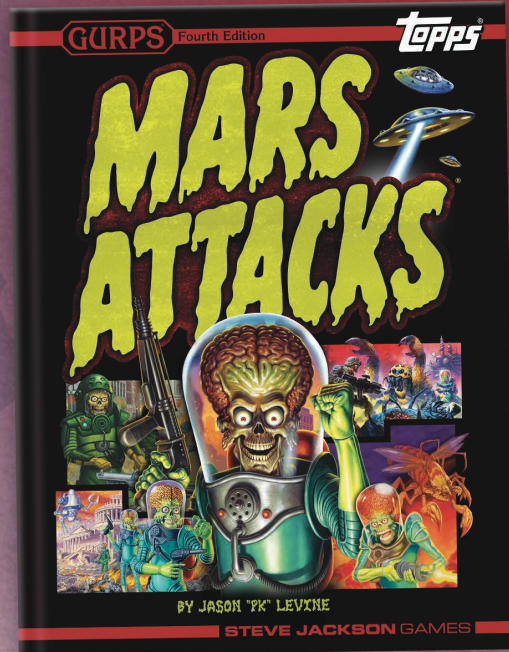
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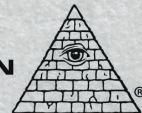
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# EIDETIC MEMORY

## MERLIN DECLASSIFIED

BY DAVID L. PULVER

This article describes a variety of new spells, historical and modern secrets, and expanded setting details for the world of Merlin (known as “Earth” by its inhabitants). The new spells can either be added to the original 1990s-era *GURPS Technomancer* setting or represent more recent developments.

### RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN MAGIC

Magic on Merlin is not a static affair. Each year, scores of additional spells are added to grimoires, many of them declassified after decades of military use. Here are several recently developed spells; feel free to keep them “secret” if you prefer, or use them as MacGuffins in adventures.

#### *Ball of Annihilation (VH)*

Regular

Creates a microscopic black hole that can devour anything (including magic). This singularity is under the caster’s control. The Ball of Annihilation floats in the direction

the caster wills it to, but moves very slowly. Its maximum speed is equal to the caster’s skill divided by 5 (round down). The ball is utterly silent.

The orb can pass through anything except a stasis field. It maintains its heading and speed unless the caster concentrates to change it or command it, e.g., to move through someone. If the ball intersects someone, the victim must dodge *and retreat* to avoid being hit. Parrying or blocking is useless.

Someone hit by the ball will suffer damage as a result of the tidal stresses and radiation it emits. The ball inflicts 7d corrosion damage with an infinite armor divisor, plus 1 rad per point of basic damage rolled. (See *Radiation*, p. B435, for effects of being irradiated.) Black holes in the *Technomancer* universe are sufficiently dense that even oz particles, the stuff of magic, cannot escape their event horizon. The area surrounding the Ball of Annihilation is a one-yard no-mana area (although mana recovers if the ball moves away).

This is a Gate spell and a Movement spell.

*Duration:* 1 second.

*Cost:* 20 to cast. 10 to maintain.

*Time to cast:* 4 seconds.

*Prerequisites:* Drain Mana, Planar Summons, and Pull.

#### Item

Staff, wand, or jewelry. Usable only by mages. *Energy cost to create:* 2,000 energy and a small iron sphere.

#### *Blackbolt*

Missile

This spell allows you to direct a pulse of coherent ultraviolet light from one fingertip. It has 1/2D 150, Max 300, Acc 2; roll vs. Innate Attack (Beam) to hit. The UV laser beam inflicts burning damage with a (2) armor divisor.

### GOLEM ARMOR

Since the 1970s, it has been possible to add the Controls and Payload advantages when creating golems. This increases the energy cost of the golem by 2 points per point of these advantages, but allows the golem to have onboard occupants.

Although expense precludes regular issue, “golem armor” suits are sometimes used by elite military units as technomagical battlesuits. Golem direction officers (GDO) wear the suit while they command a squad or platoon of ordinary unmanned golems.

The variety of golems available in *Technomancer* precludes brief treatment. For details on combat golems (with some *GURPS Third Edition* examples), see *I am Iron Man: Combat Golems in GURPS Technomancer* (available at [sjgames.com/pyramid/sample.html?id=2513](http://sjgames.com/pyramid/sample.html?id=2513)). For *GURPS Fourth Edition* rules on creating titanium, plastic, and non-clay golems, see *Appendix Z: Golem Construction System for GURPS* (available at [sjgames.com/pyramid/sample.html?id=5553](http://sjgames.com/pyramid/sample.html?id=5553)).

Blackbolt is not affected by Missile Shield or Reverse Missiles. Force Dome and Deflect Energy protect against it normally.

This is a Light and Darkness spell.

*Cost:* Any amount up to *twice* your Magery level per second, for three seconds. The bolt does 1d-1(2) burning damage per two energy points.

*Time to Cast:* 1 to 3 seconds.

*Prerequisite:* Sunbolt.

### Item

Staff or wand; the bolt is fired from the tip of the item. Usable only by mages. *Energy cost to create:* 1,200 energy and an obsidian worth at least \$1,000.

## Body of Illusion

**Regular; Resisted by HT**

A product of research into quantum magic, this spell transforms the subject and whatever they are carrying into a perfect illusion under the caster's control for the duration of the spell. The subject has neither memory nor volition of what they did while turned into an illusion. Once transformed, the subject is treated as the creation of a Perfect Illusion spell (*GURPS Magic*, p. 96) for all purposes – that is, spells such as Independence and Initiative can be cast on him with their usual effect.

If the illusion is dispelled (the caster ends the spell, or it is dispelled by Dispel Illusion or Dispel Magic), the subject reverts back to normal.

Note that the spell is generally more effective if cast on someone other than the caster himself. A caster who turns himself into an illusion will simply remain in place, unable to do anything, even maintain the spell, until the spell wears off. It is, however, a decent defensive spell for its duration if your opponents cannot dispel or control illusions.

This is an Illusion and Creation spell.

*Duration:* 1 minute.

*Cost:* 6 to cast. 3 to maintain.

*Time to cast:* 2 seconds.

*Prerequisites:* Control Illusion and IQ 15+ or Magery 3.

### Item

(a) Staff, wand, or jewelry. Only affects the wearer. As soon as it is activated, the item falls through the user's hand. *Energy cost to create:* 2,500. (b) Staff, wand, or jewelry. Casts spell; mage only. *Energy cost to create:* 4,000.

## Body of Light

**Regular; Resisted by HT**

Subject becomes an animated hologram or image, temporarily granting him the Body of Light meta-trait (below). Clothes (up to 6 lbs.) may also become light but lose any magic powers they might have had. Stop Power acts as Glue and Steal Power acts as Steal Strength on the subject of this spell.

This is a Light and Darkness spell.

*Duration:* 1 minute. The spell is broken if the subject loses consciousness.

*Cost:* 12 to cast. 4 to maintain.

*Time to cast:* 5 seconds.

*Prerequisite:* Body of Shadow.

### Item

(a) Staff, wand, or jewelry. Only affects the wearer. As soon as it is activated, the item falls through the user's hand – thus a spell cast with this item lasts only a minute. *Energy cost to create:* 3,000. (b) Staff, wand, or jewelry. Only affects the wearer. Unlike the previous item, this item turns to light along with the wearer. While in light form, it loses any other magical powers it might ordinarily have. *Energy cost to create:* 6,000.

## Body of Light Meta-Trait

*Body of Light:* Doesn't Breathe [20]; Doesn't Eat or Drink [10]; Doesn't Sleep [20]; Flight [40]; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards [30]; Nocturnal (Diurnal,\* +0%; Permanent Paralysis, +100%) [-40]; Shadow Form (Damaged by darkness-based attacks rather than light, -25%) [-15]; Supernatural Features (Glow in the dark) [-1]. *64 points.*

\* Diurnal means you are paralyzed if your entire body is in darkness (as opposed to in sunlight); with this, Permanent Paralysis requires total darkness, not merely the absence of sunlight.

## Laser Eyes

### Missile

The caster shoots burning light (a visible laser beam) from one of his eyes, using Innate Attack (Gaze) to hit. This works like the Sunbolt spell (*GURPS Magic*, p. 114), including the mechanics for bouncing the bolt off mirrors, with the exception that instead of the energy forming in the caster's hand and emitting from a finger, as usual for a Missile spell, his eyes glow with power as the spell builds up.

This is a Light and Darkness spell.

*Cost:* Any amount up to your Magery level per second, for three seconds. The bolt does 1d-1 burning per energy point. The user can spend twice as much energy per turn and fire two bolts simultaneously, one from each eye, at RoF 2.

*Time to cast:* 1 to 3 seconds.

*Prerequisite:* Sunbolt.

### Item

False eye; the bolt is fired from the eye. Usable only by a mage with the One Eye or Blindness disadvantage due to a lost eye, who places the item in an eye socket. High RoF attacks are possible only if both eyes are replaced at double cost. *Energy cost to create:* 800 energy and an eye-sized sunstone worth at least \$4,000.

## Light Speech

### Regular

You use this spell to communicate with someone by emitting modulated beams of coherent light from your eyes.

The beams carry your subvocalized speech. You can also receive such signals. This gives you the Laser Communication advantage (p. B91), allowing you to converse with someone else who possesses this advantage as long as you're looking at them. You can't communicate this way if your eyes are covered.

This is a Light and Darkness spell.

*Duration:* 1 minute.

*Cost:* 2 to cast. 1 to maintain. Maximum communication range is 200 yards. For each doubling of energy, you can increase your range by a factor of 10.

*Prerequisites:* Shape Light and Sense Light.

## Microwave Jet

### Regular

Use this spell to direct an invisible jet of microwaves from your finger. Each turn, the caster rolls vs. Innate Attack (Beam) to hit. This attack may be dodged or blocked (though only shields which are metal or covered in foil will be any use), but not parried. The jet inflicts 1 point of burning damage per energy point in the spell. Any electronic systems (e.g., computers, robots, cars with electrical ignitions, etc.) suffer an Affliction attack, requiring a HT + SM roll (at -1 per point of energy in the jet) to avoid being shut down for minutes equal to the margin of failure. DR protects, but only if sealed.

This is a Technological (Energy) spell.

*Duration:* 1 second.

*Cost:* 1 to 3. Range in yards is equal to energy cost. Same cost to maintain.

*Prerequisites:* Heat and either Light Jet or Radio Hearing.

### Item

Staff or wand. Usable only by mages. The jet issues from the item's tip. *Energy cost to create:* 500.

## Sense Light

### Regular

This spell gives you a tactile warning (e.g., a tickling feel or sensation of heat) whenever someone is illuminating you with a laser, flashlight, or other focused light source in the visible light, infrared, or ultraviolet frequencies. It also tells you the approximate direction to the source. The spell is effective even if you can't see the light source (e.g., if someone is illuminating you from behind).

This is a Light and Darkness spell.

*Duration:* 1 hour.

*Cost:* 2 to cast. 1 to maintain.

*Prerequisites:* Sense Foes and either Infravision or Light.

*Friends made in a Soulspace can give magical aid.*

## Soulspace

### Enchantment

This allows the user to create a magic item (generally in the form of servers connected to the Internet, running appropriate software) that can host an online social magic community. The community can be established on the Web or in a local network.

Users join the community by visiting the site and agreeing to a Soulbinding contract (pp. 24-25). This creates their Soulspace social-media page with a desired profile (name/alias, picture, interests, etc.) tied to their magical signature. To use it for ceremonial magic or cast spells on magic friends (see below), a user must log onto their Soulspace account and interact with it via a device (smartphone, tablet, computer, etc.); to be affected by spells from magic friends, the person needn't be actively viewing his page, but must be logged on and within one yard of his device.

The creator of the Soulspace sets the terms of the Soulbinding contract used and the access conditions, such as subscriber fee, advertising, member referrals, etc.; SoulSpace corporation (p. 24) is ad-supported.

The Soulspace enchantment is controlled through the enchanted servers it runs on. Whoever has access to these servers can view and delete member profiles, or deactivate the entire community. Disabling the servers will take down that particular network.

Once someone has joined, they may view the pages of other members. They also gain access to two magical benefits.

First, they can request that other members join a particular online "magic circle" by sending an invite with a specific time to perform ceremonial magic casting. Any invited members can join in with the ceremonial magic, regardless of distance. The software generates audio and visual effects to create a virtual space conducive to the ceremony.

Second, they can opt to offer themselves as magic friends (see below) to other members. Making someone your magic friend takes some fiddling with your account's settings. It requires 10 seconds with a compatible browser open to a Soulspace, costs two energy, and needs a successful Computer Operation+3 roll. Failure wastes the energy, but you may try again at no penalty. Critical failure may mean you made the wrong person or an extra person your magic friend.

To delete one or more of your magic friends requires the same time and procedure, but costs only one energy (regardless of how many friends you delete at once).

A magic friend request is not activated until the person you specified accepts it. They will find the request on their page with your Soulspace name. They can ignore it, refuse it, or accept it. Accepting or refusing it takes two seconds. Refusing it lets you know they've refused, while accepting it makes them your magic friend.

If you are someone's magic friend, you can cast any of your Regular spells on them at any distance by targeting their Soulspace icon instead of them. This reduces the penalty for not touching them to a mere -1 regardless of range or you not being physically present with them. You can't cast spells through Soulspace that their permissions don't allow (though you could target them normally).

To mitigate consent issues, a Soulspace lets you set permissions that restrict what spells your stable of magic friends can cast on you. A major limitation is that the same permissions apply to *all* your magic friends, not just a particular one. (SoulSpace Corporation keeps promising to fix this, but so far it's proven too complex to do.) These permissions may be turned off, leaving you open to all spells (good if you trust your friends absolutely), or alternatively, to up to three colleges and/or individual spells.

There is also a Mutual Friends option. This requires that both people send magic-friend requests to each other.

This version is only activated if both accept, and is automatically deactivated for both parties if one deletes the other.

*Example:* The Myrkwod county sheriff has decided to encourage the use of Soulspace accounts to improve magical coordination with her deputies. The sheriff instructs her four deputies to choose the sheriff as their “magic friend.” She asks that they set their permissions to the Healing college and two other spells that the sheriff (a skilled mage who is a former military veteran) happens to possess: Soul Rider and Teleport Other. If they agree, it is now possible for the sheriff to cast Soul Rider, Teleport Other, or any Healing spell on her deputies.

This is an Enchantment spell.

*Energy cost to cast:* 5,000, plus 1 for every 10 user pages the community can support.

*Prerequisites:* Communication, Enchant, and Machine Speech.

### Item

May be cast on computer software that can run on a server or series of servers capable of hosting the desired number of users in the Soulspace. *Note:* Repeated casting of the spell on newly added servers can incrementally expand the capacity of an existing network rather than creating a new one. Large

networks, such as the original SoulSpace corporation, have huge data centers.

## Starbolt

### Missile

This spell permits you to direct an invisible pulse of coherent X-rays from one fingertip. It has 1/2D 750, Max 1,500, Acc 2; roll vs. Innate Attack (Beam) to hit. The X-ray pulse inflicts burning damage with a (5) armor divisor. Starbolt is not affected by Missile Shield or Reverse Missiles. Force Dome and Deflect Energy protect normally.

This is a Light and Darkness spell and a Technological (Radiation) spell.

*Cost:* Any amount up to twice your Magery level per second, for three seconds. The bolt does 1d-1(5) burning damage per two energy points.

*Time to Cast:* 1 to 3 seconds.

*Prerequisites:* Radiation Jet and either Blackbolt (pp. 20-21) or Penetrating Spell.

### Item

Staff or wand; the bolt is fired from the tip of the item. Usable only by mages. *Energy cost to create:* 2,000 energy and a chunk of trinitite worth at least \$2,000.

# E-MAGIC COMPANIES

The end of the 20th century saw the rise of corporations that merged mobile computing, broadband Wi-Fi access, GPS, and online commerce with new developments in technomagic. These included web-based and wireless magical service providers (e-magic), magic-enabled mobile devices, and sociomantic networks such as Goodwitch (below) and SoulSpace (p. 24). Many failed spectacularly, but an elite few now number among the world’s most powerful corporations.

## CADAVER (CADDY)

Cadaver (or “Caddy”) was founded in 1994 by Internet mogul Geoffrey Jorgenson. It was initially an online store that specialized in scrolls, grimoires, and ordinary books. It saved money by using zombies to perform deliveries and golems to perform warehousing jobs.

Over time, Cadaver branched out. Although its core grimoire business remained lucrative, it expanded to home delivery of minor magic items. By 2000, its online store soon came to sell everything from electronics to groceries, threatening retail stores.

Cadaver became an important technomagic developer, too. In 2004, Cadaver developed the Codex, a programmable e-scroll. This was followed by the Brimstone, a magical tablet. Cadaver also became a major content provider and publisher, encouraging self-publishing Cadaver-exclusive scroll and e-book publications that bypassed traditional publishers, and producing its own mass media.

Cadaver continues to innovate. Recently, the company announced plans to use magical technology for door-to-door

flying delivery of small packages. Initial experiments used small rodent-piloted vehicles with possessed mice aboard drone quadcopters. However, these required an operator and expensive spells. Current tests have focused on zombie birds and bats, sometimes operating in formation.

## GOODWITCH

This is the most popular of several social network services used primarily for helping mundane users to locate and rate magical service providers. Today, having a high Goodwitch reputation is considered vital for self-employed mageworkers.

## WIZBOOK

Wizbook is the world’s most popular professional magical networking system. It is widely used both by professional mageworkers and individuals who contract their services. Wizbook functions as a mundane social media system focused on magical work. It allows users to post curriculum vitae, map professional relationships, invite or seek connections, find or list jobs, and follow developments in particular companies.

## SOCIAL MAGIC NETWORKS

Social magic networks, or sociomantic media, are enchanted online social networking platforms (similar to mundane networks like Facebook) that generate a magical link between members. This can facilitate shared spellcasting, such as ceremonial magic.

Several sociomantic media companies such as SoulSpace (below) were devised around the early 21st century on the backs of conventional social media. Their reach is significantly less than that of mundane social-media platforms (as only a small fraction of the world's population are mages or live in high-mana areas), but among magic-using individuals, such networks' use has been expanding rapidly, albeit in conjunction with controversies regarding privacy and consent.

## *SoulSpace Corporation*

The most successful such platform is the Texas-based company SoulSpace. Its pioneering development of the eponymous Soulspace enchantment (pp. 22-23) enabled its mushroom-like growth from a basement startup mainly used by University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) thaumatology students to a premier platform relied on by millions of mages and Manabelt residents. Besides ceremonial magic, one of SoulSpace's key applications is the ability to allow friends or co-workers to cast spells on you at any distance, greatly facilitating cooperative endeavors. Whether you are a parent wanting to cast Sleep or Soul Rider on a young child; a manager using Alertness, Lend Strength, Vigil, or Wisdom to assist or supervise a subordinate; or anyone casting Healing spells on a sick friend, signing on to SoulSpace enables long-distance assistance, succor, and productivity-enhancement. It is especially popular with companies that have telecommuting workers, even if halfway around the world. Of course, there are safety concerns, as a magic friend can cast spells that you might not want cast upon you, so extensive privacy permissions are implemented to prevent from this happening.

## **ENERGIZER**

Energizer is a magical crowdfunding space on the Web in which mages can post details of worthy projects and donate magical energy to support another mage's project.

It is intended to boost mages who can't afford to maintain a large circle of assistants, an industrial magic factory, or a big Powerstone, by providing an external source of magical power they can tap into. It is popular in regions outside Trinity's Shadow, and in particular, outside America, where skilled mages and magical infrastructure are less common. Energizer is often used to support magical research, good works, and the creation of cool stuff such as magic-enabled art projects. It's also tapped into by mages working for non-governmental organizations, such as those engaged in infrastructure improvement or disaster relief in developing nations. Energizer appeals are publicly visible on its website, and are boosted through links on social media and sites frequented by mages, such as SoulSpace (above).

To set up a project, or donate to one, the aspirant needs to first create a (free) Energizer account, or, in some competing versions, a Soulbinding contract (below). Setting up a project page can take as little as an hour, but often takes a week or more of work. Aspirants should describe the purpose and justification of the project, often including a video (or video of an illusion). Each project must clearly indicate the subject, spell or enchantment involved, a target amount of energy, and a project date (up to 30 days away). Some projects may have shorter deadlines; there is a section for "Urgent Appeals" that are time-sensitive. One recent example: "I'm a mage at Porter's

Mill, which is currently in the path of a raging forest fire. We don't have the magical resources to stop a fire of this size, but with your help we can Fireproof as many local buildings as we can, and save a lot of homes."

The most common Energizer projects are support for relatively simple spells that require a high energy input, either due to a high basic cost or a large area of effect. Spells that produce permanent results are particularly common – for example, Earth magic spells to create works benefiting individuals or communities (such as making a large building foundation or a small new structure), and high-end Healing spells to provide medical care or rejuvenation to those who cannot otherwise afford it. Energizer forbids projects that are illegal and reserves the right to cancel projects that violate its ethical guidelines (basically, the Golden Rule).

Energy collected through Energizer is about 50% efficient. About 20% of the energy collected is siphoned off and resold by Energizer to industrial magic companies for a profit. Another 30% is used to maintain the servers. The amount of energy that can be accumulated through a campaign varies; however, unless the campaign achieves the desired goal, no energy is collected.

A campaign can be handled as an Influence skill roll by the person or company making the pitch, with a modifier based on a number of factors. First, adjust the roll to reflect the quality of production, how popular or unpopular the specific request or cause is, and the requester's Reputation. If the campaign is associated with an event that attracted mass-media attention, apply an appropriate bonus based on degree of attention. This can range from +1 (brief mention in local media) to +10 (constant coverage on international news networks). Also, look up the amount of energy the campaign is asking for (which equals at least twice what the requester expects to need) in the "Linear Measurement" column of the *Size and Speed/Range Table* (p. B550) and apply the "Speed/Range" penalty. Finally, apply a modifier for time spent based on the length of the campaign relative to the average length of 10 days.

Success means the campaign "funded," and the mage has access to that amount of energy. Failure means it did not (and trying again with a new or similar campaign has a cumulative -3 until at least two months have passed). Success increases the amount of energy above the minimum requested by 10% times the margin of success, rounding up. On a critical success, the campaign went viral: look up the margin of success in the "Size" column of the *Size and Speed/Range Table* and multiply the campaign's goal by the amount in the "Linear Measurement" column to get the final total (before Energizer's cut), e.g., success by 10 is 100 times the energy.

## **SOULBINDING SOFTWARE**

Manadynamics (*Technomancer*, p. 115) developed the modern magical "soulbinding" software contract in 1999, and it was rapidly taken up by companies eager to have a way to establish a "magical contract" with users. Rumored to have been designed through a study of demonic pacts, the contract allows a magical connection to be remotely and simply forged between a customer and a technomagic company through a web browser. To participate in a Soulbinding contract, the person reads the fine print and clicks on the acceptance button, spending an energy point in the process.



Soulbinding contracts support various forms of magical shareware and adware. Essentially, users gain access to certain spells or abilities that they can use through their magical device in exchange for the device producing a parasitic effect that benefits the software creator. The two most common soulbinding contracts are:

*Sleepware.* This software contract automatically drains the user of one energy point (usually 1 FP, unless the person pays from a Powerstone, Energy Reserve, etc.) while they sleep. The user simply feels a bit more tired than usual after waking up.

*Dreamware.* This contract transmits targeted advertising content into the user's mind. While the user is dreaming, they are exposed to virtual product placement within their dreamscape for as long as they continue to use the magical software application. The advertising content is generally targeted based on the user's social media profile and/or search history. A client may have -1 on self-control rolls related to the product or react to the product at +1. A person cannot have more than seven of these contracts.

## OTHER E-MAGIC COMPANIES

A great number of companies simply use mundane mobile devices and web services to facilitate magical business.

*RugRats:* The use of rodent-piloted vehicles as guidance systems for smart missiles has gradually declined since its heyday in the early 1990s due to increased opposition by animal rights organizations and several poignant transcribed Beast Speech interviews. A number of NATO militaries (the

largest users) have replaced or reduced their RPV stocks. This put several hundred war-surplus rodents and associated Beast Possession items on the military surplus market. The technology was acquired by start-up firm RugRats, which found ways to use them as guidance systems for miniature flying carpets performing aerial delivery. (Similar techniques are believed to be employed by drug cartels for cross-border smuggling.)

*Flit:* This is a ride-sharing business built around the use of phone apps and flying carpets as taxis. Many city air taxi companies that employ full-time pilots and carpet fleets, as well as some national taxi courier firms such as Aladdin, oppose it.

*Bamf and BeMup:* Not every e-commerce startup has succeeded. These are but two of several corporate tries at ride-sharing versions of Teleport or Teleport Other to compete with carpet ride shares, only faster. Users with Soulspace accounts would contact a mageworker who could cast Teleport Other on them to get them to a destination they were familiar with, or could observe via camera or magic. However, Teleport spells continue to remain chancy and dangerous: fine for the military, astronauts, or individual mages teleporting themselves, but a huge liability headache for a private company. So far, teleport ride sharing has failed to get out of the research and development stage.

*Succuboard:* The largest of several notorious "darkweb" sites (presently believed to be located in Russia) that combined cryptocurrency payments and Soulspace technology to arrange dates with succubi and incubi who could fulfill every fantasy, either in person or through private video. Such sites have often been plagued with fraud, with some advertised "demonic" partners proving to be nothing more than humans or zombies.

# HISTORICAL SNIPPETS

The following are elements of Merlin's history that were not discussed in *GURPS Technomancer*.

## TRINITITE

When the first atomic bomb was detonated in 1945 at Trinity Site, near Alamogordo, New Mexico, it left a crater in the desert that was 10' deep and 1,100' wide, surfaced with radio-

active glass. This bottle-green colored glass became known as trinitite. It initially formed a layer averaging about 0.5" thick.

Trinitite was formed from quartz sand, clay, and tiny amounts of the atomic bomb itself that had been fused together by the intense heat and radiation of the nuclear explosion. It was radioactive, but not enough to be dangerous (unless you were foolish enough to eat a chunk of it, in which case long-term cancer was a risk).

Trinitite was originally considered a simple curiosity, of limited interest compared to the raging Hellstorm itself. In 1945, after initial testing, most samples of trinitite glass that were retrieved from the Hellstorm were deemed surplus and were sold by the government to collectors or amateur geologists. In addition to the official samples, curiosity-seekers

and tourists who visited (or sneaked into) the Hellstorm often acquired a few shards as souvenirs or as trinkets to sell. Some of it was even made into jewelry.

In the years between 1945 and 1950, a small but growing number of actual mages came into contact with trinitite jewelry or mineral samples. These individuals began to suspect it had unusual properties. A mage who touched trinitite jewelry experienced sensations non-mages could not feel. Mages who cast spells while holding trinitite found they could use it to produce more powerful spells with little or no fatigue. A growing number of ambitious occultists attempted to elude or bribe U.S. military patrols around the Hellstorm to allow them to chip away their own "Alamogordo glass" samples from the crater. Some of these people were arrested and confessed their suspicions regarding the value of Alamogordo glass.

Government scientists, themselves researching "parmagical phenomena," had also begun to have similar suspicions. Lab tests showed that trinitite had a complex structure with tiny concentrations of various exotic isotopes. Once the first government and military mages began playing with it, they discovered it could indeed act as a magical focus and energy battery. (After oz particles were discovered in the 1960s, trinitite was found to be mana-active, storing and emitting oz particles.)

*Technology and social media have brought power back to the people.*

– Mark McKinnon

*The first and largest industrial enchantment corporation, Manadynamics is a classic American success story.*

– **GURPS Technomancer**

With the strategic applications of magic beginning to come into focus in the early 1950s, from 1952 onward, all remaining trinitite in government possession was secured. Security was temporarily increased around the bomb crater. In 1953, the Army Corps of Engineers used earth-moving machinery to scrape all trinitite glass from the crater. It was stored in government vaults for use in technomagic research and military applications. At the same time, a law was passed making acquisition or trade in trinitite illegal, with exceptions of any material that was legally acquired prior to the law's passage in 1953.

Until the mid-1960s, shards of trinitite formed the base of the majority of Powerstones used by mages in government-funded laboratories or military and intelligence service; the term "trinitite battery" was often used. A decade of research into trinitite's properties underpinned Dr. Michael Scott's famous paper *The Mana Accumulating and Storage Properties of Enchanted Crystal Lattices* (El Paso, 1964). The research provided the theoretical foundation for the development of the modern Powerstone enchantment (which early papers sometimes referred to as "synthetic trinitite"). This paved the way for today's ubiquitous Powerstones, created through the enchantment of common gemstones such as opals, a hydrated amorphous form of silica. For both trinitite and opal Powerstones, the formation involves the bombardment of a silica matrix with oz particles. With opals, the particles are summoned and focused by the mage. With original trinitite, the particles came from the radiations of the Hellstorm.

Until the invention of synthetic Powerstones, the large but limited supply of trinitite was in high demand. Although the military and military-industrial complex acquired the lion's share, bitter turf wars were fought among military and intelligence agencies, research labs, and enchanters for access to the highest-quality samples. Many samples also "disappeared" into civilian hands. Government attempts to restrict access and buy back souvenir trinitite jewelry further created an underground black market for the material among mages. This peaked in the 1960s but persists to this day. After synthetic opal Powerstones became available, the black market cooled considerably. However, the declining natural supply and trinitite's additional utility as a material for Enchantment spells continue to keep prices high. Some mages swear by their original trinitite stones.

From circa 1953 (when its properties were publicly revealed) through the late 1960s (when Powerstones became commercially available), trinitite batteries were about 20 times as expensive as the later commercial variety. Bits of trinitite hold 1 energy (common) to 10 energy (rare), depending on the proximity of the glass to ground zero, size of the shard, and its condition. Polishing and cutting it to make it into jewelry could often improve the energy capacity, but might instead create odd quirks or destroy it if carelessly treated.

A significant amount of fake trinitite was (and still is) sold. Palming off bottle-glass "trinitite" jewelry to unwary New

Mexico tourists is a popular scam for hucksters and gift shops. More sophisticated fakes can be created by mages using False Aura (the spell, not an enchantment), followed by exposing the imitation glass to a Radiation Jet. (Some con artists add Manastone, so it is possible to draw some power from it.) This sort of fraud can fool casual examination with Detect Magic and Geiger counters, but not scientific analysis of the sample's isotopes at a physics lab (requires successful Physics and Chemistry rolls).

After the Vietnam War ended, widespread civilian production of Powerstones saw trinitite prices drop to about twice that of synthetic Powerstones. Samples again became available from the government stockpile to interested laboratories studying the material. This led to the determination that trinitite lenses or mosaics were especially useful components in certain enchantments, especially Light and Darkness spells, Radiation spells, some Meta-Spells, and some Protection and Warning spells. In some cases, the trinitite component reduces the energy required by 50% or more. In other instances, it's necessary for the enchantment to work at all.

During the early 1980s, the price of trinitite shot up again as the U.S. government imposed additional restrictions. This was driven, according to rumor, by the use of trinitite surface mosaics in high-end spacecraft and military vehicles for purposes that have yet to be publicly disclosed. Speculation in the open defense industry press has included magical stealth or defense systems (e.g., integral Invisibility or Utter Dome enchantments). Variants of composite armor in the M1 Abrams, Challenger, and Leopard 2 tanks, as well as personal body armor supplied to black dragons, are rumored to include composite materials incorporating not just depleted necronium but also trinitite glass, which provides high levels of structural Magic Resistance (10+) along with undisclosed other properties. One leak suggested it might be a system for reflecting back certain combat spells at the caster.

Today, due to its renewed use in technomagic industry, trinitite is roughly five times as valuable as a synthetic Powerstone of equivalent size, and should be considered LC2. Sales of fakes continue to be a problem.

## **NUCLEAR FUSION AND TECHNOMAGIC**

In 1920, Arthur Eddington suggested hydrogen-helium thermonuclear fusion as the energy powering the sun. Even as the atomic bomb was being developed, scientists in the program, notably Edward Teller, theorized that a more effective thermonuclear fusion bomb might be possible. The idea was to use the energy of a fission blast as a catalyst for an even more powerful fusion explosion. However, the first atomic bombs' creation of the Trinity and Antarctica Hellstorms, and the subsequent predictions of global catastrophe if a third nuclear detonation occurs, terminated this research.

Since even a small fission explosion meant doomsday, why ever bother developing a “super” bomb? Today, the general public and even most nuclear scientists consider the idea of an actual fusion bomb to be something out of apocalyptic science-fiction stories.

In fact, the development of oz-particle theory in the 1960s and the revelation of the sun as a source of such particles led to renewed but quiet theoretical interest in nuclear fusion. First, secret papers by Teller and others suggested that a hypothetical *pure* fusion weapon that did not employ a fission trigger might be capable of producing a thermonuclear blast that did not cause a Hellstorm. Between 1962 and 1976, significant resources were expended on fusion weapons research, much of it at Sandia National Laboratories. A prototype device was built in 1974 that used a pumped flux compression generator rather than an atomic bomb to ignite fusion fuel. Despite weighing 6,000 lbs., it had a fairly small yield (a mere three tons of TNT). However, it was predicted to produce significantly higher levels of hard radiation than its size indicated and a significantly higher ambient pure oz-particle flux with potential exotic effects on mages and magic items, but little in the way of hazardous or mana-active fallout. The ultimate plan was to develop a small pure fusion device and then test fire it either in deep space or on the far side of the moon. Instead, the parallel necronium bomb project provided a less costly and more predictable alternative. After the first successful N-bomb test in 1976, funding for the fusion bomb was halted.

Alternatives to using a heavy pulse generator include antimatter, nuclear isomers, and miniaturized lasers, none of which have yet reached the development stage.

*Alchemy is practiced in everything from mom-and-pop shops to huge pharmaceutical concerns – although the latter are usually more profitable.*

*– GURPS Technomancer*

## **BAD PHARMA**

While technomagic companies are infamous for occasionally engaging in dubious pursuits, so are alchemy corporations. One such company is Endor Pharmaceuticals.

### *Endor Pharmaceuticals*

Gideon Melko was a senior researcher at Necrotech (*Technomancer*, p. 116) and project leader in their pharmaceuticals department, working in the burgeoning fields of demonic cell cloning and zombie microbiotics. Although not directly connected to the scandal at their Albuquerque laboratory (the rumored “Soulburner” incident; *Technomancer*, pp. 113-114), his pet projects were considered potentially controversial. After Sephiroth Industries (*Technomancer*,

pp. 116-117) acquired the company in 1994, he was one of those who was laid off during Sephiroth’s purge of senior employees.

Despite this, Melko managed to gather financing for a new magical bio-tech startup, which he named Endor Pharmaceuticals. He recruited enough investors to establish a state-of-the-art industrial alchemy factory and genetic engineering lab complex in the small town of Myrkwod (the state is up to the GM). Melko also wooed the local politicians into giving him a huge property-tax write-off – ostensibly in exchange for promises of future jobs, but in reality for not letting pictures of a massive succubus/incubus orgy come out. Suddenly, his efforts to continue his research into alchemical necromancy hit a brick wall. Having heard through the grapevine that Endor was recruiting scientists, the current Necrotech execs and Sephiroth’s legal department made it very clear they would sue his pants off if they suspected Melko was doing anything construed as using R&D related to processes developed and patented by Necrotech – even if the company was no longer interested in pursuing those particular avenues. Since Melko had planned to use a boatload of stolen files and ideas, that was a bit of a blow.

With his funds at risk of drying up, Melko changed course and desperately sought new underfunded fringe research projects that he could bring under the Endor umbrella to keep his company afloat. This led him to hire two brilliant but unorthodox scientists.

### *Elixir of Pain-Ease*

The first was Dr. Gabrielle Gallowmere, an old friend who was a pioneer in the new field of necromantic alchemy. She was also the same necromancer who had provided the succubi and incubi for Myrkwod’s bigwigs. Gallowmere had developed an experimental process that used bodily fluids initially extracted from incubi and succubi as a growth medium for a low-cost variant of an existing, popular alchemical product. As she needed additional funds to move the process into full production, Melko took her on as an equal partner.

Those lucky enough to live in Trinity’s Shadow or wealthy enough to afford good mages used Healing spells to deal directly with painful conditions. But when the causes were more subtle, or in regions where mages were in short supply, alchemy was often a preferred solution.

One of the most successful products of industrial alchemy was Pain-Ease (p. 28), which provided significant magical relief for a variety of ailments.

The great effectiveness of this elixir in treating chronic pain and depression made it popular with patients and physicians alike. Seeing huge profits, alchemy companies sought ways to mass produce it through industrial alchemy. Recently, the up-and-coming alchemy and genetic engineering company Endor Pharmaceuticals found a way to do this. With the initial prices cut in half, their version became among the most widely prescribed alchemical analgesics. Perhaps too much so: Aggressive marketing to physicians resulted in overprescription, often causing patients to develop a craving for the drug, and with the help of complicit doctors, turning into addicts. Some of those who could not afford pharmaceutical doses even turned to crime to support their habit, or acquired the elixir from illegal alchemy labs.

Many of these sources are of dubious quality or excessive strength, resulting in overdoses (half price but roll vs. HT to avoid incapacitating ecstasy, p. B428, for 4d hours, with a critical failure causing the heart attack condition, p. B429).

## Pain-Ease

### Alternative Name: Eisheth

A single dose of this elixir imposes the euphoria condition (p. B428) for 1d/2 hours. For the rest of the day, the concoction acts as a total Mitigator vs. Chronic Pain, Chronic Depression, and the depressed stage of the Manic-Depressive disadvantage. It is physically safe (at least as far as one's health goes) but psychologically addictive.

*Duration:* 1 day (1d/2 hours for euphoric state).

*Form:* Any but pastille.

*Cost:* \$120/\$200. However, in recent years, a new generic product has slashed the price of this in half, undercutting even China's giant alchemical producers!

*Recipe:* \$50; 2 weeks; defaults to Alchemy-1.

## ENDOR'S SECRET FORMULA

Publicly, Gallowmere's process relied on a synthetic base of opal powder residue from depleted Powerstones with a concoction of nine healing herbs acquired under controlled paramagical conditions (St. John's wort harvested under the full moon, etc.). Secretly, Gallowmere supplemented the standard ingredients with magical enzymes derived from irradiated bacterial cultures grown in succubi and incubi fluids, a process that resulted in increased purity with a 50% reduction of cost per dose.

Unfortunately, these cost-cutting measures led to a variety of hidden side effects that escaped the notice of government regulators. The most insidious was pre-natal demonification. Prolonged use (six or more months) prior to conceiving a child, or use while pregnant, has a small chance (about 1 in 5,000) of a child being born as a succubus or incubus. This rises to about a 1 in 216 chance if using it for three or more months while pregnant. Since there are warnings on the elixir not to use it while pregnant or nursing, and since animal testing failed to disclose this side effect, the demonification risk has not been linked to the drug.

The phenomenon of pre-natal demonification associated with the elixir has in fact already been observed in the community around Endor's factory complex and in areas where its medical waste was disposed. There, high levels of Eisheth elixir residual exposure have resulted in a small but significant number of children born as soulless succubi. Fortunately so far, this effect is fairly rare: no more than 400 to 600 workers and residents were exposed (resulting in two to three demon births per year). As a result, Gallowmere and Melko believe they can mitigate it (by increasing safety standards and reducing exposure) without increasing the production cost. However, this biohazard is a massive class-action lawsuit waiting to happen if it becomes exposed . . . Needless to say, the corporate weasels in Endor will do anything to keep it covered up, while rival alchemy companies (both American and Chinese) would eagerly pay for any "dirt" that would destroy their competitor.

## The Penguin Project

Melko's prior experience with "black" government programs led him to his second genetic engineering program. His contacts in the defense industry and Pentagon gave him inside information that DARPA, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, would soon be seeking contractors for a military xenotransplant R&D project that involved hawk chimeras. In order to gain this contract, he contacted an old friend he had known in college: Dr. Thomas Flud. The multi-talented ornithologist had done pioneering-if-controversial work studying the mana glands of teenage hawk and half-hawk chimeras, as part of early attempts to "cure" chimerization through xenotransplants. After hints of the project leaked, Flud's clinic had been targeted by chimera radicals and shut down. Flud had been reduced to studying manafall effects on giant chickens in Trinity's Shadow, but Melko brought him back into the fold with promises of more secure facilities.

Having an expert ornithologist with experience in transplants on hand would help Endor get back into the highly lucrative field of classified military necrotechnology programs, if they could secure a piece of that particular pie. And he thought a very tasty pie was about to be served . . .

Melko had guessed right. After wining and dining the right contacts in the Pentagon, Melko was introduced to Colonel Michael Barkonen, a former U.S. Marine. Barkonen had been part of the staff that had planned Operation Napoleon, a covert operation in Antarctica in the early 1990s. Its mission had been to gather intelligence on the current state of the Penguin Collective (see *Technomancer*, pp. 65-66) to supplement that gained through national technomagical means (spy satellites, Divination spells, etc.). In 1995, a small unit of Navy SEALs and New Zealand SAS had penetrated into a penguin village near the former McMurdo Station on Ross Island. Despite suffering heavy casualties at the hands of penguin militants, it had retrieved important data on the Collective's defensive capabilities, as well as a number of killer penguin cadavers.

During the operation, Barkonen had witnessed the impressive capabilities of Penguin Collective soldiers, whose hive mind enabled them to fight as if they were a single organism. Some years later, after he had left the Marines and become a senior defense consultant at DARPA, Barkonen had advocated incorporating a similar capability into the concept of a magically networked battlefield. While the Marines weren't interested, the Army was. This idea soon evolved into the "Army of One" project, the development of a new drug that would allow ordinary non-magical soldiers to fight as if they were a single hive-mind entity. The drug contained purified penguin theokinesin protein (PPTP).

PPTP could be harvested from the mana glands of killer penguins, but aside from ethical issues involved in doing so, there was a distinct shortage of killer penguins in the United States. Instead, Endor Pharmaceuticals' job was to produce a vat-grown synthetic version. This was to be done using genetic material acquired from the killer penguin cadavers that had been captured in Operation Napoleon, as part of a program codenamed Feather Heritage.

The penguin genes were then spliced into bacteria using genetic engineering. The ultimate result were vats of mana-active bacteria inside the Endor lab complex, churning away producing PPTP for use in the military program.

### Purified Penguin Theokinesin Protein

PPTP is an alchemical drug refined from killer penguin theokinesin. It can be used to induce a state of communal awareness, granting those injected certain killer penguin-like abilities for a 24-hour period. These abilities are shared by everyone whose PPTP doses came from the same original "biomass." Everyone who consumes the same batch of this elixir gains the Collective Intelligence trait found in the killer penguin stats (p. 10), based on the total number of individuals so exposed.

Unfortunately, there's a side effect. If the user is within 1,000 miles of the Penguin Collective (in Antarctica), roll 3d every hour, or every minute in a stressful situation. On a 6 or less (increase the target number by the same bonus that the group size gives to IQ), the hive mind takes notice and members are submerged within it, gaining the disadvantage Fanaticism (Penguin Cause) for as long as the drug lasts.

At present, only a small number of people have taken PPTP: 20 security guards (mostly ex-military) assigned to Endor's laboratory and factory complex, and a 30-person U.S. Marine recon team who are engaged in training exercises.

## 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

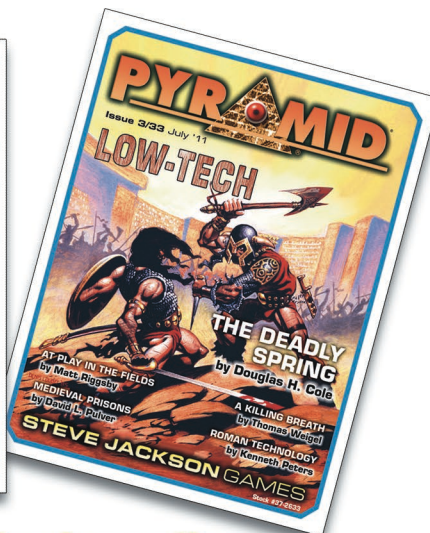
## NEW PENGUINS

Unknown to Endor's scientists, the pools of mana-active bacteria (see *The Penguin Project*, pp. 28-29) are now developing a rudimentary form of sentience. Moreover, their psychic emanations have been detected by the Penguin Collective. While unable to make direct contact with the pools, the Penguin Collective has sensed the emergence of a similar entity in the United States. It has tasked some of its surviving North American agents with investigating it.

The foundation of the Penguin Collective's foreign intelligence operation was its capture of Russian GRU (military intelligence) and KGB (state security) operatives taken during the fall of Zhukov Station and other Antarctic actions. Several of these officers were literally "turned" when the killer penguins developed a Permanent Shapeshifting human-to-penguin spell. After a few months as members of the Penguin Collective, they became loyal servants of a more-perfect Communist state than Lenin had imagined. These assimilated former-Soviet operatives in concert with a few captives from other nationalities have provided the expertise needed for covert infiltration.

designer. Since then, David has written over 70 roleplaying game books, and he has worked as a staff writer, editor, and line developer for Steve Jackson Games and Guardians of Order. He is best known for creating *Transhuman Space*, co-authoring the *Big Eyes, Small Mouth* anime RPG, and writing countless *GURPS* books, including the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition*, *GURPS Ultra-Tech*, and the *GURPS Spaceships* series.

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# REVISED TEMPLATES, COME FOURTH!

BY KELLY PEDERSEN AND DAVID L. PULVER

The world of *GURPS Technomancer* has a variety of unusual races that make things interesting. Although some of those denizens are best thought of as “monsters” – such as atomic lichens (p. 9) or killer penguins (p. 10) – others are better served in *GURPS Fourth Edition* with racial templates. To that end, here are other entities from *Technomancer*, which can be used to bring the setting to Fourth Edition, or added to other Fourth Edition games involving supernatural creatures (such as *GURPS Monster Hunters*).

## HUMAN CHIMERAS AND HALFLINGS

Perhaps most-suited as heroic options (see *Nonhuman Hunters*, p. 8), chimeras and half-breeds can become interesting NPCs. Racial descriptions can be found in *Human Chimeras*, *Technomancer*, pp. 53-54, and *Halflings*, *Technomancer*, pp. 54-55.

### *Homo Sapiens Arachnae*, “Spider People”

30 points

As a special effect, each use of either version of Binding also counts as a use of the other version. Both refresh at the same time with the same recharge as well.

#### *New Binding Enhancement: Retractable*

When you successfully use Binding to entangle someone, you retain a line to your target. On subsequent turns, you can take a Ready maneuver to pull the victim toward you (or drag yourself toward them, if they're heavy enough). Use the higher of your ST or the Binding's ST. However, if the bound subject's hands are free, or someone else grabs the line, they can try to pull *you!* Releasing the line is a free action on your turn. +100%, or +80% if you cannot release the line until the subject breaks free. Reduce the value by -10% if you use the *weaker* of your ST or the Binding's ST to pull the target.

**Advantages:** Binding (Webbing) 15 (Accessibility, Target must be grappled, -20%; Engulfing, +60%; Melee Attack, Reach C, -30%; Sticky, +20%; Takes Recharge, 15 seconds, -15%) [7]\*; Binding (Webbing) 10 (Rapid Fire 7, +70%; Retractable, above +100%; Reduced Range, 1/10, -30%; Sticky, +20%; Takes Recharge, 15 seconds, -15%) [38]; Claws (Sharp Claws) [5]; Clinging [20]; Extra Arms 2 (Temporary Disadvantage, Ham-Fisted 2 (Accessibility, Ham-Fisted only applies to extra arms, -50%), -5%) [19]; Extra Legs (Four Legs) [5]; Lifting ST 6 (Accessibility, only applies to lower “spider” body, -20%) [15]; Night Vision 6 [6]; Speak With Animals (Specialized, Spiders, -60%) [10]; Teeth (Fangs) [2]; Toxic Attack 1d (Poison; Cyclic, 1 hour interval, 5 cycles, +40%; Follow-Up, Bite, +0%; Resistible, HT-4, -10%) [6].

**Perks:** Climbing Line [1]†.

**Disadvantages:** Appearance (Ugly) (To humans and other non-spider chimeras) [-8]; Dependency (Mana; Constantly) [-25]; Lunacy [-10]; Social Stigma (Minority Group) [-10]; Vulnerability (Depleted necronium or silver x3) [-30]; Weakness (Depleted necronium or silver; 1d/minute) [-20].

**Quirks:** Bulky Frame [-1]‡.

\* Alternative Ability (x1/5 cost) to other Binding advantage.

† As long as you have “shots” of the Binding advantage available, you can create a climbing line, allowing you to use the “rope up” or “rope down” options for climbing (p. B349).

‡ While spider-people are technically SM 0, their large lower spider-half means they find narrow spaces intended for upright humans awkward, imposing -1 to all tasks that involve fitting or squeezing into something.

### *Half-Spider*

8 points

**Advantages:** Extra Arms 4 (Short, -50%) [20]; Sharp Teeth [1]; Speak With Animals (Specialized, Spiders, -60%) [10]; Toxic Attack 1 point (Poison; Cyclic, 1 hour interval, 5 cycles, +40%; Follow-Up, Bite, +0%; Resistible, HT-4, -10%) [2].

**Disadvantages:** Social Stigma (Minority Group) [-10]; Vulnerability (Silver x3) [-15].

## *Homo Sapiens Canis Latrans, "Coyote People"*

-3 points

**Attribute Modifiers:** HT+1 [10].

**Secondary Characteristic Modifiers:** Per+1 [5]; FP+1 [3].

**Advantages:** Acute Hearing 2 [4]; Discriminatory Smell (Emotion Sense, +50%) [23]; Fit [5]; Magery 0 [5]; Night Vision 5 [5]; Reduced Consumption 2 (Cast-Iron Stomach, -50%) [2]; Sharp Teeth [1]; Speak With Animals (Specialized, Canines, -60%) [10]; Striking ST 1 (Bite Only, -60%) [2]; Ultrahearing [5].

**Perks:** Fur [1]; Long-Range Smell [1]\*; Penetrating Voice [1].

**Disadvantages:** Dependency (Mana; Constantly) [-25]; Lunacy [-10]; Social Stigma (Minority Group) [-10]; Vulnerability (Depleted necronium or silver x2) [-20]; Weakness (Depleted necronium or silver; 1d/minute) [-20].

**Quirks:** Disgusting Diet (Carrion) [-1]†.

\* A perk from *GURPS Powers: Enhanced Senses*, p. 26, that allows the character to use normal size/speed range penalties for Sense rolls based on smell, instead of -1 per yard.

† Imposes a -2 reaction penalty on anyone who sees or finds evidence of the coyote person actually eating carrion.

## *Half-Coyote*

0 points

**Attribute Modifiers:** HT+1 [10].

**Advantages:** Acute Hearing 1 [2]; Acute Taste and Smell 1 [2]; Sharp Teeth [1]; Speak With Animals (Specialized, Coyotes, -80%) [5].

**Disadvantages:** Social Stigma (Minority Group) [-10]; Vulnerability (Silver x2) [-10].

*Coyote never loses. Because I change the rules of the games my enemies play.*

– Patricia Briggs, *Frost Burned*

## *Homo Sapiens Felis, "Cat People"*

5 points

**Attribute Modifiers:** DX+1 [20].

**Advantages:** Acute Hearing 3 [6]; Catfall [10]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Night Vision 9 [9]; Parabolic Hearing 1 [4]; Perfect Balance [15]; Sharp Claws (Switchable, +10%) [6]; Sharp Teeth [1]; Silence 2 [10]; Speak With Animals (Specialized, Felines, -60%) [10].

**Perks:** Acrobatic Feints [1]\*; Fur [1].

**Disadvantages:** Curious (12) [-5]; Dependency (Mana; Constantly) [-25]; Extra Sleep 2 [-4]; Impulsiveness (12) [-10]; Lunacy [-10]; Social Stigma (Minority Group) [-10]; Vulnerability (Depleted necronium or silver x2) [-20]; Weakness (Depleted necronium or silver; 1d/minute) [-20].

**Racial Skills:** Climbing (A) DX [1]-11†.

\* A perk from *GURPS Martial Arts*, p. 51, this allows a cat person to use Acrobatics as the skill to make a Feint in combat.

† Includes +1 from Perfect Balance.

## *Half-Cat*

15 points

**Attribute Modifiers:** DX+1 [20].

**Advantages:** Acute Hearing 1 [2]; Night Vision 9 [9]; Sharp Claws (Switchable, +10%) [6]; Sharp Teeth [1]; Speak With Animals (Specialized, Pumas, -80%) [5].

**Disadvantages:** Curious (12) [-5]; Extra Sleep 1 [-2]; Social Stigma (Minority Group) [-10]; Vulnerability (Silver x2) [-10].

**Quirks:** Impatient [-1].

## *Homo Sapiens Raptor, "Hawk People"*

-10 points

**Attribute Modifiers:** DX+1 [20].

**Secondary Characteristic Modifiers:** HP-1 [-2]; Per+1 [5]; Basic Move-2 [-10].

**Advantages:** 3D Spatial Sense [10]; Acute Vision 4 [8]; Enhanced Move 1 (Air) [20]; Flight (Temporary Disadvantage, No Sharp Claws, -5%; Winged, -25%) [28]; Sharp Claws [5]; Speak With Animals (Specialized, Raptors, -60%) [10]; Telescopic Vision 2 [10].

**Perks:** Feathers [1].

**Disadvantages:** Dependency (Mana; Constantly) [-25]; Lunacy [-10]; Social Stigma (Minority Group) [-10]; Vulnerability (Crushing x2) [-30]; Vulnerability (Depleted necronium or silver x2) [-20]; Weakness (Depleted necronium or silver; 1d/minute) [-20].

## *Half-Hawk*

-5 points

**Secondary Characteristic Modifiers:** HP-1 [-2].

**Advantages:** Absolute Direction [5]; Acute Vision 1 [2]; Speak With Animals (Specialized, Hawks, -80%) [5]; Telescopic Vision 1 [5].

**Disadvantages:** Social Stigma (Minority Group) [-10]; Vulnerability (Silver x2) [-10].

## *Homo Sapiens Serpens, "Snake People"*

2 points

**Secondary Characteristic Modifiers:** Basic Move-2 [-10].

**Advantages:** Constriction Attack [15]; Double-Jointed [15]; Extra Arms 1 (Extra-Flexible, +50%; Foot Manipulator, -30%; Temporary Disadvantage, Ham-Fisted 2 (Accessibility, Ham-Fisted only applies to extra arms, -50%), -5%) [12]; Magery 0 [5]; Magery 1 (One College Only, Communication and Empathy, -40%) [6]; Sharp Teeth [1]; Speak With Animals (Specialized, Snakes, -60%) [10]; Tail ST 2 [6]\*; Thermal Infrared Vision (Short-Range 1, -10%) [9]†; Toxic Attack 1d (Poison; Cyclic, 1 hour interval, 5 cycles, +40%; Follow-Up, Bite, +0%; Resistible, HT-4, -10%; Symptom, Moderate pain, 1/3 HP, +60%; Symptom, Severe pain, 1/2 HP, +80%; Symptom, Terrible pain, 2/3 HP, +60%) [14].

**Perks:** Charm (Persuasion) [1]‡; Scales [1].

**Disadvantages:** Dependency (Mana; Constantly) [-25]; Lunacy [-10]; No Legs (Slithers) [0]; Reputation -1 (Manipulative; Almost everyone; All the time) [-5]; Social Stigma (Minority Group) [-10]; Vulnerability (Depleted necronium or silver ×2) [-20]; Weakness (Depleted necronium or silver; 1d/minute) [-20].

**Quirks:** Hissing “accent” [-1]§.

**Racial Spells:** Persuasion (H) IQ+1 [8]-11.

\* As Arm ST, but it only applies to the tail. It *does* help Constriction Attack.

† A version of Infrared Vision from **GURPS Powers: Enhanced Senses**, p. 8, this allows perception of the heat emitted by humans and other animals or anything at similar temperatures. It lacks the resolution to read or make out other fine details, but it can be used at the same time as normal vision.

‡ A perk from **GURPS Power-Ups 2: Perks**, p. 19, this replaces the spell and Magery prerequisites for Persuasion.

§ Imposes an additional -2 to Disguise and Mimicry rolls when trying to pretend to be a *non*-snake person.

## Half-Snake

-4 points

**Advantages:** Flexibility [5]; Speak With Animals (Specialized, Rattlesnakes, -80%) [5]; Striker (Snake hair; Cutting; Weak, -50%) [4]; Toxic Attack 1d-2 (Poison; Cyclic, 1 hour interval, 5 cycles, +40%; Follow-Up, Snake hair striker, +0%; Resistible, HT, -30%; Symptom, Moderate pain, 1/3 HP, +60%; Symptom, Severe pain, 1/2 HP, +80%; Symptom, Terrible pain, 2/3 HP, +60%) [7].

**Disadvantages:** Reputation -1 (Manipulative; Almost everyone; All the time) [-5]; Social Stigma (Minority Group) [-10]; Vulnerability (Silver ×2) [-10].

## Homo Sapiens Vulpes, “Fox People”

-2 points

**Secondary Characteristic Modifiers:** HP-1 [-2].

**Advantages:** Acute Hearing 3 [6]; Acute Taste and Smell 3 [6]; Alternate Form (Human disguise; Cosmetic, -50%; Magical, -10%) [6]; Discriminatory Smell (Emotion Sense, +50%) [23]; Night Vision 5 [5]; Parabolic Hearing 1 [4]; Sharp Teeth [1]; Speak With Animals (Specialized, Canines, -60%) [10]; Ultrahearing [5].

**Perks:** Fur [1].

**Disadvantages:** Dependency (Mana; Constantly) [-25]; Social Stigma (Minority Group; Mitigator, Illusion disguise, -80%)

[-2]; Vulnerability (Depleted necronium or silver ×2) [-20]; Weakness (Depleted necronium or silver; 1d/minute) [-20].

**Features:** Born Biter 1\*.

\* A feature from **GURPS Martial Arts**, p. 115, this increases a fox person’s effective SM by +1 to determine how large a target he can effectively bite, but also gives +1 to hit to anyone attacking the face.

## Half-Fox

-9 points

**Secondary Characteristic Modifiers:** Per+1 [5].

**Advantages:** Sharp Teeth [1]; Speak With Animals (Specialized, Foxes, -80%) [5].

**Disadvantages:** Social Stigma (Minority Group) [-10]; Vulnerability (Silver ×2) [-10].

## DEMONS

Demons are malign (or sometimes merely mischievous) supernatural entities of indeterminate origin. They may be manifestations of extradimensional evil, or merely created by the darker side of a summoning mage’s subconscious. For more information about demons, their origins, and the quirks of summoning them in the **Technomancer** setting, see **Technomancer**, pp. 61-62.

## Demon Meta-Trait

-25 points

This trait is common to all demons. It includes Callous [-5]; Dependency (Mana; Constantly) [-25]; Doesn’t Sleep [20]; Dread (Holy Symbols) [-10]; Extra Life 1 [25]; Fragile (Unnatural) [-50]; Immunity to Mind-Affecting Magic [30]; Immunity to Sickness [15]; Night Vision 5 [5]; Pacifism (Cannot Harm Innocents; Accessibility, Prevents direct harm of *truly* good folk only, -50%) [-5]; Social Stigma (Excommunicated) [-5]; Social Stigma (Monster) [-15]; Unaging [15]; Vulnerability (Depleted necronium or silver ×2) [-20]. Demons are affected by True Faith, Banish, and Pentagram.

## Gremlin

152 points

A gremlin is a technological trickster demon; see **GURPS Technomancer**, p. 63, for details.

**Attribute Modifiers:** HT+1 [10].

**Secondary Characteristic Modifiers:** HP+1 [2].

*Hunt and kill, hunt and kill. Titillating? Yes. Practical? Hardly. Meanwhile, the humans, with their plebeian minds, have brought us a truly demonic concept: mass production!*

*– The Master, in **Buffy the Vampire Slayer** #3.9*



**Advantages:** Flight (Only in altered body form, -10%; Small Wings, -10%) [32]; Invisibility (Machines Only, -50%) [20]; Magery 2 (Technological only, -40%) [17]; Shrinking 6 [30]; Versatile [5]. ● 50 points chosen from among Artificer [10/level], Gadgeteer or Quick Gadgeteer [25 or 50], Gizmos [5/gizmo], Intuitive Mathematician [5], Mathematical Ability 1-2 [10/level], or Regeneration (Regular) [25].

**Disadvantages:** Curious (6) (Only about gadgets, -60%) [-4]; Demon (p. 32) [-25]; Impulsiveness (9) [-15]; Sadism (12) [-15].

**Racially Innate Spells\*:** Glitch (H) IQ+5 [16]-15; Machine Control (Touch only, -20%) (H) IQ+5 [13]-15; Reveal Function (H) IQ+5 [16]-15.

\* Includes +2 for Magery.

## Hellraker

64 points

A Hellraker is a monstrous warrior demon; see **GURPS Technomancer**, p. 64, for background information.

**Attribute Modifiers:** ST+5 [45\*]; DX+1 [20]; HT+2 [20].

**Secondary Characteristic Modifiers:** SM+1; HP+10 [18\*].

**Advantages:** Teeth (Sharp) [1]. ● 100 points chosen from among ST [9\*/level], HP+1 [2], Claws (Blunt) or (Hooves) or (Sharp) or (Talons) or (Long Talons) [3, 3, 5, 8, or 11], DR 1-4 [5-20], Flight (Winged, -25%) [30], Regeneration (Slow) or (Regular) or (Fast) or (Very Fast) [10, 25, 50, or 100], or Striker (Horns or Tail) [varies].

**Disadvantages:** Appearance (Monstrous) [-20]; Bloodlust (12) [-10]; Demon (p. 32) [-25]; Frightens Animals [-10]; Social Stigma (Monster) [-15]; Uncontrollable Appetite (12) (Human Flesh) [-15]; Uncontrollable Appetite (12) (Murder) [-15]. ● -30 points chosen from among Bad Grip 1 [-5], Bad Temper (12) [-10], Bully (12) [-10], Increased Consumption 1 [-10], or Sadism (12) [-15].

\* Bought with Size, -10%.

## Malebrachne

146 points

These entities are demonic masters of temptation and corruption; see **GURPS Technomancer**, p. 64, for details.

**Attribute Modifiers:** ST+2 [20]; IQ+1 [20]; HT+2 [20].

**Secondary Characteristic Modifiers:** FP+5 [15].

**Advantages:** Charisma 3 [15]; Magery 1 [15]; Smooth Operator 1 [15]. ● 60 points chosen from among DR 1 or 2 [5 or 10], Invisibility [40], Morph (Cosmetic, -50%; Retains Shape, -20%) [30], Regeneration (Slow) or (Regular) or (Fast) [10, 25, or 50], Voice [10], or additional levels of Smooth Operator [15/level].

**Disadvantages:** Demon (p. 32) [-25]; Sadism (12) [-15].

**Racial Skill Modifiers:** +3 to Fast Talk [6].

## Succubus/Incubus

175 points

These are demons of carnal temptation; see **GURPS Technomancer**, p. 64, for more information.

**Attribute Modifiers:** ST+2 [20]; DX+1 [20]; HT+3 [30].

**Advantages:** Appearance (Very Beautiful/Handsome) [16]; Double-Jointed [15]; Hermaphromorph [5]; Leech 2 (Accelerated Healing, +25%; Accessibility, Requires sexual intimacy, -25%; Contact Agent, -30%; Steal FP, +50%; Takes Extra Time 10, -100%) [6]; Magery 1 [15]; Morph (Cosmetic, -50%; Retains Shape, -20%) [30]; Teeth (Sharp) [1]; Voice [10]. ● 40 points chosen from among HP [2/level], Claws (Sharp) [5], DR 1 or 2 [5 or 10], Flight (Winged, -25%) [30], or Regeneration (Slow) or (Regular) [10 or 25].

**Disadvantages:** Broad-Minded [-1]; Demon (p. 32) [-25]; Lecherousness (12) [-15]; Responsive [-1].

**Racial Skill Modifiers:** +3 to Erotic Art [6].

**Racially Learned Skills:** Erotic Art (A) DX+8 [2]-19\*; Sex Appeal (A) HT+7 [1]-20†.

\* Includes +5 for Double-Jointed and +3 for racial skill bonus.

† Includes +6 for Very Beautiful and +2 for Voice.

## OTHER SUPERNATURAL ENTITIES

Because they are the products of standard magical spells, **Technomancer** elementals (**Technomancer**, pp. 59-61) can use the elemental templates from **GURPS Magic**. **Necromantic** zombies can be based on the zombie templates from **GURPS Magic** or use the stats in **GURPS Monster Hunters 3: The Enemy**. The Western dragon from **GURPS Dragons**, p. 146, is a decent starting point for translating **Technomancer** dragons to Fourth Edition; note that **Technomancer** dragons do not have breath attacks.

## Holo-Ghost

215 points

This is the visible and sentient remnant of a dead person, created via spirit holography (see **GURPS Technomancer**, p. 47).

**Advantages:** Doesn't Breathe [20]; Doesn't Eat or Drink [10]; Doesn't Sleep [20]; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards [30]; Insubstantiality (Always On, -50%) [40]; Invisibility (Substantial Only, -10%; Usually On, +5%) [38]; Magery 1 [15]; Possession (Holo-Spiritual\*, -20%; Magical, -10%) [70]; Unaging [15].

**Disadvantages:** Dependency (Mana; Constantly) [-25]; Dread (Exorcism) [-10]; Social Stigma (Minority Group) [-10].

● A total of -15 points in Compulsive Behaviors, Obsessions, and Odious Personal Habits related to haunting or connected to the cause of death.

**Racially Innate Spells†:** Death Vision (H) IQ+3 [12]-13.

**Features:** Affected by Pentagram spell; Can be detected by sensitive individuals and animals; and Can be turned using True Faith.

\* This limitation is identical to the Spiritual limitation (p. B76), except that this holo-ghost template is required rather than the Spirit meta-trait.

† Includes +1 for Magery.

## Merlin Vampire

242 points

The vampires of *GURPS Technomancer* are blood-sucking corpses whose strengths and weaknesses are somewhat different from those of traditional fictional vampires. See *Technomancer*, p. 57, for a description and *Technomancer*, p. 56, for details on becoming a vampire.

**Attribute Modifiers:** ST+8 [80]; HT+5 [50].

**Advantages:** Discriminatory Taste [10]; Doesn't Breathe [20]; Hard to Kill 3 [6]; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards [30]; Invisibility (Machines Only, -50%) [20]; Magery 1 [15]; Night Vision 9 [9]; Shadow Form [50]; Supernatural Durability (Killed by depleted necronium and silver) [150]; Unaging [15]; Vampiric Bite [30].

**Disadvantages:** Callous [-5]; Dependency (Mana; Constantly) [-25]; Dependency (Rest nightly in earth of homeland; Daily) [-60]; Draining (Blood) [-10]; Infectious Attack [-5]; Lifebane [-10]; Social Stigma (Monster) [-15]; Supernatural Features (No Body Heat\*; No Reflection; Pallor\*) [-16]; Uncontrollable Appetite (12) (Blood) [-15]; Unhealing (Partial) [-20]; Vulnerability (Depleted necronium or silver x2) [-20]; Weakness (Sunlight; 1d/minute) [-60].

**Racially Innate Spells†:** Create Servant (Animates a person's reflection‡, -50%) (H) IQ+2 [4]-12; Shape Darkness (H) IQ+2 [8]-12; Teleport (Only from one mirror to another, and both must be large enough to step through, -50%) (VH) IQ+2 [6]-12.

**Features:** Sterile.

\* Except after feeding.

† Includes +1 for Magery.

‡ That person's reflection steps out of the mirror and behaves as a created servant; the person whose reflection was animated still reflects normally in other mirrors.

## Toxic Zombie

4 points

This is a shambling animated corpse that is usually created by exposure to mana-toxic waste; see *GURPS Technomancer*, p. 56, for further information.

**Attribute Modifiers:** ST+5 [50]; HT+2 [20].

**Advantages:** Doesn't Breathe [20]; Doesn't Sleep [20]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards [30]; Injury Tolerance (No Blood; Unliving) [25]; Silence 2 [10]; Single-Minded [5]; Unaging [15].

**Disadvantages:** Appearance (Hideous) [-16]; Bad Smell [-10]; Dependency (Mana; Constantly) [-25]; Draining (Cerebral\*, +100%) [-20]; Fragile (Unnatural) [-50]; Hidebound [-5]; Infectious Attack† [-5]; Social Stigma (Dead)‡ [-20]; Supernatural Features (No Body Heat; Pallor) [-15]; Uncontrollable Appetite (12) (Brains) [-15]; Unhealing (Partial) [-20].

**Features:** Sterile.

\* The zombie loses IQ instead of HP and must devour the brain of an intelligent living being to restore each point of lost IQ; this cannot raise IQ above its starting value. For each point of IQ lost, also reduce self-control roll for Uncontrollable Appetite by 1.

† See *Ambulatory Necrotic Plague* (*GURPS Technomancer*, pp. 102-104).

‡ Social Stigma (Dead) comes from *GURPS Horror*, p. 25. Unless the zombie is presently serving some lawful purpose, most people (and the law) would prefer it be put to rest or destroyed.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Kelly Pedersen also wrote *Technomancer Needs Hunters!* (pp. 4-10); see that article for his bio. David L. Pulver contributed *Merlin Declassified* (pp. 20-29); check out that article for his bio.

**GURPS** Fourth Edition



# TECHNOMANCER™

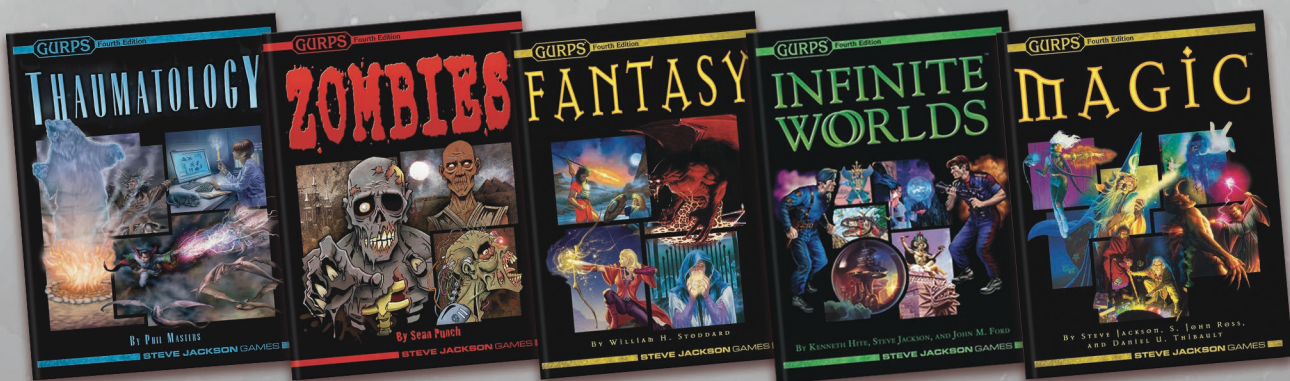
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# RANDOM THOUGHT TABLE

## QUESTIONS AND TECHNOMANCERS

BY STEVEN MARSH, *PYRAMID* EDITOR

I hope you'll forgive me for one of the most obvious sentences I've ever typed, but it's important to establish the groundwork: The *GURPS Technomancer* universe is a fair bit like ours, only different.

In other words, the conceptual underpinnings for the world of *Technomancer* feel like our own world, only with magic sometimes standing in for technology.

But it's interesting to think about this setting from a fundamental game-design question: Why? Why is it important for the world to start from that foundational standpoint? And what can it tell us about trying to craft our *own* settings?

*Much of what we are exists  
in the mysterious realm called  
memory. Our identities reside there.  
Without memories, what are we?*

– B.V. Larson, *Technomancer*

### SO YOU WANT TO VISIT ANOTHER WORLD . . .

From my position as an outside-the-loop guy with no special insight into the *GURPS* creative process but lots of insight into making game worlds that make sense, the biggest reason to have *GURPS Technomancer* feel as similar to our world as it does is to make it as fast as possible for players to “enter” that world and have it make sense in their minds.

It goes a lot faster for the group if their baseline assumptions are – in some way – true:

“We want to cause some serious harm. What kind of weapons are there?”

“Well, there are guns, swords, fists . . . whatever you can think of in the real world. Of course, in this setting, they're probably made or powered by magic in some way, but that doesn't change what they look or feel like, or how people react to them.”

“Gotcha.”

Soon . . .

“Okay; we're hurt. In this world, are there emergency services?”

“Sure! Give them a call. Again, the telecommunications industry may be a bit more magical than you'd imagine, but it'll basically work the same . . .”

It's a *huge* advantage to gamers if most of what they know or understand about the mundane is completely true, albeit with a few (relatively) minor tweaks overlaid on top of the setting. I'd argue it's one of the big reasons that the *Star Wars* universe took root in the collective consciousness as easily as it did; the world felt more-or-less like our own world, enough so that it was entirely possible to be “grounded” in the setting. Are there guns? Yes, and they more-or-less work like our guns (and – at least in the first movie – they look identical to our world's guns). Farms? Binoculars? Money? Yep, yep, yep. Are family structures the same? Aunts, uncles, fathers, sisters . . . all identical to our world's. Well, surely the vehicles are different, right? Not so much, actually; the landspeeder pretty much behaves like a dune buggy, large spaceships operate like trucks, huge spaceships move like battleships and other open-sea vessels, small ships operate – and are shot cinematically – like they're WWII dogfighting airplanes – and so on. (Zero-g isn't an issue, and space even conveniently allows for helpful “BOOM” noises when stuff blows up!) Fixing strange electronics involves tools that look and behave like screwdrivers and wrenches. There are bars and bartenders, and musicians, and trash compactors, and pretty much all the trappings of the modern world . . . but *in space!* In fact, the only elements that aren't more or less “mundane” are all treated with a similar level of awe and disbelief.

The Force is approached by one protagonist (with disdain) as being analogous to any real-world religious belief, devoid of any verifiable power. The Death Star is so incredible compared to what the main characters know and understand that everyone treats it as the One Big Thing that's completely at odds with the rest of the universe . . . and is thus the focused threat.

This is also similar to the tack taken by the Harry Potter universe, which behaves very much like our own, only with magic instead of Star Wars' technology. So there are classrooms, but they're *magic* classrooms. There's a robust mail delivery system, but it's based on *owls*. And so on.

As a final gaming example (which I'm sure I've shared before, but I'm sharing it again): I struggled for a couple of years to make sense of the original *Fading Suns* setting. The words were understandable on the page, but it didn't "click." Then one day a friend said, "It's basically *Dungeons & Dragons* in space," and the whole thing came into focus. Oh; *those* folks are the priests, *those* folks are the magic users, you've got fighters, a medieval Ren Faire-type society, quests, monsters – got it! Even though that was an imprecise distillation of the setting (and it was, to a great extent), it was close enough for me – as an audience member – to put enough of the pieces together in a way where I was part of an amazing campaign that lasted for years.

## ALTERNATE WAYS TO REALITY

If the whole point of tying a game setting into our own worldview is to make it more accessible to players, what does that get you? Well, understanding the "trick" of how a game universe introduces itself to new players can help us come up with new ways to devise our own game worlds . . . or rework existing worlds to something new and fresh.

But first, let's delve into the three most-common *other* gateways to presenting strange settings.

### What Does "Obliviscor" Mean? I Forget . . .

If I had a dollar for every video game where the main character starts out with amnesia, I'd probably be able to afford to re-buy at least a few of those video games. Having a hero who doesn't know anything about a setting is a good way to introduce *players* who don't know anything about a setting, since you're all in the same boat.

This method can also work for any divergence points, if things were "normal" but now aren't; by having the protagonist not know things, the players can be forgiven their ignorance also. For example, in *The Walking Dead*, Rick Grimes awakens from a coma to discover the world is now overrun by zombies. While the world is largely the same as he knew, the facts of what happened, how zombies work, how many are there, how endangered is humanity, etc. are all left as open-ended. This could easily be cribbed for any setting with a clearly defined divergence point, such as *Torg* or *Aberrant*.

Starting out with amnesia may only work for a specific campaign – it's hard to envision a setting where PCs would

always awaken with amnesia every time – but that may be all that's needed to bring the *players* up to speed on the world.

### It's Like Our World, But Postal Workers Are Gods

Perhaps the great 1990s cliché in gaming was, "The world is not what it seems." There were a bunch of RPG settings that began with the premise that the world was more-or-less what we (as readers) knew it to be, *and* there's an additional world layered on top of that. Gaming examples include *Vampire: The Masquerade* (*the world is what it seems* . . . but there are also vampires), *In Nomine* (*twiwis* . . . but angels and demons), the venerable *Call of Cthulhu* (*twiwis* . . . but tentacles), *GURPS Voodoo* (*twiwis* . . . but monsters), and others I'm sure I'm forgetting.

In this case, fledgling players usually take the role of someone who's newly indoctrinated into the world, and they need to get up to speed on the bits they *didn't* know.

## THE DISCLAIMER

Although establishing certain fundamental ideas for a setting is a good idea (at least, that's my thesis statement, and I'm sticking with it), that doesn't mean if your gaming group *doesn't* do this You're Doing It Wrong. In particular, establishing a world for small groups is usually much easier than for larger ones, because you can all figure out what you don't know together, and patch those holes or change things to make sense on the fly. That's trickier to do with settings intended for a mass audience.

Of course, worlds from fiction authors' settings tend to be much more "out there" than many gaming settings. However, they generally have the advantage of a fixed viewpoint (the main hero or heroes), and authors usually have all the pieces of the plot straight in their heads. If you go to translate one of these settings to your gaming table, you can always hand the novels to the players and say, "Here, read these," and be reasonably assured you'll all be on the same page. If you want more insight into translating a world with a strange outlook, check out *GURPS Adaptations*.

### Weird With a Side Order of Weird

As a final example – which seemed *just* different enough to warrant spinning off into its own thing – some settings seem to benefit from taking an established bit of weirdness that the audience *is* familiar with, and layering on weirdness that they aren't.

Probably the quintessential examples of this are the classic TSR settings of *Spelljammer* and (especially) *Planescape*. In both those cases, these campaigns take an established type of world that the players don't *really* "know" but they do "understand" – in both cases, medieval-esque dungeon-gear fantasy – and add on new weirdness that the players can't be expected to know (spacefaring and alternate-world traveling, respectively).

This gets its own mention because players may have knowledge gaps in the underlying (non-weird) world that keep them from understanding it fully, which may provide complications to comprehending the full setting.

For example, if players don't have a good idea of how elves sleep in a standard *Dungeons & Dragons* game, they may have additional complications with understanding how they do in *Spelljammer's* strange gravity.

This is a useful one to keep in mind when layering some new strangeness on an existing setting. For example, I'm sure we could all envision a post-apocalyptic campaign set in the Star Wars universe, but there are probably going to be some gaps that make that an interesting challenge. ("How do we refuel our personal vehicles? Wait, how did vehicles get refueled *before* the Fall?" "How do we deal with radiation? Hold on, did folks worry about radiation before in this universe?" etc.)

## MORE *TECHNOMANCER!*

You can find more Fourth Edition support for *GURPS Technomancer* in other issues of *Pyramid* and in a few supplements.

- *Practical Astromancy* in *Pyramid* #3/30: *Spaceships* extends the *Technomancer* setting into space.
- *Ultra-Tech Too* in *Pyramid* #3/51: *Tech and Toys III* provides *GURPS Fourth Edition* stats for nuclear-enhanced mana area (NEMA) reactors.
- *Thoroughly Modern Magic* in *Pyramid* #3/66: *The Laws of Magic* discusses production-line magic.
- *GURPS Disasters: Meltdown and Fallout* offers a brief discussion of the possible effects of radiation in magical worlds, in addition to its in-depth look at mundane nuclear reactors, radiation effects, and the like.
- *GURPS Mysteries* briefly talks about how to deal with a setting that includes both magic and forensic science.
- *GURPS SEALs in Vietnam* has a section about SEALs in the *Technomancer* setting.
- Although *GURPS Thaumatology: Urban Magics* doesn't deal directly with *Technomancer*, much of the information in that volume is relevant to a world where magic and technology co-exist. The supplement also includes a much greater look at the Conduct Power and Draw Power spells, plus two new minor versions of these rituals.

## WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT, ELFIE?

So, having put down a whole bunch of words to talk about how different games concoct and introduce their universes in different ways, what does this mean for *Technomancer*?

First of all, understanding the link between the *Technomancer* universe and our own can improve your ability to make up your own elements. If you're hewing close to the "same but different" ethos, then it can help you make sure you don't stray too far from established canon.

Second, understanding the link between how the setting intersects with our own expectations makes it easier to introduce elements that are more ambitious. For example, if you wanted to run a 1960s cinematic espionage game that takes place in that world, then it's helpful to have an idea of

what technology and mindsets of that era were in our universe, so you can more correctly translate the period into the *Technomancer* realm. (If you – say – make cheap omnipresent communications as available in your 1960s campaign as they are in our modern world, then you're going to have a hard time with many of the common plots of that genre and time period, including courier missions and "we've got to get to the authorities before the plan comes to fruition!" storylines.)

Similarly, if you want to layer on something new or different to the *Technomancer* universe, finding out how much the players know about the setting and about what you'd like to include will help you decide how much you'll need to bring the players up to speed on. For example, do the players know the *Technomancer* world well enough to all be on the same page for what a post-apocalyptic version of that setting would look like . . . and would such a thing be of interest to them?

Finally, understanding the trick of *Technomancer's* world presentation means that you can decide to do your own thing, if that's what the group would prefer. For example, the *Technomancer* of 1998 had a flavor of our own world in that era, and this issue brings some elements "up to date" by postulating more-modern takes on similar ideas. If we come out in another 20 years with any articles talking about *Technomancer*, chances are that the world of *Technomancer 2038* will resemble our *own* world at that time (whatever form it may take). But – and this is the key – you don't have to be beholden to that vision of *Technomancer* in your own game. The Game Police won't come for you if you do your own wild and crazy thing; they're still too busy trying to figure out what happened with the "clicky-base" character-design system of the *GURPS Fourth Edition* timeline that split off in April 2003.

If you want to have a *Technomancer* divergence point that involves a world war in (say) 2000, and have the geopolitical or magical situation be really strange compared to the normal campaign, have fun! The point of *GURPS* is to help you easily bring your ideas to life at the gaming table. We just try to give you the tools to make your games as awesome as possible. Having a firm understanding of those tools – and the tricks they use in order to function – makes it easier for you to work *your* magic.

*Knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it.*

– Samuel Johnson

## ABOUT THE EDITOR

Steven Marsh is a freelance writer and editor. He has contributed to roleplaying game releases from Green Ronin, West End Games, White Wolf, Hogshead Publishing, and others. He has been editing *Pyramid* for over 10 years; during that time, he has won four Origins awards. He lives in Indiana with his wife, Nikola Vrtis, and their son.

## ABOUT *GURPS*

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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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