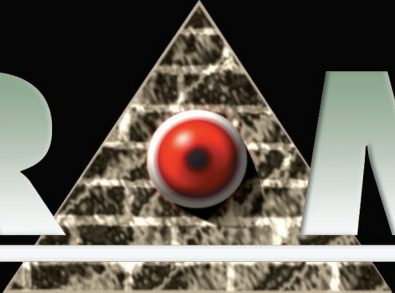


# PYRAMID<sup>®</sup>



Special Issue December '16

## DUNGEON FANTASY

COLLECTED



FEATURING MORE THAN 20 ARTICLES BY  
PETER V. DELL'ORTO, DAVID L. PULVER,  
SEAN PUNCH, MATT RIGGSBY,  
AND MANY OTHERS!

# STEVE JACKSON GAMES

Stock #37-2581

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# INTRODUCTION

Shortly after going to college in 1991, I picked up the *GURPS Basic Set* (the original one-book Third Edition version) and was looking for unusual support material that spoke to me. At some point, this quest took me to the back stock of a game shop's inventory. There, I stumbled across some back issues of *Roleplayer*, including issue #21.

The article I most remember from that issue was "The Noble Steed" by Ann Dupuis – *GURPS* character-creation rules for horses. Even by today's standards, it was a huge article, running a few thousand words longer than the longest feature we've run in the PDF era of *Pyramid*.

That article blew my fledgling *GURPS* mind. "Wait; you can *do* this?!" I mean, I knew immediately that not every campaign – or even *most* campaigns – would find use for it. But I recognized those settings that *could* use it would be wildly appreciative of the ability to add depth and possibility to their equine associates.

More importantly, I recognized that a *GURPS* support magazine could push the envelope of what you might expect, delivering material that you didn't know you wanted or needed, but sparked that "cool!" instinct.

Flash forward to 2008. Less than a year after the first *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* supplement was released, *Pyramid* underwent a transformation, from a weekly website format to a monthly PDF release. This format allowed us a number of advantages, including closer integration to the rest of the *GURPS* line. For the first time in years, *Pyramid* articles looked more-or-less like *GURPS* supplements, and the ties between articles and existing *GURPS* items was closer than ever.

But *Pyramid* has retained the tradition of the original *Roleplayer* as the spot to try out things that tied into existing *GURPS* canon but weren't 100% beholden to it. Great ideas that may not fill an entire supplement could find a home, as could focused material of high interest to a smaller audience. And, of course, there are plenty of bits that are designed to appeal to a large number of readers.

As of the time of this writing, we've had 97 issues of *Pyramid*, of which six have been devoted to *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*: four "regular" *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* issues, and two "Alternate Dungeons" issues devoted to ideas that look at other ways of thinking of crypt-crawling adventure. But we've also had dozens of articles that have supported, expanded, or tied into *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* in issues that *weren't* explicitly tied to that product line.

This compilation, then, collects most of those articles in one easy-to-access source. We have *not* done any additional editing or reformatting of this material, outside of giving it attractive page numbers so it makes some semblance of sense if you print it out.

Articles are arranged in five sections, following the format of the books of the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game* (which had a successful Kickstarter in 2016 thanks to 1,587 backers):

- *Adventurers* collects everything of interest to the character-creation process, including new professions and add-ons.
- *Exploits* is an assortment of material that is designed for running of the game, including new rules, add-ons, and other bits that don't fit neatly into the other four sections.
- *Magic* is a compilation of new magical material, including spells, abilities, magic items, and artifacts.
- *Monsters* brings together adversaries and threats for the heroes, as well as material directly related to sapient dangers.
- *Dungeons* comprises four adventures or outlines that should provide a complete experience for the heroes and GM.

In each section, articles are arranged in the order they were originally published. We've also retained the original dates for each article at the foot of the page, so you can easily see when it first appeared on the scene

I hope this compilation provides you with the same delight and awe as my encounter with *Roleplayer* did 20-plus years ago. Gather your heroes; adventure awaits!

## THE CUTTING EDGE OF DUNGEON CRAWLING

The *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* line has always been designed to be entirely self-contained, so you only need its supplements, the *GURPS Basic Set*, and *GURPS Magic* to use. *Pyramid* is under no such restrictions, and – in fact – we'll often push the envelope by tying in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* with other *GURPS* supplements to mix things up and expand its possibilities.

All of this is warning that – in addition to the *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* line – some of these articles presume familiarity with supplements that *aren't* part of that series . . . and sometimes with other issues of *Pyramid*. However, a lot of material here stands alone. In fact, not all these articles were designed specifically with *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* in mind, but were chosen for this compilation because they should prove useful or inspirational to those gamers.

## 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.

# ADVENTURERS

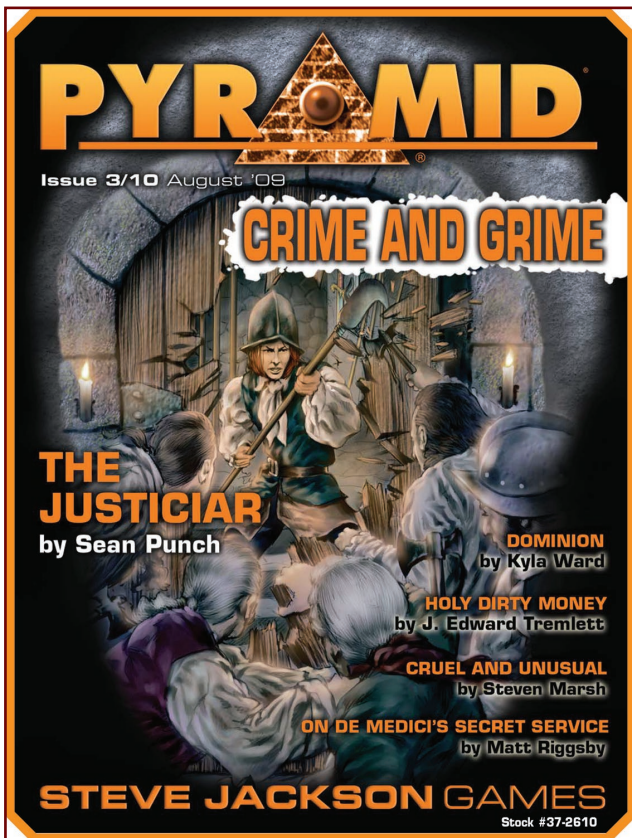
Perhaps unsurprisingly, character-creation options are the most popular articles among writers and readers of *Pyramid*. After all, most in-game mechanics, abilities, or subsystems have already been devised and sorted out, but there's a seemingly infinite diversity in adventuring possibilities. Plus, it's interesting to look at existing ideas and expand them, like "a fighter who specializes more in defense," or "a swashbuckler who's more sociable."

Of course, not all of these options are suitable for all campaigns, and some might be better reserved for NPCs. Ask your GM if adventuring is right for you.

As a final idea, maybe some of the suggestions presented in this volume are only available if the heroes "unlock" them through adventuring. This can be as realistic or

video-game-y as the group wants. For example, the abilities from "More Power to Dungeon Warriors!" (pp. 26-36) might require everyone to play at least 10 adventures to get experience with the system, while "Clerics of Order and Chaos" (pp. 53-58) might only become available once the heroes actually encounter those practitioners of faith for the first time and learn of their ways.

As noted in the introduction on p. 3, some articles rely on outside material. In particular, "The Mystic Knight" (pp. 8-11) requires *GURPS Power-Ups 1: Imbuements*, "May the Shadows Guide You" (pp. 12-17) needs *GURPS Divine Favor*, and "The Sorcerer" (pp. 59-63) uses *GURPS Thaumatology: Sorcery*.



*Complex character concepts with tricky ability mixes have always been an element of hack-and-slash gaming – if only because of the added opportunities for munchkinism!*

*– GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 3: The Next Level*

# THE JUSTICIAR

BY SEAN PUNCH

**GURPS *Dungeon Fantasy*** is all about killing and taking. Civilization exists mainly to give the heroes somewhere to sell loot and buy gear. The Law – such as it is – consists of the Town Watch (who descend upon unlucky black-marketeers) and the King’s men (who collect taxes, seize stolen goods, and punish debasers of coin).

As explained on p. 30 of ***Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons***, the Town Watch and the King’s men are abstract, impersonal forces. Nevertheless, they somehow manage to keep well-armed, spell-slinging dungeon-crawlers in line, and even discipline them. This suggests that The Law has its own champions, the equal of any delver.

Enter the justiciar. These men of justice are tough enough to challenge even hardened adventurers. More interestingly, they could *be* adventurers!

## JUSTICIAR

250 points

You’re a champion of The Law. Whomever you serve – Lord Mayor, the King, or the Faerie Court – you’re on “detached duty.” You venture into dungeons alongside delvers, retrieve property stolen by monsters, and discourage your allies from committing crimes against civilized folk. You’re as high-minded as the holy warrior, but you enforce mortal law, not divine commandments. Since you judge motives, not methods, and aren’t above “sneaky” tactics, you’re a natural foil for the thief but not *automatically* his foe.

**Attributes:** ST 12 [20]; DX 13 [60]; IQ 14 [80]; HT 12 [20].

**Secondary Characteristics:** Damage 1d-1/1d+2; BL 29 lbs.; HP 12 [0]; Will 14 [0]; Per 15 [5]; FP 12 [0]; Basic Speed 6.00 [-5]; Basic Move 6 [0].

**Advantages:** Higher Purpose (Justice Will Be Served)† [5] and Intuition [15]. • A further 35 points chosen from among ST +1 to +3 [10/level], DX +1 [20], IQ +1 [20], HT +1 to +3 [10/level], Will +1 to +6 [5/level], Per +1 to +5 [5/level], Basic Move +1 to +3 [5/level], Acute Senses (any) [2/level], Danger Sense [15], Eidetic Memory [5] or Photographic Memory [10], Fearlessness [2/level] or Unfazeable [15], Honest Face [1], Luck [15] or Extraordinary Luck [30], Magic Resistance [2/level], Mind Shield [4/level], Night Vision 1-9 [1/level], Penetrating Voice [1], Peripheral Vision [15], Resistant to Poison (+3) [5], Signature Gear [Varies], Smooth Operator 1 or 2 [15 or 30], or Weapon Bond [1].

**Disadvantages:** Honesty (12) [-10] and Intolerance (Scum who aren’t as law-abiding as me in civilized regions)

[-5]. • Another -10 points chosen from among Code of Honor (Gentleman’s or Soldier’s) [-10], Curious [-5\*], Obsession (Tracking down *specific* criminal or stolen goods) [-5\*], Sense of Duty (Adventuring companions) [-5] or (Nation) [-10], Truthfulness [-5\*], or worsen Honesty from (12) [-10] to (9) [-15] for -5 points or to (6) [-20] for -10 points. • A further -20 points chosen from the previous list or Bad Temper [-10\*], Bully [-10\*], Callous [-5] or Selfless [-5\*], Loner [-5\*], No Sense of Humor [-10], Odious Personal Habits (Arrogant, judgmental, etc.) [-5], Overconfidence [-5\*], Overweight [-1] or Fat [-3], or Stubbornness [-5].

**Primary Skills:** Interrogation, Shadowing, and Traps, all (A) IQ [2]-14. • Observation, Search, and Tracking, all (A) Per [2]-15. • One of Bolas, Lasso, or Whip, all (A) DX+1 [4]-14; or Net (H) DX [4]-13. • One of Crossbow (E) DX+2 [4]-15; Bow or Throwing, both (A) DX+1 [4]-14; or Sling (H) DX [4]-13. • One of these three packages of melee skills:

1. One of Axe/Mace, Broadsword, or Shortsword, all (A) DX+3 [12]-16, and Shield (E) DX+3 [8]-16.
2. One of Rapier, Saber, or Smallsword, all (A) DX+3 [12]-16; one of Shield (Buckler) (E) DX+3 [8]-16, or Cloak or Main-Gauche, both (A) DX+2 [8]-15.
3. One of Polearm, Spear, or Staff, all (A) DX+5 [20]-18.

**Secondary Skills:** Brawling and Forced Entry, both (E) DX+1 [2]-14; Stealth (A) DX [2]-13; and Wrestling (A) DX+1 [4]-14. • Three of Savoir-Faire (High Society) (E) IQ [1]-14; Heraldry, Public Speaking, or Streetwise, all (A) IQ-1 [1]-13; Diplomacy (H) IQ-2 [1]-12; Intimidation (A) Will-1 [1]-13; or Detect Lies (H) Per-2 [1]-13.

**Background Skills:** Seven of Fast-Draw (any), Knife, or Knot-Tying, all (E) DX [1]-13; Climbing or Riding (Horse), both (A) DX-1 [1]-12; First Aid or Gesture, both (E) IQ [1]-14; Acting, Connoisseur (any), Disguise, Holdout, Lockpicking, or Occultism, all (A) IQ-1 [1]-13; Diagnosis, Poisons, or Tactics, all (H) IQ-2 [1]-12; Thaumatology (VH) IQ-3 [1]-11; Hiking (A) HT-1 [1]-11; Scrounging (E) Per [1]-15; Body Language, Lip Reading, or Urban Survival, all (A) Per-1 [1]-14; 1 point to raise a 1-point secondary or background skill by a level; or 1 point to buy an extra secondary skill.

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

† Gives +1 to any roll made to find bandits, thieving monsters, etc.; subdue, capture, or punish them; and recover stolen goods. Applies only when pursuing *proven* criminals (e.g., there’s a warrant or a bounty) – “All kobolds are thieves!” isn’t good enough.

Learn about politics and justice in Western 17th-century cities in **GURPS Swashbucklers**.

## Legal WHAT?

Despite being a law-enforcer – often in the service of a city or even the King – the justiciar lacks Legal Enforcement Powers. That's because this advantage doesn't suit the simplistic view of society prevalent in the fantasy games of which *Dungeon Fantasy* is a pastiche. Of course, the same thinking excludes the Duty disadvantage, so it's a wash. If the GM would prefer greater social complexity in his campaign, then he should assume that PCs built with the justiciar template possess *both* traits . . . which conveniently cancel out as a zero-cost feature.

### Customization Notes

The justiciar must first decide whether he operates primarily in the dungeon or around town. The former means being a better delver, but a party that seeks urban adventures – or the patronage of powerful townsfolk – may recruit someone with the latter inclination. Next, the justiciar should choose a particular quarry: enemies of the state, rogue wizards, thieving orcs, urban scum, etc. These decisions lead to a few common archetypes:

*King's Man:* You're an agent of the King's court, delivering high justice at sword's point. Allot some advantage points to Eidetic Memory (for royal decrees and, oh, laws), Signature Gear (for *nice* weapons), Smooth Operator, and/or high IQ. Fitting disadvantages are one or more of Code of Honor (Gentleman's), Sense of Duty (Nation), relentless Honesty, and an arrogant Odious Personal Habit. Most courtiers select Rapier, Saber, or Smallsword as their primary melee skill, and Diplomacy, Heraldry, and Savoir-Faire as their social skills. Background skills inevitably include Riding, but rarely much knowledge of how to operate in the wilds (Climbing, Hiking, etc.) or slums (Scrounging or Urban Survival).

*Mage-Hunter:* You bring magic-wielding criminals to justice: high priests of sinister cults, liches, necromancers, wizardly thieves, etc. You'll *need* – not merely want – some of Fearlessness, Magic Resistance, Mind Shield, and improved Will . . . maybe all four. The motivation to pursue this risky calling might come from Obsession, Overconfidence, and/or Stubbornness. Since your quarry's spells aren't quite as potent from afar, choose the longest-ranged weapon skills: Bolas and Crossbow from a distance, Polearm, Spear, or Staff for melee. As for your other training, Occultism and Thaumatology are essential in order to know your (very dangerous) enemy.

*Retriever:* You go into dungeons to reclaim stolen goods, kidnapped princesses, and so on – and occasionally to deliver death sentences to the criminal monsters and bandits who dwell there. Useful advantages are Danger Sense, Fearlessness, Luck, Night Vision, and extra ST and HT. Disadvantages tend to be things like Curious, Obsession, and Overconfidence. A Sense of Duty to adventuring companions is also likely for one who travels with other dungeon-crawlers. Invest in a hard-hit-

ting melee skill like Axe/Mace, Broadsword, or Polearm. Whatever social skills you take, make sure that Intimidation is among them. Retrievers also need key delving skills like Climbing, Gesture, Hiking, and Lockpicking.

*Watchman:* You're a special agent of the Town Watch. Classic detective advantages include Acute Senses, Danger Sense, Night Vision, Peripheral Vision, and more Per – and for a point, Penetrating Voice is great for those “Hands up!” moments. Code of Honor (Soldier's) is suitable for Watchmen; sleuths are famously Curious; and Bully and No Sense of Humor fit authoritarians. Fantasy gumshoes get as much use out of Detect Lies, Public Speaking, and Streetwise as do high-tech cops, while weapons run toward Polearm, Shortsword, or Spear. Assassins are common in the city, making Diagnosis and Poisons valuable investigative skills. “Undercover” men might want Acting, Disguise, Fast-Draw, Holdout, and Knife.

### Justiciar Power-Ups

In the spirit of *Dungeon Fantasy 3*, justiciars can spend earned points on any ability from their template plus some extras. They may exceed normal Perception limits, buying up to Per 25 (*before* racial modifiers). They may improve Higher Purpose as if it came in levels; Higher Purpose 3 [15], the maximum, gives a +3 bonus. And they may purchase Weapon Master (Entangling Weapons) [30]; when entangling, read the +1 or +2 per die damage bonus as +1 or +2 to the justiciar's ST and -1 or -2 to the victim's escape rolls. Additional options: Combat Reflexes [15], Ridiculous Luck [60], and Silence 1 or 2 [5 or 10].

*I have always believed  
that to have true justice  
we must have equal  
harassment under the law.*

*– Peter Krassner*

### Making the Justiciar Useful

Above-average Per, Per-based skills, and combat abilities ensure that the justiciar will rarely be left twiddling his thumbs. He'll shine whenever reconnaissance, searching, and tracking matter. He might even outshine scouts and thieves, so the GM should be careful to present some challenges that require those other adventurers' unique abilities (archery and dungeon Parkour, respectively). To test the *justiciar's* special gifts, include monsters that must be followed to some lair, secret door, trap, or treasure – or captured alive and made to talk about such a thing – rather than simply killed.

*In some societies, a prisoner might have to rely on friends and family for food and water.*

## New Wildcard Skill: Justiciar!

In a campaign that uses wildcard skills, the justiciar may learn the following:

*Justiciar!* (IQ). Replaces Interrogation, Shadowing, Streetwise, and Traps. Make a DX-based roll for Stealth – or for Bolas, Knot-Tying, Lasso, Net, Whip, or Wrestling to capture someone *by surprise* (never in a melee). Make a Per-based roll for Body Language, Detect Lies, Observation, Search, or Tracking.

The best material rewards for the justiciar are fine or magical versions of live-capture weapons: bolas, lariats, nets, whips, and even such exotica as *crossbow-launched* bolas and nets. Enchanted or upgraded non-weapon items in this vein

also work: miraculous binding rope or shackles, giant-strength leg-hold traps, improved sleeping-gas potions, etc. Finally, the superiors of a justiciar who brings a criminal to justice *and* forgoes his share of the loot might issue him expensive special-order gear (see *Dungeon Fantasy 1*, pp. 25-26 and *Dungeon Fantasy 4*, p. 12) equivalent in value to what his pals ended up taking home.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sean “Dr. Kromm” Punch set out to become a particle physicist in 1985, ended up the *GURPS* Line Editor in 1995, and has engineered rules for almost every *GURPS* product since. He developed, edited, or wrote dozens of *GURPS Third Edition* projects between 1995 and 2002. In 2004, he produced the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition* with David Pulver. Since then, he has created *GURPS Powers* (with Phil Masters), *GURPS Martial Arts* (with Peter Dell’Orto), and the *GURPS Action, GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*, and *GURPS Power-Ups* series . . . and the list keeps growing.

*For we both alike know that into the discussion of human affairs the question of justice enters only where the pressure of necessity is equal, and that the powerful exact what they can, and the weak grant what they must.*

– Thucydides

**GURPS** Fourth Edition



# HOW TO BE A GURPS GM

The Student's Guide to Ultimate Power

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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# THE MYSTIC KNIGHT

BY ANTONI TEN MONRÓS

Imbuement Skills, as detailed in *Power-Ups 1: Imbuements* and *The Perfect Defense* from *Pyramid* #3/4: *Magic on the Battlefield*, are especially fitting for **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy**, and the former includes some suggestions on how to add them to existing templates. It is, however, much more in the style of *Dungeon Fantasy* if such special qualities are only available to those with a certain template. If you include this template in your games, it is recommended that you only allow access to the Imbue advantage through it, and the associated lens.

*Be brave and pure, fearless to the strong and humble to the weak; and so, whether this love prosper or no, you will have fitted yourself to be honored by a maiden's love, which is, in sooth, the highest guerdon which a true knight can hope for.*

– Arthur Conan Doyle

## MYSTIC KNIGHT

250 points

You've unlocked the power to access your internal lines of power, and, by making precise muscle movements, you can make them resonate with the magic around you. You might have had an innate gift, achieved it through rigorous spiritual exercises, or had forced them open with an excruciating ritual that left scars on your mystical aura. Whatever the reason, you can now channel magical energies to power your attacks, on an instinctual level.

Like the holy warrior, you wield supernatural powers in combat. Unlike him, you're not focused solely on fighting evil, nor are you blinded by fanaticism. Instead of the energies of a

fickle god that may end up displeased with you due to your practical nature, you wield arcane energies. Wizards consider you an uneducated brute, toying with mysteries better left to them, but you have enough applied knowledge of harnessing magical forces to boost your martial prowess.

**Attributes:** ST 14 [40]; DX 14 [80]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 13 [30].

**Secondary Characteristics:** Damage 1d/2d; BL 39 lbs.; HP 14 [0]; Will 10 [0]; Per 10 [0]; FP 13 [0]; Basic Speed 6.00 [-15]; Basic Move 6 [0].

**Advantages:** Imbue 2 (Magical, -10%) [18]; Eldritch Talent 3 [15]; and Magery 0 [5]. • Another 51 points from among ST +1 to +5 [10/level], DX +1 to +2 [20/level], HT +1 to +5 [10/level], HP +1 to +4 [2/level], FP +1 to +3 [3/level], Basic Speed +1 or +2 [20 or 40], Combat Reflexes [15], Enhanced Block 1 [5], Enhanced Parry 1 (One melee skill) [5], Eldritch Talent 4 [5], Fearlessness [2/level], Fit [5] or Very Fit [15], Hard to Kill [2/level], Hard to Subdue [2/level], High Pain Threshold [10], Imbue 3 (Magical, -10%) [18], Imbued Weapon [1], Imbued Weapon Bond [1], Luck [15] or Extraordinary Luck [30], Signature Gear [Varies], or Unfazeable [15]. Put any leftovers in more Imbuement Skills.

**Disadvantages:** -20 points chosen from among Bad Temper [-10\*], Bloodlust [-10\*], Callous [-5], Code of Honor (Pirate's or Soldier's) [-5 or -10], Frightens Animals [-10], Magic Susceptibility 1-5 [-3/level], Obsession (Slay some specific type of monster) [-5\*], One Eye [-15], Sense of Duty (Nation) [-10], Unnatural Features 1-5 [1/level], or Wounded [-5]. • Another -15 points chosen from among those traits or Bully [-10\*], Greed [-15\*], Honesty [-10\*], Lecherousness [-15\*], Overconfidence [-5\*], Pyromania [-5\*], Sense of Duty (Adventuring companions) [-5], Social Stigma (Excommunicated) [-5], or Supernatural Features (Flagrant Aura or Unmistakable Power) [Varies]†.

**Primary Skills:** Fast-Draw (any) (E) DX [1]-14 and Shield (E) DX+2 [4]-16‡. • One of Crossbow or Thrown Weapon (any), both (E) DX+2 [4]-16; Bow or Throwing, both (A) DX+1 [4]-15; or Sling (H) DX [4]-14. • One of Axe/Mace, Broadsword, Polearm‡, Shortsword, Spear‡, Two-Handed Axe/Mace‡ or Two-Handed Sword‡, all (A) DX+5 [20]-19; or Flail (H) DX+4 [20]-18.

*The GURPS Range Ruler is a handy item to speed up combat. It's available at [e23.sjgames.com](http://e23.sjgames.com) – and it's free!*



**Secondary Skills:** Armoury (Body Armor or Melee Weapons) (A) IQ+1 [4]-11 and Thaumatology (VH) IQ+1 [2]-11§. • One of Brawling (E) DX+1 [2]-15 or Boxing (A) DX [2]-14.

**Background Skills:** Four of Forced Entry (E) DX [1]-14; Climbing or Stealth, both (A) DX-1 [1]-13; First Aid, Gesture, or Savoir-Faire (High Society), all (E) IQ [1]-10; Gambling, Heraldry, Hidden Lore (Elementals, Spirits, or Undead), or Streetwise, all (A) IQ-1 [1]-9; Strategy or Tactics, both (H) IQ-2 [1]-8; Carousing (E) HT [1]-13; Hiking (A) HT-1 [1]-12; Intimidation (A) Will-1 [1]-9; Scrounging (E) Per [1]-10; or Observation (A) Per-1 [1]-9.

**Imbuement Skills:** 10 Imbuement Skills, all (VH) DX [1]-14§.  
• A further 10 points in either existing Imbuement Skills or new Imbuement Skills, all (VH) DX [1]-14§.

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

† From *GURPS Thaumatology*, p. 25.

‡ Mystic knights who prefer two-handed weapons can omit Shield and raise a two-handed combat skill by a level.

§ Includes +3 from Eldritch Talent.

### Customization Notes

Your 20 points in Imbuement Skills allow a great deal of variation. Melee Imbuements allow you to boost your offensive capabilities greatly. Defensive ones, coupled with heavy armor and a shield, give you resilience unmatched by other adventurers, and Ranged ones allow you to hold your own in ranged combat, without being a specialist like the scout. Some proposed archetypes:

*Brilliant Defender:* Shield and Armor Imbuement Skills are critical. Concentrate on being able to take a lot of damage and protect other party members while still being too dangerous to ignore: Annihilating Weapon, Blinding Defense, Blunting Armor, Corrosive Strike, Dancing Shield, Energizing Defense (Armor and Shield), Expand Armor, Fireproof Armor, Healthful Armor, Impenetrable Armor, Insulated Armor, Lighten Armor, Padded Armor, Reinforce Armor, Restorative Armor, Rigid Armor, Sovereign Armor, Vengeful Defense, and Widen Shield.

*Death Knight:* You focus on crippling, incapacitating, and killing your foes. This is one of the few archetypes that can forego a shield and take full advantage of two-handed weapon options. Suitable Imbuement Skills include Annihilating Weapon, Chilling Strike, Continuing Attack, Corrosive Strike, Crippling Blow, Dancing Weapon, Drugged Weapon, Envenomed Weapon, Forceful Blow, Ghostly Weapon, Penetrating Strike, Shockwave, Stealthy Attack, Strike of Negation, Stupefying Blow, Toxic Strike, Traumatic Blow, Vampiric Weapon, and Withering Strike. Place an extra point in Vampiric Weapon.

*Knight of the Elements:* You excel at taking advantage of your foes' elemental weaknesses, and withstanding their elemental attacks. You specialize in battling elementals. Take Hidden Lore (Elementals) to identify such creatures. Suitable Imbuement Skills include Binding Shot, Burning Strike, Chilling Strike, Corrosive Strike, Cutting Strike, Electric Weapon, Fireproof Armor, Ghostly Weapon, Guided Weapon, Incendiary Weapon, Insulated Armor, Nullifying Armor, Reinforce Weapon (p. 10), Restorative Armor, Shockwave,

Sovereign Armor, Spiritual Defense, Strike of Negation, and Withering Strike.

Like knights, most mystic knights trade the 5 points from quirks for cash for arms and armor.

## Eldritch Might

This is the arcane equivalent to Holy Might, as used by mystic knights.

### Power Modifier: Magical

-10%

The powers of Eldritch Might are based on the instinctive channeling of magical energies through one's body, and they suffer the same penalties for low mana zones as wizard spells.

### Eldritch Abilities

Imbue 1, 2, or 3 (PM, -10%) [9, 18, or 36].

### Eldritch Talent

5 points/level

Eldritch Talent gives a bonus to all Imbuement Skills purchased as part of Eldritch Might, to Thaumatology, and to Magery rolls to detect magic items and changes in mana levels.

## POWER-UPS FOR MYSTIC KNIGHTS

Mystic knights can get up to Eldritch Talent 6, Energy Reserve 20 (Magical) [3/level], and Enhanced Parry 1-3 (Imbuement Skills) [5/level] (which gives +1 to all defensive uses of Imbuement Skills). They can purchase Imbuement Perks and are able to add and improve Imbuement Skills whenever they have enough points – even in battle!

## MIXING PROFESSIONS

These lenses are provided for those using the *Mixing Professions* rules from *Dungeon Fantasy 3: The Next Level*.

### Lenses for Mystic Knights

Mystic knights should use the lenses described for knights (*Dungeon Fantasy 3*, pp. 28-29), with the following exceptions:

• Mystic knight-wizards should upgrade Eldritch Talent 3 to full Magery 3. As they already possess Magery 0, this frees a total of 10 points from the lens, which may be spent on further Magery or more spells.

*GURPS Power-Ups 2: Perks has hundreds of new options to give your hero the upper hand he needs.*

## New Enhancement Skills

### Reinforce Weapon

Melee; DX/Very Hard

*Default:* Specialty for related weapon at same penalty as weapon default.

*Prerequisite:* Imbue 1.

Reinforces the structure of the weapon, changes it into adamant, or coats it with an indestructible force field for an instant. For unarmed attacks, this protects you from the situations governed by the rules for *Hurting Yourself* (p. B379) and the *Parrying Unarmed* (p. B376) rules. For armed attacks, this makes the weapon unbreakable when parrying with it (as per *Parrying Heavy Weapons*, p. B376). This Imbuement also protects the weapon (or body part) from the damage from attacks that are destructive for parrying purposes – such as force swords and attacks enhanced with Annihilating Weapon – and innate attacks with the Aura enhancement, as long as they are not Cosmic.

*Modifiers:* -5 to protect your weapon against Cosmic attacks.

### Returning Weapon

Ranged; DX/Very Hard

*Default:* Specialty for related weapon at same penalty as weapon default.

*Prerequisite:* Imbue 2.

This makes any single imbued projectile return to you. It can either fly straight to you, or dematerialize and reform in your possession. Thrown weapons appear directly in your hands, and ammo appears – intact – in your quiver, magazine, or equivalent. Any single-use effect on the projectile is still expended, though. If the weapon has RoF greater than 1, only the first projectile returns.

*Modifiers:* -1 per additional projectile returned, up to the weapon's RoF.

• Mystic knight-knights should use the template for the holy warrior-knight. This is mostly a level-up template, since most of the choices are already in the mystic knight template. However, it grants access to Born War Leader.

### Becoming a Mystic Knight

Any class can benefit from Imbuement Skills. The GM, however, might wish to add special training difficulties, charge a premium for it, or add some mandatory disadvantages, representing metaphysical scars resulting from the acquisition of such powers.

#### Mystic Knight Lens

50 points

**Advantages:** Eldritch Talent 1\*† (p. 9) [5]; Imbue 1 (Magical -10%) [9], Magery 0 [5].

**Skills:** Thaumatology (VH) IQ-2 [1].

**Special Abilities:** 30 points total in Eldritch Talent 2 to 4 [5/level], Imbue 2 or 3 [9 or 27] and Imbuement Skills all (VH) DX-2 [1].

\* Gives +1 to Thaumatology and Imbuement Skills, already included in the relevant skills.

† Wizards who take the mystic knight lens should drop Eldritch Talent, since Magery already gives them bonus to magical Imbuement Skills, and should base those skills on IQ instead of DX. Likewise, bards have the option of dropping Eldritch Talent from the lens. In this case, they should apply the Bard-Song power modifier to Imbue, changing the cost to [7, 14, or 28], and basing Imbuement Skills on IQ. In any case,

the GM is encouraged to limit access to Imbuement Skills to those he feels are reasonable, for those that do not take the whole lens.

*A true knight is fuller of  
bravery in the midst, than  
in the beginning of danger.*

*– Sir Philip Sidney*

## MAKING A MYSTIC KNIGHT USEFUL

Given their strong combat focus, mystic knights are always useful in the situations where knights are useful. If using Defensive Imbuement Skills, mystic knights can be incredibly resilient. Having the Thaumatology and Hidden Lore (Elementals) skills, plus Magery 0, they can fulfill some of the roles of the wizard, though not as well. In order to make him shine, however, you need to add foes that require some of his special skills to defeat: insubstantial ghosts, creatures with weaknesses to some types of damage, and the like.

*If you're tapping Imbuements, consider giving them cool names. After all, "harnessing the Winter Wind's Edge" sounds better than "activating my Chilling Strike."*

# Imbuement Perks

Imbuement Perks are magical in nature, and thus have Magery as a prerequisite and require mana to work. Mystic knights can purchase 1 Imbuement Perk per 10 points spent in Imbuement Skills. The base template offers up to two Imbuement Perks, as it already includes 20 points spent on Imbuement Skills.

## *Frightening Side Effects*

Mystic knights take pride in putting unsettling flourishes on Imbuement Skills in order to unnerve enemies: Annihilating Weapon that makes your weapon project an uncanny aura of darkness, Vampiric Weapon that makes your weapon emit blood-curdling shrieks when damaging enemies, etc. These are mostly just special effects, but with enough practice, a particular Imbuement Skill can be truly frightening. You must specialize by Imbuement Skill.

On any turn during which you incapacitate – daze, knock out, paralyze, petrify, etc. – or kill an enemy while you’re using the chosen Imbuement Skill, make an immediate second roll against that skill. Success manifests scary side effects that let you try Intimidation (p. B202) against any witnesses as a free action that turn. You must specialize by Imbuement Skill. Note down the exact nature of the effect. Not all specializations might be possible; the GM’s word is final.

## *Illumination*

Imbuement Skills are assumed to make the items you imbue glow, be covered in flames, or show similar special effects. You have managed to focus this mostly cosmetic effect to provide useful illumination. You can charge an item you’re able to imbue to make it glow like a torch (see *Dungeon Fantasy 1: Adventurers*, p. 24). The nature of the glow depends on what Imbuement Skills you possess, on the setting, and on the GM’s prerogative; it lasts indefinitely, without rolls or FP expenditure.

## *Imbued Weapon*

You own a ritually named and attuned weapon (or shield) that you must purchase as Signature Gear; details depend on the setting, and may involve oaths, spells, or inscriptions, and/or require a fine-quality, or similarly special item (GM’s decision). This perk grants that weapon the potential for gaining special abilities. It earns character points at the same rate as you when you per-

form deeds of supernatural significance. Each point can be exchanged for \$500 worth of enchantments chosen by the GM, which optionally increases the possession’s value as Signature Gear. See *Dungeon Fantasy 1*, p. 30, to determine what’s possible. You can only have one Imbued Weapon perk, but should you lose it, you can purchase it a new for a new weapon.

## *Imbued Weapon Bond*

*Prerequisite:* Imbued Weapon

The Weapon Bond perk in *Dungeon Fantasy 1* assumes a balanced, familiar weapon that grants the owner +1 to effective combat skill; it isn’t a supernatural attunement. Mystic knights can purchase a variant that is supernatural. The mystic knight must specialize in a weapon (or shield) that he has selected with the Imbued Weapon perk, and can have only one Imbued Weapon Bond at a time. However, he may freely shift the bond to another suitable item with a day of meditation, which makes replacing lost items easier to manage.

## *Improvised Imbuement*

You can manifest Imbuements without knowing the relevant Imbuement Skills. Each try costs 2 extra FP in addition to the normal costs, and requires a roll against DX-7, with a bonus equal to any relevant power Talent (such as Magery or Eldritch Talent). Whether this is due to natural connection with the forces in play or due to extensive knowledge of the mechanics of Imbuement is setting specific and up to the GM to explain.

## *Mana Compensation*

You have discovered how to use mana more efficiently to power your Imbuements. You cannot imbue if there’s no mana; however, as long as there is any mana at all, the total penalty you suffer for lower-than-normal mana and for negative aspects is -1 less severe for you.

This perk is only available if your Imbue has the Magical power modifier.

## *Sacrificial Imbuement*

You know how to burn your life force to power Imbuement Skills. You can spend HP instead of FP to pay for the costs of Imbuement Skills.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Antoni Ten Monrós is a 27-year-old Spanish information technologies specialist and Java programmer, who started role-playing 15 years ago, with *Stormbringer* and *MERP*. He found *GURPS* 10 years ago and has been hooked since. He lives in Alboraya, Valencia, Spain (to his chagrin), and is a retired

member of Steve Jackson Games MIB Program and an active playtester. When he saw *GURPS Power-Ups 1: Imbuements* he knew he had to write a template for his *Dungeon Fantasy* games. He thanks Emily “Bruno” Smirle, who proofread the original draft; Joan “Artic” Sanchís and Luis “Yolum” Soriano, who field tested it; and the rest of his group, who patiently put up with him while he tweaked it every session.

# MAY THE SHADOWS GUIDE YOU

BY CHRISTOPHER R. RICE

Thieves, con men, and other “street operators” usually work on the fringes of the law, which means that they more or less function outside of society (and all that that entails). This tends to create an environment where they develop their own beliefs, gestures, or even languages. In many works of fiction, thieves have their own set of gods they pray to, heroes they admire, or even a system of gestures that only they know (e.g., “thieves cant”).

Here, then, is a description of one possible faith system for thieves . . . because every good rogue needs someone to pray

to when things go wrong. It also assumes a medieval-like setting – such as most fantasy campaigns – but can be adapted to use in modern-day games or perhaps as a special club in Victorian times. You will need *GURPS Powers: Divine Favor* to make full use of this article (but see *So Now I'm a Priest?* on p. 17 for an alternate idea), plus a few other resources, depending on the prayers used. Those planning to run *GURPS Banestorm*, *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*, *GURPS Infinite Worlds*, or *GURPS Monster Hunters* campaigns obviously need those books as well.

## THE UNSEEN HAND

The Cult of Vayadu – pronounced “vay-AH-due,” and sometimes spelt as Vyabdu – is a secretive group, allowing it to be dropped into nearly any setting. It may be an ancient society in the criminal classes; a “forgotten” religion, recently rediscovered; or an import from another country – perhaps along with another country’s organized criminals.

Ceremonies are fairly straightforward and simple, with a silent litany said in utter darkness being the most common. A few fanatical adherents prefer more spectacular forms of “worship”; committing an act of blatant thievery in the name of Vayadu is the most popular.

Most governments and rulers actively suppress Vayaduian cults wherever they find them, not because of the criminal problems that they can bring but because Vayadu isn’t just a patron of thieves. He also embodies such ideas as freedom of choice and the right to choose one’s destiny. This often conflicts with the dogmatic methods of local churches and institutions who would rather keep their subjects thinking less about their current lives and more about their “afterlives.” Strangely enough, Vayaduian worship is often found among the ranks of the local politicians due to the deity’s influence on intrigue and other “shadow-games.”

Vayadu is said to be the patron god of freedom of choice, intrigue, secrets, shadows, things that are lost, thieves, and thievery. Typical followers include assassins, conspirators, freethinkers, mercenaries, orphans, politicians, thieves, and

treasure-hunters. With this peculiar mix of people, places of worship can be found nearly anywhere.

### VAYADU, THE HIDDEN LORD

Not much is known about the Hidden Lord other than the fact that he concerns himself with all manner of secrets, the lost, and intrigues. Some of his other monikers include the Keeper of Secrets, the Shadow-That-Watches, and the Weaver. He might also have names specific to certain regions, places, or even particular worshippers.

He is known among the other gods as a rebel, troublemaker, and freethinker. It is suggested that he was not born to his divinity but that he took it from another god as a mortal (though no one truly knows). True or not, it gives him the air of an usurper, similar to the way “old money” might view the *nouveau riche*. Over the years, he has built up quite the following, especially after his rather epic battle with an unnamed deity.

Like Vayadu, this unknown god was in life a thief and murderer-for-hire. Having taken offense to Vayadu drawing away several of his own worshippers (mostly those seeking lost or hidden treasures), he decided to kill Vayadu. The battle was said to have lasted a full day and night, and raged across many planes of existence until finally Vayadu learned of the resting place of his foe’s heart (which he had placed in a jar and hid away). The shadowy god destroyed the jar and its contents, thereby absorbing the defeated deity’s power and taking his worshippers.

While he is often associated with both secrets and hidden treasure, he doesn't go out of his way to keep such things hidden. For those skilled enough to find such treasures or learn such truths, he does not try to deprive them of those hard-won prizes.

Vayadu is a meddler and keeps close tabs on all his worshippers (even if this is not the norm for the setting). The GM should allow all worshipers to make use of the *Man Proposes, God Disposes* rules (*GURPS Fantasy*, p. 148), even if others are not permitted to rely on them in the campaign.

## Priests

Priests of the Hidden Lord tend to have their fingers in all the local pies, providing services for all worshippers, regardless of occupation or inclination. The priests themselves tend to come from all walks of life and may be of any age or sex. The only thing they have in common is the day when their god called for them to take on more duties, and they answered.

Most priests do not advertise themselves (for obvious reasons), though they do try to be available to their flocks. They are more open in areas where they are not actively persecuted. If local politicians and policy-makers are worshippers, other area worshipers tend to receive unofficial religious freedom; local politicians will not *want* their chosen religion to be one that is persecuted.

Priests use the rules for *Divine Favor* instead of the standard magic system (but see *So Now I'm a Priest?* on p. 17). As paragons, they must select -10 points from among the following:

- Code of Honor (Pirate's) [-5].
- Compulsive Scheming [-10\*] (p. 15).
- Odious Personal Habit (Mysterious) [-5].
- Sense of Duty (Coreligionists) [-10].
- Vow (Never tell someone else a secret he didn't discover on his own) [-5].

Other disadvantages may be taken with the GM's permission as long as they fit his campaign's outlook on Vayadu. Other traits appropriate for worshippers (especially priests) include: Acute Senses (any) (p. B35), Blessed (p. B40), Charisma (p. B41), Cultural Adaptability (p. B46), Flexibility or Double-Jointed (p. B56), High Manual Dexterity (p. B59), Perfect Balance (p. B74), Rapier Wit (p. B79), Smooth Operator (p. B91), Social Chameleon (p. B86), True Faith (p. B94), and Zeroed (p. B100).

In addition to the new prayers described in this article, priests may take any of these learned prayers from *Divine Favor* (pp. 7-16): Confidence, Consecrated Ground, Divine Guidance, Eclipse, Feed the Masses, Final Rest, Holy Touch, Lay on Hands (but not the enhanced version), Powerful Conviction, Raise the Dead, and Traveler's Blessing. (Unless otherwise specified, the priest may also learn the enhanced versions of learned prayers that have them.) The following learned prayers described in *Dungeon Saints* (from *Pyramid* #3/36: *Dungeon Fantasy*) are also suitable: Eyes of Hell, Mantle of the God of Lies, Petrify, and Servant of the God of Lies.

## Sayings From the Shadows

*Freedom is a cause all its own:* If for no other reason than to be able to choose to do something.

*May the shadows guide you:* The equivalent of "good luck."

*May the sun shine upon you:* You wish someone ill luck or harm, or – if used with a specific action or task in mind, such as "May the sun shine upon your journey to the Isla Della Cova" – a schadenfreude hope that he will fail at his task.

*May that which is hidden remain so:* Be quiet, or this conversation needs to stop now.

*The best web is that which goes unnoticed:* The best plan or action is one that cannot be easily understood.

# NEW LEARNED PRAYERS

These prayers are all formatted and detailed similarly to those of *Divine Favor*.

## MINOR BLESSINGS

*Minimum Reaction:* Neutral

### Secret Cache

*Learned Prerequisite:* Divine Favor 4.

*Learned Prayer Cost:* 2 points

You have a special ability to hide items where you can recall them to you at will. These objects must be of a size that you can reasonably hide on your person, and you may hold up to 10 lbs. within your cache. To place an object in your Secret Cache, you must make a Holdout roll (subject to all the usual penalties and modifiers; see p. B200). Once in your Cache, it is undetectable

by mundane senses and can only be withdrawn by you. If you die, all objects placed within your Cache are lost.

*Statistics:* Payload 5 (Accessibility, Only items you could reasonably conceal on your person, -10%; Cosmic, Doesn't count against encumbrance, +50%; Divine, -10%; Requires Holdout roll, -10%) [6]. *Feature:* Weight limit is based on a static BL of 20 lbs. instead of using actual ST.

### Supreme Sneakiness

*Learned Prerequisite:* Divine Favor 4.

*Learned Prayer Cost:* 3 points.

This miracle lends you some of the deceptive capacity of Vayadu, adding +3 to any Acting, Camouflage, Disguise, Holdout, Shadowing, and Stealth roll you make. These bonuses last for an hour, or long enough for you to make use of the bonus for one roll, whichever is *longer*.

*Statistics:* Craftiness 3 (Divine, -10%) [14]. (Craftiness is a Talent from **GURPS Power-Ups 3: Talents**, p. 9.)

## Spider Climb

*Learned Prerequisite:* Divine Favor 5.

*Learned Prayer Cost:* 4 points.

So long as it can support your weight, you can move over any surface (even a vertical one) or ceiling at half your normal move, without needing to make Climbing checks.

*Statistics:* Clinging (Divine, -10%) [18].

## Burglar's Blessing

*Learned Prerequisite:* Divine Favor 6.

*Learned Prayer Cost:* 5 points.

This prayer muffles the sounds you effect, making you silent as a cat. You gain +5 to Stealth (+10 if perfectly motionless) against attempts to hear you.

*Statistics:* Silence 5 (Divine, -10%) [23].

## MAJOR BLESSINGS

*Minimum Reaction:* Good

### Veiled

*Learned Prerequisite:* Divine Favor 7.

*Learned Prayer Cost:* 7 points.

With this blessing, you are hidden from the scrying and detection by others, even *deities*. Whenever anyone uses any ability that attempts to gather facts about you, detect your location via remote viewing, special senses, etc., they suffer a -5 modifier. Furthermore, your true name is hidden from all but your god. This is similar to the Zeroed advantage but not as absolute, but you don't need to worry about all the hassle that comes with that advantage.

*Statistics:* Obscure 5 (Clairsentience; Always on, -50%; Cosmic, +50%; Defensive, +50%; Divine, -10%; Extended, Detect, Divination, Para-Radar, +60%; Selective Effect, +20%; Stealthy, +100%) [32] + Obscure True Name [1].

### Burglar's Blessing (Enhanced)

*Learned Prerequisite:* Divine Favor 8.

*Learned Prayer Cost:* 9 points.

Like Burglar's Blessing but better, this prayer makes you completely silent. You gain +10 to Stealth (+20 if perfectly motionless) against attempts to perceive you by hearing.

*Statistics:* Silence 10 (Divine, -10%) [45].

### Secret Cache (Enhanced)

*Learned Prerequisite:* Divine Favor 9.

*Learned Prayer Cost:* 10 points

As for Secret Cache (p. 13), but you may hold up to 80 lbs. within your cache.

*Statistics:* Payload 40 (Accessibility, Only items you could reasonably conceal on your person, -10%; Cosmic, Doesn't count against encumbrance, +50%; Divine, -10%; Requires Holdout roll, -10%) [48]. *Feature:* Weight limit is based on a static BL of 20 lbs. instead of using actual ST.

## MIRACULOUS POWER

*Minimum Reaction:* Good

### Masterful Locksmith

*Learned Prerequisite:* Divine Favor 10.

*Learned Prayer Cost:* 12 points.

This ability allows you to open any lock, safe, etc. *instantly* without the need to touch or manipulate it, as long as you are within 10 yards of it. You don't even have to see the lock, as long as you know where it is. Roll against the better of DX or DX-based Lockpicking, at +12 and with no penalties for time, equipment, lighting, etc. Use the same rules against an electronic lock, but at "only" +7. Success unlocks it immediately; if you fail, the consequences depend on the particular lock.

This blessing applies to any lock whether it is a padlock, the lock on manacles, etc. It does *not* work on physical restraints like chains, ropes, etc. or locks protected by magic or supernatural effects that render it unpickable.

*Statistics:* Accessory (Lockpicks) [1] + Efficient (Lockpicking) [1] + Lockpicking (A) IQ+8 [32] + Skill Adaptation (Electronics Operation (Security) defaults to Lockpicking-5 for the purpose of circumventing Electronic Locks) [1] + Speed-Picking (H) Lockpicking-2 [9] + Telekinesis 6 (Divine, -10%; Specific, Locks, -60%) [9] + Unusual Technique (Speed-Picking) [1] + Work by Touch (H) Lockpicking [6].

*Assassination is an art, milord. And I am the city's most accomplished artist.*

*– Brent Weeks, The Way of Shadows*

## Veiled (Enhanced)

*Learned Prerequisite:* Divine Favor 10.

*Learned Prayer Cost:* 13 points.

As for Veiled (p. 14), but you are *completely* immune to detection. You simply cannot be found by any of the methods mentioned in that entry.

*Statistics:* Obscure 10 (Clairsentience, Always on, -50%; Cosmic, +50%; Defensive, +50%; Divine, -10%; Extended, Detect, Divination, Para-Radar, +60%; Selective Effect, +20%; Stealthy, +100%) [64] + Obscure True Name [1].

## Cloak of Shadows

*Learned Prerequisite:* Divine Favor 11.

*Learned Prayer Cost:* 15 points.

By gathering the shadows around you, you can become invisible. This does not require a roll but you must be in a shadowy area (Vision penalties of -3 or more) to activate it. Once you leave the darkened area, you may remain unseen for one minute. You can still be heard!

*Statistics:* Invisibility (Can Carry Objects, up to Heavy Encumbrance, +100%; Divine, -10%; Switchable, +10%; Trigger, areas of darkness, -20%) [72].

## Shadow-Walker

*Learned Prerequisite:* Divine Favor 12.

*Learned Prayer Cost:* 20 points.

You can become a *living* shadow at will. Your equipment transforms with you, up to Heavy Encumbrance; if your gear exceeds that limit, the GM decides what's left behind. This form allows you to flow over walls and floors at your usual ground Move, slide through the small cracks in dark places, and to slip along walls and ceilings at half Move.

Furthermore, you may flit from shadow to shadow, teleporting yourself (and your transformed equipment) up to 100 yards away from your current location as long as there is a nearby shadow that you could walk to. For the purposes of this ability, a shadow is defined as being big enough for you to step into and have at least -2 to Vision due to low or little ambient light. To utilize this form of movement, make an IQ roll and add modifiers for distance and preparation (see p. B98 for more details). If the combined penalty is too great, you can expend fatigue – every 1 FP spent removes 1 point of penalties. If you succeed, you immediately vanish and appear at your new destination. If you fail, you stay where you are. On a failure, you go nowhere on a critical failure, in addition to any other effects, you shadow-walk to the wrong place (GM's call).

All physical attacks do half damage to you in this form. Most energy-based attacks do normal damage – except for *light*-based attacks, which do 50% extra damage. Magic and other purely mental abilities affect you normally.

While in this shadowy form, you cannot perform any purely physical attacks or actions. However, you *can* pick up objects (you may carry up to Light Encumbrance), which then become

shadowy themselves. They revert to solid form the moment you let them go.

All of these benefits do have a downside: For every 15 seconds you are in an area of bright luminescence or are exposed to sudden bright flashes, you lose 1d FP, ignoring DR. This lost FP can only be regained by switching back to your normal form. If you reach 0 FP, you instantly revert to your normal form.

*Statistics:* Shadow Form (Can Carry Objects, Heavy Encumbrance, +100%; Divine, -10%; Temporary Disadvantage, Weakness\*, -54%) [68] + Warp (Accessibility, Only to places you could reach normally, -20%; Cannot blink, -20%; Divine, -10%; Extra Carrying Capacity, Heavy Encumbrance, +30%; Gyroscopic, +10%; Range Limit, 100 yards, -40%; Special Movement, Must be able to walk a few steps, -10%; Special Portal, Darkness no greater than candlelight, -10%) [30].

\* This is priced as Weakness (Bright light, 1d per minute; Fatigue Only, -50%; Reduced Time 2, +40%) [-54].

## New Disadvantage

For more information on Compulsive Behaviors in general, see pp. B128-129.

### Compulsive Scheming

**-5 or -10 points\***

You cannot stop yourself when it comes to creating complex plans, involving yourself in conspiracies, or fomenting your own intrigues. This does not mean you try to help with just anyone's plans, but if you would conceivably be involved anyways, you must make a self-control roll.

You hate simple plans of action. Although you are not necessarily impractical, you prefer the byzantine over the easily understood. Make a self-control roll to stop yourself from unnecessarily complicating a given situation, participating in local political intrigues, etc. A failed roll means you *must* to make it more complicated than necessary.

You have a -1 reaction to those who know about your scheming ways, or -2 against those who prefer methods that are straightforward, simple, or dislike lies or obfuscation.

Compulsive Scheming is worth -5 points, or -10 points in settings where intrigue is frowned upon.

## WORLD-SHAKING MIRACLES

*Minimum Reaction:* Excellent

### Masterful Locksmith (Enhanced)

*Learned Prerequisite:* Divine Favor 13.

*Learned Prayer Cost:* 26 points.

As Masterful Locksmith (p. 14), but the DX or Lock-picking roll is at +5. As well, you have the same +5 on all ST, DX, and Escape rolls to break free in close combat or squeeze through narrow openings . . . and if someone *does* catch you and ties you up, you need only wriggle for a second to *automatically* escape any bonds, bindings, chains, etc., holding you!

*Statistics:* As for Master Locksmith (p. 14) [60] + another +5 to Lockpicking [20] + Insubstantiality (Accessibility, Only to cause bonds to fall off, -50%; Divine, -10%) [40] + Slippery 5 (Div -ine, -10%) [9].

### **Shadow-Walker (Enhanced)**

*Learned Prerequisite:* Divine Favor 15.

*Learned Prayer Cost:* 34 points.

As for Shadow-Walker (p. 15), but you may carry up to Extra-Heavy Encumbrance (instead of Heavy). As well, you can travel up to 1,000 miles (instead of just 100 yards) by walking through

shadows; however, you must be able to see the destination or have visited there before (see *Removal*, p. B98, for details).

*Statistics:* Shadow Form (Can Carry Objects, Extra-Heavy Encumbrance, +150%; Divine, -10%; Temporary Disadvantage, Weakness, -54%\*) [93] + Warp (Accessibility, Only to places you could reach normally, -20%; Cannot blink, -20%; Divine, -10%; Extra Carrying Capacity, Extra-Heavy Encumbrance, +50%; Gyroscopic, +10%; Range Limit, 1,000 miles, -15%; Special Movement, Must be able to walk a few steps, -10%; Special Portal, Darkness no greater than candlelight, -10%) [75].

\* As for Shadow-Walker.

## OTHER CAMPAIGNS

Worship of the Hidden Lord can be easily ported to other campaigns; after all, one of the basic tenets of its religious dogma is the keeping of secrets. For campaigns set in the Victorian era or a steampunk setting, a Vayaduian cult can serve the same purpose as any other secret group like the Illuminati or Hellfire Club: a place for adherents to relax or discuss ideas or philosophies that are not considered socially acceptable by the rest of society (*especially* politics and other political intrigue). Houses of Shadow (the name of temples devoted to Vayadu) might exist nearly anywhere in such settings or perhaps in only one particular spot. Perhaps Jack the Ripper was an adherent to the tenants of Vayadu, showing his adoration of his god by ritually murdering his victims.

Campaigns taking place in modern times should prove equally interesting, though most national governments will consider such a shadowy organization a “cult” by default. Of course, when those who worship Vayadu can literally walk through shadows and ignore most locks and restraints, it does tend to give others pause. Vayaduian cults could be mixed up in nearly anything in such a setting, from gunrunning to supplying freedom fighters with the resources needed to throw off the shackles of an oppressive government.

Worship of the Hidden Lord in the far future is also possible. Adherents make excellent spies and Machiavellian manipulators on a planet-wide scale. Perhaps there is something in the darkness other than Vayadu himself, and he is attempting to protect humanity from such horrors. Perhaps Vayaduian worship originates from an alien or lost race; his last temple might be on a burnt-out world where no other life exists.

In a science-fiction setting, he doesn't even need to be a god! He could be a multidimensional life form that enjoys being worshipped as one. He then uses his vast power to grant his followers abilities unlike any other in the campaign.

Here are four more examples for using the Hidden Lord in various *GURPS* settings.

### **BANESTORM**

The world of Yrth is chock full of secret societies, conspiracies, and guilds for thieves, which makes adding a cult of Vayadu fairly straightforward. The easiest way to do this would be to integrate Vayaduian worship as a (secret!) theme in any number of thieves' or assassins' guilds.

The GM should decide if Vayadu's outlook on freedom meshes with the Ministry of Serendipity. If not, an entire campaign could be made up of an alliance between the church of Vayadu and the Underground Engineers. Vayaduian worship will probably be considered a nonhuman religion (*Banestorm*, pp. 81-83) even if its origins dictate otherwise.

*Occasionally words must serve to veil the facts. But let this happen in such a way that no one become aware of it; or, if it should be noticed, excuses must be at hand to be produced immediately.*

– Niccolò Machiavelli

### **INFINITE WORLDS**

*Infinite Worlds* campaigns allows for too many possibilities to exhaustively cover. However, it should be presumed that Vayadu is a real entity and that he somehow grants powers to his worshippers. Whether he is just a ridiculously powerful mage or entity is up to the GM, but cults and places devoted to him could appear on any worldline. The GM should decide how his worshippers react to others, and whether they help or hinder Infinity, Reich-5, etc.



One possibility is that Vayadu is (or was) a very powerful god, but at some point, his worship declined. He ended up joining the Cabal as a grandmaster, his intentions being to spread his worship through the multiverse so he can once again regain his mantle of godhead.

## DARKEST DUNGEONS

Vayaduan worship fits right into *Dungeon Fantasy* with few problems. After all, dark deities with seemingly unfathomable goals are bread and butter in such settings. The GM should first decide whether Vayadu is a “evil god” or simply misunderstood. The latter opens more player options, but the former can be useful for campaigns needing a large organization to pose as a threat to adventurers.

Clerics and holy warriors of the Hidden Lord should use the rules for priests of night and holy warriors of night (*Dungeon Fantasy 7*, p. 24). The GM should allow Vayadu’s clerics and holy warriors to purchase the New Realm (Rogues and Messengers) power-up (*Dungeon Fantasy 11*, pp. 22-23) at character creation even if he doesn’t allow this for anyone else. Many clerics (and holy warriors) also mix professions (see *Dungeon Fantasy 3*), typically training as assassins (*Dungeon Fantasy 12*, p. 9), ninjas (*Dungeon Fantasy 12*), thieves, or scouts. Any of those four professions who want to add a little holy magic to their repertoire should add the cleric or holy warrior lenses. An especially interesting idea might be for an entire clan of ninjas to devote themselves to Vayadu – use the ninja template with the cleric or holy warrior lens. These terrifying incarnations of the night are silent and can at their targets while remaining completely hidden.

The material from *Dungeon Saints* (see *Pyramid* #3/36: *Dungeon Fantasy*) is especially appropriate to use Vayadu in a *Dungeon Fantasy* campaign.

## THE SHADOW HUNTERS

In the *GURPS Monster Hunters* series, Vayadu becomes not just a keeper of secrets and shadows, but also a silent protector of humanity, an unseen guardian keeping the worst terrors at bay. While anyone can espouse the beliefs of Vayadu, the crusader can actually call on him for tangible assistance.

The brother or gifted templates (*Monster Hunters 4*, pp. 5 and 8) are also suitable, as is the scout (*Monster Hunters 4*, p. 14); simply add Mysticism abilities to the optional list of advantages they can purchase. Adding the mystic lens (*Monster Hunters 4*, p. 22) to any of the other templates works equally well. Those who are not using *Divine Favor* will have to retrofit some of the Learned Prayers into Mysticism abilities, but that should be a fairly straightforward process. Crusaders should choose Shamanic for their particular Theology specialty, though in some settings it may make sense for Vayadu to be a loa, and therefore Voodoo is a better fit.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christopher R. Rice is a devout worshipper of the Hidden Lord, using his god-granted abilities to stay hidden in his dark lair. From Portsmouth, Virginia, he dreams of being able to write full time one day, or at least eke out a living doing it. He wishes to thank L.A., who in addition to being his own personal muse, helped him craft quite a bit of this article. Finally he thanks his gaming group for being the test subject . . . err good players that they are, his good friend Antoni Ten Monrós for being his usual fantastic self, as well as Emily “Bruno” Smirle, Robert “RevBob” Hood, and Elizabeth “ArchangelBeth” McCoy.

### So Now I’m a Priest?

This article relies heavily on *Divine Favor* as the main source of supernatural power granted by Vayadu. Those without access to it or who do not wish to use it in their campaign can keep much of the flavor of Vayaduan worship by substituting standard spells for learned prayers. Any spells that can be used to influence minds or conjure darkness/light are prime candidates. The following list itemizes the most obvious choices; the GM is encouraged to add to it to suit his campaign and how he views the Hidden Lord. All page references are from *Magic*.

Alertness (pp. 133-134)	Levitation (p. 143)
Apportation (p. 142)	Light (p. 110)
Avoid (p. 140)	Lighten Burden (p. 143)
Blackout (p. 112)	Locksmith (p. 143)
Blade Turning (p. 167)	Manipulate (p. 145)
Blur (p. 113)	Mass Daze (p. 137)
Body of Shadow (p. 114)	Night Vision (p. 111)
Climbing (p. 35)	Persuasion (p. 45)
Continual Light (p. 110)	Quick March (p. 144)
Dark Vision (p. 111)	Rear Vision (p. 134)
Darkness (pp. 111-112)	Remove Shadow (pp. 110-111)
Dull (Sense) (p. 133)	See Invisible (p. 113)

Dullness (p. 134)	See Secrets (p. 107)
Fear (p. 134)	Seeker (pp. 105-106)
Foolishness (p. 134)	Sense Danger (p. 165)
Forgetfulness (p. 135)	Sense Emotion (p. 45)
Freedom (p. 148)	Sense Foes (p. 44)
Gloom (p. 112)	Shade (p. 113)
Haste (p. 142)	Shape Darkness (p. 113)
Hide (p. 113)	Slow Fall (p. 144)
Hide Emotion (p. 45)	Strengthen Will (p. 136)
Hide Thoughts (p. 46)	Touch (p. 35)
Hinder (p. 36)	Trace (p. 106)
Insignificance (p. 48)	Turn Blade (p. 166)
Invisibility (p. 114)	Undo (p. 145)
Jump (p. 143)	Wallwalker (p. 144)
Keen (Sense) (p. 133)	Weakness Will (p. 136)

The GM might even allow the above spells to count as a single “college” for the purposes of the One College Only Limitation (p. B67), cheapening the cost of Magery. It should also be noted that, since only one Seek spell is on this list, for Seeker, the GM should change its prerequisite of any two Seek spells to Sense Emotion and Sense Foes.

# EIDETIC MEMORY

## MONSTER SLAVERS

BY DAVID L. PULVER

There are many types of loot that a roguish adventurer can carry out of a dungeon, but one of the more lucrative is something they usually kill and discard: the monsters themselves.

Intelligent monsters like orcs often fight to the death because they see no hope of mercy. Medieval societies lack the resources to incarcerate prisoners for long periods, and unlike knights, monsters lack wealthy relatives to ransom them. So, adventurers traditionally slay any dungeon denizens unwise enough to surrender. But massacre need not be the only solution. Another is to offer mercy, take captives – and sell them into slavery.

The institution of slavery exists in most ancient and many medieval civilizations, so there is every reason to believe slave markets would exist in a dungeon fantasy setting. Because dungeon adventurers (and the society that produces them) have no compunctions about charging into monster's lairs, killing them, and taking their stuff, few will complain if they drag any survivors out with them in chains. Even in enlightened realms where human or demi-human slavery is illegal and the Powers of Good hold sway, intelligent monsters may be seen as little better than beasts. Clerics may have few objections to enslaving monsters – first, because they are not human or near-human; second, because it's nicer than killing them outright.

### CAPTURING THE MONSTERS

Monster slavers use various tactics. The simplest one is to kill about half the monsters, then call on the survivors to surrender or die! Use the rules for negotiations (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons*, p. 10). You can substitute Intimidation for Diplomacy, but no monsters will pay attention unless they're losing. Make sure someone is available who can talk to the monsters! It's hard to negotiate with cornered orcs if no one speaks Orcish.

If they don't surrender and the party has a cleric, alchemist, or other magical healer along, incapacitated monsters can be cured.

Once the monsters give up, they'll need to be restrained. See *Chains and Irons* in *Dungeon Fantasy 2* (p. 12) for tying up nonhuman monsters – a Knot-Tying skill roll and (monster's BL/50) lbs. of rope. Collaring or binding them into a cuffle – a connected chain of captives – makes it easier to lead them out of the dungeon.

Skilled slavers may develop more sophisticated capture techniques, using exotic weapons like bolas, lassos, or potion grenades. A wizard with mind control spells, especially area-effect ones like Mass Daze, are useful. Some dungeon monsters are themselves slavers and may make deals, e.g., orcs or shadow elves may have goblin captives they're willing to trade away.

### THE MONSTER SLAVER

250 points

You are a professional monster slaver. Maybe you've also captured animals or human slaves, but now your specialty is the capture and resale of nonhumans. You combine the strength of a warrior, the cunning of a thief and the fighting skill of a scout. You are often a skilled trader as well, to get good prices. Unlike many adventurers, you are willing to talk to monsters, and may know several of their barbarous languages.

**Attributes:** ST 13 [30]; DX 14 [80]; IQ 12 [40]; HT 12 [20].

**Secondary Characteristics:** Damage 1d/2d-1; BL 34 lbs.; HP 13 [0]; Will 14 [10]; Per 12 [0]; FP 12 [0]; Basic Speed 7.00 [10]; Basic Move 7 [0].

**Advantages:** Outdoorsman 2 [20] and Wealth (Comfortable) [10]. • 20 points chosen from among ST +1 or +2 [10 or 20], DX +1 [20], HT +1 or +2 [10 or 20], Per +1 to +4 [5/level], Basic Speed +1.00 [20], Basic Move +1 to +3 [5/level], Combat Reflexes [15], Danger Sense [15], Fit [5], High Pain Threshold [10], Language Talent [10], Languages (any) [2-6/language], Luck [15], Night Vision 1-9 [1/level], Peripheral Vision [15], Rapid Healing [5], Signature Gear [Varies], Weapon Bond [1], Weapon Master (one weapon) [20], or increase Wealth to (Wealthy) [20] for 10 points.

**Disadvantages:** -15 points chosen from among Bully [-10\*], Callous [-5], Greed [-15\*], or Overconfidence [-5\*].

• Another -35 points chosen from among the previous traits or Code of Honor (Pirate's) [-5], Intolerance (Nonhumans) [-5], Lecherousness [-15\*], Loner [-5\*], No Sense of Humor [-10], Odious Personal Habit ("Brutal slave master") [-5], Sense of Duty (Adventuring companions) [-5], Social Stigma (Disowned) [-5], Trademark [-5 to -15] or Xenophilia [-10\*].

**Primary Skills:** Net (H) DX+1 [8]-15; Intimidation (A) Will+1 [4]-15; Knot-Tying (E) DX+1 [2]-15; Merchant (Slaves)† (E) IQ+2 [4]-14; Tracking (A) Per+2 [2]-14‡; and Whip (A) DX+1 [4]-15. ● One of these two combat skills packages:

1. Shield (E) DX+2 [4]-16. ● One of Broadsword, Shortsword, or Spear, all (A) DX+2 [8]-16.
2. One of Broadsword or Shortsword, both (A) DX+2 [8]-16. ● One of Bolas or Lasso, both (A) DX+1 [4]-15.

**Secondary Skills:** Diplomacy (H) IQ-1 [2]-11; First Aid (E) IQ+1 [2]-13; Naturalist (H) IQ [1]-12‡; Observation (A) Per [2]-12; Hiking (A) HT [2]-12; Stealth (A) DX-1 [1]-13; Traps (A) IQ+1 [4]-13; and Wrestling (A) DX [2]-14.

**Background Skills:** 8 points in improved primary or secondary skills, or Brawling, Fast-Draw (any), Garrote, Jumping, or Knife, all (E) DX [1]-14; Boating (Unpowered), Riding (Horse), or Throwing, all (A) DX-1 [1]-13; Seamanship (E) IQ [1]-12; Interrogation, Leadership, or Fast-Talk, all (A) IQ-1 [1]-11; Navigation (Land or Sea) (A) IQ+1 [1]-13‡; Carousing or Swimming, both (E) HT [1]-12; Running or Sex Appeal, both (A) HT-1 [1]-11; or Search (A) Per-1 [1]-11.

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

† An *optional* specialty; see p. B169.

‡ Includes +2 for Outdoorsman.

## Customization Notes

Monster slaves may be of various races, but are often humans or shadow elves. A common variant is the slaver who has a bit of magic.

*Magical Slaver:* A slaver who has learned a smattering of spells – perhaps he once enslaved a mage! Reduce ST to 12 (saving 10 points), spend 15 of your 20 advantage points on Magery 1 [15], and *add* five spells, all (H) IQ [2]-12 (including +1 from Magery). A good set might be Daze, Foolishness, Haste, Hinder, and Rooted Feet.

*First, wars produce a lot of prisoners, and medieval societies lack the resources to imprison such people for long periods. Enslaving them may seem more moral than simply massacring them!*

– **GURPS Banestorm**

## SLAVING PARTIES

Some adventurers will find monster slaving lucrative enough to make it a focus of their expedition. It's a good way to clear out the dregs of an upper-level dungeon! In addition to slavers, other character types are helpful to have on a slaving expedition. A wizard is *always* useful, but the following archetypes bring unique talents.

*Barbarians* with their great strength are handy when subduing larger monsters. ("Someone hold that ogre while we collar it!")

*Bards* are surprisingly useful for a slaver, because their musical influence and mind-control magic can sing or sooth monsters into submission.

*Clerics* that specialize in healing are very useful to have along, so injured monsters can be fixed for the auction block.

*Knights* with heavy armor can risk taking damage when trying to subdue the more powerful monsters. A wealthy knight can might have contacts for selling slaves.

*Martial artists* with Judo or Pressure Points can capture opponents alive.

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

In addition to the usual adventuring gear a party engaged in monster slaving may want special equipment.

*Extra Bandages or First Aid Kits:* These should be at hand for patching up injuries the merchandise sustained when captured. Surgical instruments are useful for removing body parts from a captive that are just too dangerous to allow it to keep attached, such as chopping off a scorpion-man's sting.

*Collar:* A heavy iron and leather collar that locks around the neck with rings for attaching a chain or leash and provision for a padlock. Also functions as an anti-garrote collar (+4 DR vs. strangling or garroting damage). It takes four seconds to attach. DR 4, HP 8. \$45, 1.2 lbs.

*Grooming Supplies:* Some soap and water may improve the sale value, especially if selling pleasure slaves or gladiators; see **Low-Tech** (p. 36).

*Lasso and Bolas:* These require skill to master but are good for capturing smaller monsters. Their short range is rarely a problem in a dungeon.

*Mittens, Leather:* Padded cloth and leather mitts that lock on paws or hands, preventing manipulation and use of claws, effectively giving No Hands. Take four seconds to attach; protect hands with DR 1. \$20, 2 lbs.

*Muzzle:* An iron muzzle that will prevent a monster with teeth from using them to bite (and also muffle speech). It takes six seconds to attach. Protects the face on a roll of 1-2 on 1d with DR 2. \$60, 1.5 lbs. Adjust for SM.

*Nets:* The best weapon for capturing medium or large monsters is a thrown net. Get several! Once a monster is thoroughly tangled up, it can be threatened with a spear or burning oil, trussed up, or if necessary, beaten unconscious with clubs or staves.

*Potions:* Of those detailed in **Dungeon Fantasy 1**, the most useful to slavers are Sleep or Weakness in grenade form. Be wary, though: These potions are expensive and only good once each – if used to capture monsters with a poor resale value, you might have thrown away your profit!

*Provisions:* There's no point capturing monsters and letting them starve to death; get a supply of cheap food and plenty of water. Beware: some monsters are fussy eaters ("want man-flesh!"). If desperate, food problems could always be solved by feeding uncooperative captives to other captives of a different race. Just *threatening* to feed your goblins to your minotaur may get them to eat their porridge.

*Restraints and Torture Devices:* Necessary for securing and disciplining captives. A slaver needs rope or cord for tying up captives, and several padlocks for attaching chains and collars.

Statistics for rope and padlocks are in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 1: Adventurers*. Rules for restraining monsters are in *Dungeon Fantasy 2*. For a wide variety of shackles, stocks, whips, etc., see *GURPS Low-Tech* (pp. 130-131). To capture pixies or giants, see *Adjusting for SM* in *Low-Tech* (p. 8).

*Secure Holding Area*: After you've dragged monsters out of the dungeon, it's time to put them back in one! In practice, renting a barn at a nearby village, chaining them up, or a basic stockade is usually fine.

*Traps*: Portable spring-loaded leg-hold traps are useful. Set them in corridors to trap small groups of wandering monsters, then pounce! See *Dungeon Fantasy 1* for statistics on man-traps and monster-traps. For more option, see *Traps* in *Low-Tech* (pp. 122-123).

*Whip*: A whip is more often used as a symbol of authority or a means of inflicting punishment, but many monster slavers, especially shadow elves, master the art of using one in combat and take pride in their whip skills. Heavy whips that would lacerate human flesh can be just the thing for disciplining thick-skinned monsters.

## THE MARKET FOR MONSTER SLAVES

Who buys monster slaves and what are they worth? Many communities may need additional labor, especially if the depredations of monsters, warlords, or plagues have decimated humanity. Dungeon monsters are unlikely to be skilled craftsmen – most are stigmatized as brutal savages or worse – but they are often strong, tough, and used to living rough. No one is going to trust monsters to perform skilled jobs, and most aren't really suited for polite society anyway. That tends to leave occupations where they can be chained up and forced to work on pain of death.

*Mine Slaves*: Any sort of work in mines or quarries is back-breaking and dangerous labor, with plenty of unskilled jobs for slaves. Instead of human slaves, why not use monsters who are both hardy and accustomed to underground pits and tunnels? Dwarves may pay well for them – what dwarf wouldn't secretly delight in seeing orcs and goblins in chains?

*Galley Slaves*: Chaining slaves to row in galleys is historically a TL4 innovation, but this isn't history, is it? Besides, if they *do* revolt successfully, the GM can have pirates crewed by monstrous former galley slaves ravaging the seven seas, which is entertaining.

*Gladiatorial Arena*: Many societies do not have these, but if a bread-and-circuses tradition has survived, then the arena will have a steady demand for monsters, both as regular gladiators and exotic grotesqueries.

*Farm Labor*: Less likely than the above options, since there's usually enough serfs and peasants to go around. Moreover, enslaved monsters often do poorly in the sunlight and are too dangerous for the more open conditions of a farm or plantation. However, slaves sold to dwarves, shadow elves, or the like might work in underground mushroom fields.

*Slave Soldiers*: These require a significant investment in training and officers, but there may be warlords with janissary armies who take monster recruits. Some may prefer child monsters to indoctrinate while young. Markets for slave soldiers pay well but are hard to find and may be a great distance away from the dungeon – perhaps even overseas in foreign cultures.

*Pleasure Slaves*: Some brothels, harems, etc. may pay to acquire captives that are both monstrous enough to enslave yet simultaneously attractive. These are rare and specialized, so prices are often high, and buyers are few.

## WHO TO ENSLAVE?

A monster slaver's goal is to capture creatures that can be subdued, and for which there is a market. It is no good trying to enslave creatures too fierce or stupid to obey, or too powerful or stubborn to break. Many intelligent monsters are too mad, insubstantial, or possessed of innate weaponry to make good slaves. A fire-breathing dragonborn, brain-eating horde zombie, or a mind-blasting elder thing won't sell well!

The bread and butter of the monster slaver, then, are IQ 6+ "mundane" intelligent monsters (see *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 3: The Next Level*), and in particular, that subset of intelligent monsters known as "monster races." These races have Social Stigma (Savage) and are often Ugly or worse, so no one cares what happens to them.

*Coleopterans*: These multi-armed humanoid beetles are likely to be popular as mine slaves, galley slaves, or gladiators. Because they have extra arms, they can do more work and so will usually fetch at least +50% price!

*Cat-Folk*: Racial laziness makes them poor laborers, but their exotic grace gives them value as gladiators or, if of Attractive or better Appearance, as pleasure slaves.

*Corpse Eaters*: Far too icky for anything except a gladiatorial arena. Even then, they are a poor choice for regular attractions due to the smell.

*Dark Ones, Shadow Elves, and Infernals*: Generally too arrogant or powerful to make menial slaves, they will sell as pleasure slaves or gladiators.

*Faerie Folk*: There's a long tradition of forcing faeries into servitude, but this is usually only done by evil characters. They won't work, but fauns and nymphs may sell as exotic pleasure slaves in disreputable areas.

*Gargoyles*: If chained to prevent them flying far, they can make decent gladiators or miners, but are tough to handle.

*Goblins*: They're too cowardly to make good gladiators or slave soldiers but are as strong as humans, so will make excellent mine slaves. Many are already enslaved by orcs; thus, they are used to submission to stronger masters.

*Half-Orcs and Orcs*: A staple of the slaver. Most are sent to the mines, the galleys, or, if available, the gladiatorial arena. Slavers claim they work under a brutal master, but any sign of weakness can lead to revolt. They usually have no compunction about enslaving humans, dwarves, etc., themselves – turn-about is fair play.

*Hobgoblins*: Their strength is useful in the mines, but their bad tempers make them hard to manage.

*Minotaurs*: Their habit of going berserk under stress makes them too dangerous for most occupations, but they make excellent gladiators.

*Ogres*: These powerful humanoids are *highly* valued as mine slaves and gladiators due to their strength. They're too large to make good galley slaves.

*Reptiloids*: The dragon-blooded are dangerous, but ordinary lizard men can make useful slaves. They are especially valued as gladiators for their exotic appearance. Some tend to be climate-sensitive, though.

*Trolls:* Occasionally enslaved as gladiators or miners, but usually too weak, nasty, or powerful.

*Wildmen:* Like orcs, these “savages” are valued for their strength, and wildmen slaves may be sold as miners, galley slaves, or gladiators.

## SELLING THE SLAVES

The smart party sets up in advance of any expedition meetings with local merchants in the area who have appropriate contacts with slavers. This minimizes the time needed to hold and feed captives.

It helps to have a variety of slaves to sell to different buyers. For example, the GM could decide that a group of slave merchants may want no more than 1d-2 pleasure slaves, 1d gladiators, 4d mine slaves, and 2d galley slaves. The GM might also rule that some markets don't exist locally. If no gladiatorial arenas exist in their own country, for example, the PCs may have to meet foreign traders or establish overseas contacts.

Slaves can be disposed of like any other specialized loot. The basic value of a slave is equal to five year's wages at the best job he could qualify for as a free man (see p. B518). For a typical monster slave, that is the unskilled job of laborer in fields, mines, or a galley. As this pays about \$120/month, it means an average slave sells for \$7,200. Multiply this by 1.5 for a race that has advantages that make it potentially very useful as a laborer, like Extra Arms.

This assumes ST 11 (BL 24 lbs.). Stronger or weaker slaves adjust the price: multiply by BL/24. If arenas exist, a gladiator or slave soldier may sell for more (multiply by DX/10) but usually a slave merchant only wants to buy a few.

Pleasure slaves generally sell for \$2,000 times the point value of their Attractiveness – maybe more if they are a highly exotic race like Infernals. Filthy slaves may have reduced Appearance of 1-2 levels until cleansed up.

Slaves with racial Bad Temper sell for half as much. Those with racial Laziness are 1/4 value for as miners, galley slaves, etc. Slaves who go berserk sell only to gladiatorial arenas, and are half value there. A premium will be paid if a slave is a craftsman such as blacksmith (+50%). Crippled slaves will not sell; injured slaves are half cost. Slaves that speak a language no one in the area can understand may be -10% value.

That gives the maximum sale price. How much the adventurers get when selling depends on their own wealth and skills. Use the usual rules for disposing of dungeon loot: You must get it to a market, and how much you get depends on the Wealth level of the adventurer doing the selling.

Opening up a market for slaves can be challenging, but once adventurers get word out, slave traders – individually or in caravans – may visit to buy live merchandise, or even send agents to set up shop. These slave merchants are middlemen. As such, an adventurer can really expect to only get under 50% of market value after other modifiers. If the nearest town or village is on a seaport or river, slave ships may even put in. This might open a market for galley slaves, slave soldiers, or gladiator slaves that doesn't exist locally.

Alternatively, enterprising adventurers may arrange to cut out the middleman and sell the slaves themselves for full price. If they don't have a particular market – such as a nobleman, craft guild, or dwarf lord in need of labor – they might arrange with local authorities to incorporate a monster-slave auction into the local market day or fair. This may require a slaver's guild license or a pay-off (maybe \$1,000 or more). The party might also have to cage and feed slaves for weeks before each market day or fair opens up. Nevertheless, a well-managed slave auction may be the hit of any local fair, with travelers and locals coming from all around to gawk at the parade of monsters as they go on the block. Just hope the monsters don't have any friends or relatives who decide to emerge from the dungeon to crash the party. If something goes wrong and the monsters escape, it could be a massacre!

## ABOUT THE COLUMNIST

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

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# TRAITS FOR TOWN

BY SEAN PUNCH

For many gamers, “urban fantasy” evokes wonders hidden beneath the surface of a superficially realistic world, hinting at fairy tales unfolding behind the wainscot. *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*, by stark contrast, is *in your face* – it’s all about hacking and slashing through dungeons, monster-infested mountain ranges, and haunted forests. Reconciling these styles is made even more difficult by the fact that *Dungeon Fantasy* simplifies all social traits to Wealth, which exists solely to help fence stolen goods (well, *loot*) while visiting town . . . which itself is little more than a place to sell booty, buy gear, and hear rumors of even richer treasures that you’ll need more and better gear to obtain.

In a campaign with more going on in town, the GM may wish to let PCs purchase a greater range of social traits. After all, how can one have a princess to rescue from orcs, or a high priest to collect donations at the temple, without some way of explaining what the titles mean? And many a delver would like to know how to join the Town Watch or the King’s men, who apparently run town with an iron fist (or at least a couple of iron swords). When urban fantasy runs into the dungeon kind, heroes need to know where they stand. Striking a balance between civilized parts and the dungeon calls for a little rethinking, though.

First, some quick-and-dirty definitions:

*Academy, brotherhood, clan, guild, order*, and related terms describe “professional” organizations for delvers. Most artificers, assassins, elementalists, innkeepers, thieves, and wizards belong to guilds; barbarians, ninja, and shamans are organized along clan lines; bards, clerics, druids, holy warriors, and martial artists are invested in orders; demonologists, mentalists, necromancers, and often scouts have (secret) brotherhoods; scholars, and bookish clerics and wizards, form academies; and knights, swashbucklers, and otherwise-unaffiliated assassins, barbarians, martial artists, and scouts end up in a “Mercenaries’ Guild.” The salient feature is access to profession-specific training and gear.

*Town* means a population center, from the customary out-sized fantasy village (the sort with pubs and shops, like a lot of historical market towns) on up to a stinking metropolis (similar to Ankh-Morpork or Lankhmar) – what matters most is that it supports a Town Watch. Delvers of every stripe can find their organizations there, but this doesn’t imply *distinct* facilities. A single “Magic Shoppe” may cater to demonologists, elementalists, necromancers, scholars, and wizards alike; a temple could be consecrated to not one god but an entire pantheon, and welcome most clerics and holy warriors; and “headquarters” for

barbarians, druids, and scouts might be a Gypsy-like camp in the old oak grove. Each town is unique, with a name of the GM’s choosing. Most contain members of many races but are dominated by a single race. A town collects enough taxes to reward adventurers who solve local problems, such as basement cults and alligator-infested sewers.

*Kingdom* refers to a land in which all the towns are ruled by the same sovereign – by default, the King – who is served by a formidable force of ex-delvers and professional troubleshooters known colloquially as “the King’s men” (who make Town Watches look namby-pamby). Most kingdoms are dominated by one race, although the racial mix in individual towns often diverges (more elves near forests, more dwarves near mountains, etc.). A kingdom is home to many brotherhoods, guilds, and orders that keep “national” records on who holds what rank and is a member in good standing. It is crisscrossed by trade routes sufficiently robust to keep prices stable, and collects enough taxes to offer lucrative rewards to heroes who rescue princesses, defeat zombie legions, and end evil wizards’ dreams of conquest.

## *Claim to Hospitality*

see p. B41

As explained on p. 16 of *Dungeon Fantasy 11*, this advantage allows the adventurer to roll 14 or less to locate members of his group while in town. Success lets him stay with his colleague for up to a week, saving the \$150 cost of living (*Dungeon Fantasy 2*, p. 4). Roll again weekly. Critical failure means the *hero* must provide aid, paying a professional colleague’s cost of living for the week as well as his own. The delver may also ask for small favors – being hidden while hunted, a short-term loan of up to \$100, etc. – but this calls for a reaction roll at +3, scoring at least a Good reaction. Refusing to reciprocate, causing property damage, or defaulting on loans can cost the adventurer his advantage.

This normally benefits one delver. However, a reaction of “Good” or better – this time *without* the +3 – extends the hospitality to one associate in the same or a similar profession. This means a fellow wizard, or maybe a scholar or an elemental, for a wizard; another cleric, or a holy warrior of the same faith, for a cleric; and so on.

Claim to Hospitality costs 1 point for a single inn, safe house, temple, etc. in one particular town; 5 points for an entire clan, guild, order, etc. that has tendrils in every town in one kingdom; or 10 points for hospitality that spans kingdoms (e.g., “thieves’ guilds the world over”).

## Legal Enforcement Powers

see p. B65

Two levels of “police powers” exist in *Dungeon Fantasy*:

*Town Watchman*: You’re authorized to search and arrest lawbreakers in one specific town. This doesn’t grant the right to commit crimes! It mostly means that you have a job that pays your \$150/week living expenses – no dice rolls required – as long as you forgo crafting and other “town” activities that the GM feels would be full-time work. However, you can replace bumming, busking, and haranguing (*Dungeon Fantasy 2*, p. 4) with shaking down crooks for fines; use the same rules, but roll against the *highest* of Fast-Talk, Intimidation, Streetwise, or a suitable weapon skill, treating the other skills as complementary. You may carry arms and armor appropriate to Status 2 (p. 25) in service to the town. Finally, when the town has a quest to offer (*Dungeon Fantasy 2*, p. 4), you hear about it automatically. *5 points*.

*King’s Man*: You enjoy the above powers in all the towns of an entire kingdom! You can also requisition food and fodder when travelling in the realm, even when en route to private dungeon raids; thus, you can reduce the cost of rations to just what you need for the dungeon (though you must still carry the weight of the free supplies). See also *Travel* (*Dungeon Fantasy 2*, p. 5). You may carry arms and armor befitting Status 2 anywhere in the kingdom when you’re on duty. If the kingdom has a quest to offer, you learn of it automatically. Lastly, you get a snazzy surcoat (\$350, 0.5 lb.) that’s blue with silver fleurs-de-lis, red with golden lions rampant, etc. *15 points*.

You cannot have Legal Enforcement Powers and Social Stigma (Criminal Record). If you acquire the latter, you lose the former.

### Criminal Record?

As *Scum and Villainy* (*Dungeon Fantasy 2*, p. 4) notes, somebody who plays free and easy with the law can end up branded a criminal. The GM decides when this becomes permanent, but “three strikes” works well: It’s temporary the first two times, the -2 applying only on *that* visit to town, but becomes permanent the third time, as Social Stigma (Criminal Record). After that point, spellcasters will be able to detect this status through spells like Aura, and a visible brand, tattoo, magical mark, or similar will warn everyone else. Members of the offender’s clan, guild, etc. will catch wind of his misdeeds (or of his clumsiness at getting caught, if a thief) and become hesitant to deal with him. While there won’t be a dossier in a file cabinet in most fantasy settings, he *will* acquire a record in every way that matters.

## Legal Immunity

see p. B65

Two levels of immunity exist in *Dungeon Fantasy*, too:

*Local Bigwig*: For whatever reason – you’re the mayor’s brother, you saved the burg from orcs, you’re a scion of the founding family, etc. (explain it!) – you enjoy immunity in one specific town. Critical failure while shopping or selling on the black market there is treated as mere failure; failure at shoplifting, cheating, or pickpocketing results in no consequences worse than “no material gain”; and sauntering around

over-armed for your Status (pp. 24-25) leads to nothing worse than being escorted home to put away the hardware. Getting caught at these crimes, or even betraying a local quest sponsor, won’t trigger the effects of *Scum and Villainy* (*Dungeon Fantasy 2*, p. 4). You still can’t debase coin safely. *5 points*.

*Royal Favor*: You enjoy the above privileges in all the towns of a kingdom, and may treat even critical failure at debasing coin as mere failure. Explain why this is: You saved the King’s life, you’re a super-secret agent whose *job* is testing the law (complete with a Royal Writ making you the covert-ops equivalent of a King’s man), etc. *15 points*.

Those with Legal Immunity can’t also have Social Stigma (Criminal Record). The 5-point version goes away if that Stigma is somehow acquired, while the 15-point version grants immunity to acquiring it!

## Rank

see p. B29

You hold a privileged position within your guild, order, etc. Each profession has its own variety of Rank, which the GM should rename for flavor; wizards are conservative, and might go with “Wizardly Rank,” but barbarians may literally have a pole with clan totems carved on it, making “Pole Length” entirely sensible (to them). In formal groups, this accompanies a public title. In clans, it’s like Status (pp. 24-25) relevant only to kinfolk. In secret scout societies, sinister underground necromancer cults, and so on, it’s about being recognized on sight. Whatever it’s called, it costs the usual 5 points/level.

When dealing with that group, add Rank to skill rolls to engage them as a sponsor for a quest (*Dungeon Fantasy 2*, p. 4), to reaction rolls for *Negotiation* (*Dungeon Fantasy 2*, p. 10), and to skill rolls for any ensuing deal-making.

Also increase effective Wealth by steps equal to Rank when fencing loot of interest to that group (*Dungeon Fantasy 2*, pp. 14-15). Finally, subtract 10% per level from the training expenses for acquiring that profession’s abilities (*Dungeon Fantasy 3*, p. 43 and *Dungeon Fantasy 11*, p. 8); 5% per level from the cost of anything the GM deems to be professional goods (see *Professional Discounts*, p. 24); and 5% per level from the pay rate of hirelings the GM agrees match the hirer’s profession under *Niche Substitution* (*Dungeon Fantasy 15*, p. 5). The maximum discount is 80% off.

*Example*: A Poor thief with Guild Rank 5 would enjoy +5 to convince Guild scum not to rob his group, or to persuade the Guild to back a mission; fence goods to thieves as if Very Wealthy; pay 50% tuition for training at thief power-ups; buy thieves’ tools at 25% off; and retain cutpurses and burglars (and possibly agents and treasure-hunters) for 25% less.

## Reputation

see p. B26

Reputation enhances all reaction rolls – for *Negotiation* (*Dungeon Fantasy 2*, p. 10), selling loot (*Dungeon Fantasy 2*, pp. 14-15), all the purposes described in *Dungeon Fantasy 10* (learning information, stopping brawls, and so on), and Claim to Hospitality (p. 22). It doesn’t influence the reaction rolls noted for conjured or summoned creatures in *Dungeon Fantasy 5* or *9*.

## Professional Discounts

*Literate* delvers can claim their Rank (p. 23) discount on manuals (*Dungeon Fantasy 4*, pp. 13-14) for skills on their templates. If a skill requires tools, those get the discount, too. The guild or clan might sell *entire loadouts* from *Dun-geon Fantasy 13* at this discount – but only as sets, with-out substitutions. In addition:

*Artificers*: Chemicals, magic potions, special-order gadgets and adventure-wear (e.g., *Dungeon Fantasy 4*, p. 12); anything with “alchemy” or “alchemist’s” in its name.

*Assassins*\*: Blowpipes (and darts), crossbows (and bolts), garrotes, knives, poisons, traps.

*Barbarians*: Two-handed melee weapons that require ST 12+, partial armor (*Dungeon Fantasy 13*, p. 8), *any* weapon or armor for a SM +1 user.

*Bards*†: Manuals (*all kinds!*), maps, musical instruments.

*Clerics*†: Healer’s kits, holy symbols and holy symbol weapons (*Dungeon Fantasy 7*, p. 33), holy water (“stacks” with the basic -50%); any special gear pertinent to their order (*Dungeon Fantasy 7*, p. 34).

*Demonologists*†: Anything with “demon” or “demon’s” in its name; knives and swords matching the summoner’s Slayer Training (*Dungeon Fantasy 9*, p. 7).

*Druids*†: Camouflage (*Dungeon Fantasy 13*, p. 25), healer’s kits, natural preparations (*Dungeon Fantasy 1*, p. 28 and *Dungeon Fantasy 8*, pp. 36-37).

*Elementalists*†: Anything clearly linked to the elements (e.g., alchemist’s matches for fire, true water potions for water); gems.

*Holy Warriors*: Holy symbols and holy symbol weapons, holy water, garlic, wolfsbane, silver weapons. Treat *unholy* warriors as assassins.

*Innkeepers*\*: Beverages, rations, spices, cookware (*Dun-geon Fantasy 8*, p. 14), wagons (*Dungeon Fantasy 13*, p. 5); anything (drink, food, shelter) ordered at an inn (*Dungeon Fantasy 10*), for himself or anybody he favors.

*Knights*: Axes, broadswords, flails, lances, maces, polearms, and spears; crossbows, bolts, and quivers; shields and metal armor. For samurai-themed knights,

replace this with katanas, spears, bows, etc. Either can get cut-rate cavalry horses or warhorses (*Dungeon Fantasy 13*, p. 5).

*Martial Artists*: Brass knuckles and similar fist weapons; kusaris, nunchaku, quarterstaves, sais, shuriken, tonfas; other “martial arts” weapons the GM deems fitting (e.g., *Dungeon Fantasy 12*, p. 14);

*Mentalists*: Psi-related gear (*Dungeon Fantasy 14*, pp. 23-27); any item bought specially to replace a current power item with a higher-capacity one; anything intended as a new Psychic Replica (*Dungeon Fantasy 14*, p. 14).

*Necromancers*†: Knives or swords matching the summoner’s Slayer Training; poisons.

*Ninja*: Covert ops and security gear (*Dungeon Fantasy 1*, p. 25), poisons, non-artifact-grade ninja gear (*Dungeon Fantasy 12*, pp. 12-17).

*Scholars*: Manuals (*all kinds!*), maps, scholarly gear (*Dungeon Fantasy 4*, p. 12), scrolls, writing equipment (ink, paper, etc.).

*Scouts*: Bows (and arrows and quivers), camouflage, camping and survival gear (*Dungeon Fantasy 1*, p. 23), maps, telescopes.

*Shamans*†: Healer’s kits, natural preparations, anything intended as a new Spirit Weapon (*Dungeon Fantasy 9*, p. 5).

*Swashbucklers*: Bucklers, cloaks, knives, one-handed swords.

*Thieves*\*: Camouflage, covert ops and security gear, ladders, ropes, thieves’ mail.

*Wizards*†: Magic potions, mass-produced magic items from p. 30 of *Dungeon Fantasy 1* (only!).

\* For these professions, purchases on the black market (*Dungeon Fantasy 2*, p. 4) use the *better* of 10% off or Rank discount.

† Spellcasters get their discount on scrolls and spell-books for their profession (*Dungeon Fantasy 4*, pp. 13-16), any item bought specially to replace a current power item with a higher-capacity one (maximum one item per visit to town), and power-item recharges.

Base point cost is unchanged. In one town (a small class), the cost multiplier is 1/3; in an entire kingdom (a large class), it’s 1/2; and for everyone you meet, pay full cost. The third and broadest level is identical to the Hero power-up on p. 16 of *Dungeon Fantasy 11*.

### Status

see p. B28

Fancy titles are especially tricky to justify for errant delvers. In *Dungeon Fantasy*, the most practical benefits have to do with bearing arms and armor on urban adventures – and the fact that “blood will tell.” Cost is 5 points/level, as usual.

*Status 0*: Delvers cannot fall below this level – although those with clan Rank rarely rise above it, dancing to a different drum as they do. Adventurers may be seen as smelly, ragged

menaces to society, but they possess the abilities of potential heroes and thus the physical or magical capacity to escape or strike back if oppressed (this is true even for 125-pointers created using *Dungeon Fantasy 15*). They cannot run around town *armed*, though – permitted weapons there are daggers, small and large knives, and quarterstaves. Armor is allowed, but metal armor hints that the wearer is looking for trouble, and is also off-limits. Those who break the law by carrying heavier weapons or armor are subject to *Scum and Villainy* (*Dungeon Fantasy 2*, p. 4).

*Status 1*: A gentleman of sorts, somebody at this stratum may legally traipse around town with one or two long knives, rapiers, sabers, shortswords, or smallswords hanging off his belt. He can wear metal armor in town, but no heavier than DR 4 mail – and if he goes that far, he’ll be mocked unless there’s a war going on (-2 to all reaction rolls).



## Who Gets What?

From a character-improvement perspective, not all social traits make equally sensible “power-ups” for all adventurers. Anybody might be able to call upon friends or extended family (Claim to Hospitality), advance in his vocation (Rank), or inspire admiration for his adventures (Reputation). However, the GM may opt to restrict other advantages as follows:

*Legal Enforcement Powers:* Knights, martial artists, swashbucklers, and even barbarians are often hired as enforcers at either level. Assassins and thieves can possess either level, too – but that puts them in the pay of the law, disqualifying them for Rank. Few scouts will sit around town, and the GM may rule that they can only be King’s men (“Rangers”). Clerics and holy warriors rarely possess this trait outside of a theocracy; however, clergy of city gods (*Dungeon Fantasy 7*, pp. 11-12) are sometimes Town Watch.

*Legal Immunity:* Almost everybody can have either level – including assassins, demonologists, necromancers, and thieves, who often work hard to acquire it! However, barbarians, druids, and shamans are tied to communities, and lack the social connections to move beyond the 5-point version. Conversely, scouts (who avoid towns) and ninja (who glide between towns like the wind) can have only the 15-point version, which makes them royal spies.

*Status:* Successful artificers and innkeepers can achieve up to Status 1. Gentlemanly bards and swashbucklers might have up to Status 2. In most fantasy societies, some combination of clerics (or even druids or shamans, where they’re the prevailing holy folk), demonologists, elementalists, holy warriors, knights, mentalists, necromancers, scholars, and wizards are the “ruling classes,” and can boast any Status, while the others on that list are “trusted advisors” at best, limited to Status 2. This detail is up to the GM, and varies by kingdom. Other professions reject froufrou Status in favor of Rank.

*Tenure:* Artificers, clerics, demonologists, elementalists, mentalists, necromancers, scholars, and wizards often belong to academies. Some game worlds have academies for bards and druids, too – GM’s decision.

### A Monster’s Life for Me

Most fantasy societies are racist (or to be precise, “speciesist”). Status 1+ is off-limits for the races listed in *A Monster’s Life* (*Dungeon Fantasy 3*, p. 11): coleopterans, corpse-eaters, gargoyles, goblin-kin, half-ogres, minotaurs, ogres, reptilians, and trolls. The same goes for 15-point Legal Enforcement Powers or Legal Immunity, or any Reputation broader than “in one town” – a town might appreciate a monster’s qualities, but a kingdom won’t. The GM can make exceptions for coleopterans in the Hive Lands, goblin-kin in the Orc Khanate, etc.

*Status 2:* This level befits a genuine knight. *All* weapons and armor are fine, even in town – but mockery (-2 to all reactions) will ensue for going beyond a gentleman’s arms and armor in peacetime. The GM may specify that some magic items require a “knightly” user and only work for people with Status 2+. At this level, ignore the \$150/week to live in one specific town.

*Status 3-5:* These levels suit nobility. Treat them as Status 2 for bearing arms – but there’s no danger of mockery, even when visiting the pub in plate armor with a halberd in hand. At Status 3+, ignore the \$150/week to live in town while you’re in any town

in a given kingdom. Being of truly noble blood has two further benefits. First, potent artifacts that call for a “noble” user will function for you. Second, “blood will tell”; *in any town in your kingdom*, add Status-2 as a bonus in all Quick Contests against living people who are physically in your presence; e.g., a thief who attempts to pick the pocket of a Status 5 duke must beat the duke’s Vision+3 with Pickpocket, while an evil wizard would find his Charm spell resisted by the duke’s Will+3. There’s no effect in wilderness, dungeons, or faraway barbarian lands; against undead, demons, inanimate traps, and similar threats that aren’t truly alive; or on uncontested rolls.

*Status 6-8:* These levels indicate royalty. Treat them as Status 3-5 for bearing arms and ignoring living costs. Status 6+ also lets you wield relics that demand a “princely” user, while Status 7+ lets you use ones that require a “kingly” wielder. And “blood will tell” (as above) *anywhere in your kingdom*, even outside of town. Add Status/2, rounded down, as a bonus in all Quick Contests against living people in your presence there. Thus, a Status 6-7 prince or king has +3 to beat others in his lands – in town or not – and a Status 8 emperor gets +4. This *still* doesn’t matter in faraway barbarian lands, though, or against ancient undead, falling rocks, or other impersonal dangers.

Status in *Dungeon Fantasy* isn’t boosted by Rank or Wealth, doesn’t guarantee fancy duds or digs, and doesn’t use the standard rules for cost of living – in fact, ignore *Cost of Living* (pp. B265-266). Your holdings aren’t liquid assets, and while they pay whatever costs your station might demand, they don’t give you cash in excess of that. If you’re set on being rich, then buy Wealth, too.

### Tenure

see p. B93

Spellcasters and sages can belong to obscure academies instead of or as well as their usual guilds. The upshot is a place to stay in the town where the institution is based (yet another way to avoid the \$150/week cost of living, equivalent to a 1-point Claim to Hospitality) *and* the benefit of the doubt. Such people are expected to be little wonky, and until they actually commit a crime involving demons, poison, or the Dark Ritual of Calling and Binding the Squid-Lord, they can learn about and work with such matters freely, up to and including filling their cellar with zombies. In effect, this is 5-point Legal Immunity in one town, specifically for the purpose of occult machinations.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sean “Dr. Kromm” Punch set out to become a particle physicist in 1985, ended up the *GURPS* Line Editor in 1995, and has engineered rules for almost every *GURPS* product since. He developed, edited, or wrote dozens of *GURPS Third Edition* projects between 1995 and 2002. In 2004, he produced the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition* with David Pulver. . . and the list keeps growing. He lives in Montréal, Québec with his wife.

# MORE POWER TO DUNGEON WARRIORS!

BY PETER V. DELL'ORTO AND SEAN PUNCH

*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 11: Power-Ups* describes many tricks for delvers who prefer swords to sorcery. Such power-ups are what passes for martial arts in *Dungeon Fantasy*. Since there's no such thing as "too much power," here are some *new* cool moves!

## GENERAL COMBAT POWER-UPS

These combat abilities are for sale to anyone who satisfies the prerequisites.

### Combat Perks

These perks follow the same rules as those on pp. 11-12 of *Power-Ups*.

### Double-Ended Weapon Training†

You may ignore the -2 to skill when wielding one of the contraptions under *Double-Ended Weapons* (p. 27). You must specialize by Melee Weapon skill.

### Heroic Sacrifice‡

*Prerequisites:* High Pain Threshold and others (see below).

You can burn HP as FP for the tasks listed under *Heroic Reserves* (p. 28). Each level of this perk permits you to pay 1 HP per expenditure; e.g., Heroic Sacrifice 3 [3] would let you spend up to 3 HP at a time on Great Rage. There's no maximum level, but as the majority of feats that qualify consume just 1 FP, the ability to spend more rarely matters.

### Put It In His Eye

You're vengeful in a very specific way: If a foe successfully attacks a hit location and you fail to defend, you're highly motivated to return the favor. Regardless of whether *he* struck that body part on purpose, you enjoy +1 on your next attack on that enemy if *you* target that location intentionally. Elapsed time is unimportant – your next shot at him receives this benefit no matter how many turns (or years!) pass between the offending strike and your reply – but targeting any other hit location first wipes out the bonus.

### Ramming Speed

You always tackle your foes at maximum speed! Whenever you make a slam, work out damage as if traveling at *full* Move (adjusted normally for encumbrance and injury), regardless of how far you *actually* ran on your previous or current turn.

### Retroactive Poisoning‡

*Prerequisite:* Poisons at 12+.

Once per session per level of this perk, you can poison a weapon *after* successfully injuring a foe. Declare the weapon to be poisoned, mark off appropriate dose(s) of poison from your equipment list, and resolve the effects. You must have the poison on you or spend one Gizmo per dose to produce it. Retroactive Poisoning merely represents a weapon you envenomed earlier but failed to mention – it isn't a supernatural ability.

The GM may limit this perk to professions that have Poisons as a template option. The usual suspects are assassins, druids, evil clerics, innkeepers, necromancers, ninja, thieves, and unholy warriors.

### Sacrificial Block†

You're trained at blocking attacks on your buddies. You can try a block defense against any attack that permits a block, comes from in front of you, and is intended for an associate *behind* you. This normally means a strike from a ranged weapon or a melee weapon with Reach 2+ that crosses your hex on the battle map on its way to your companion. If you haven't retreated this turn, you may expend your retreat to step into a spot where this condition is met. Your shield DB aids your roll, but your friend's doesn't (although he may attempt his own defense if yours fails) – and you *don't* get +1 for retreating if you step! In all cases, this "uses up" your block.

You must specialize in Cloak, Shield, or Shield (Buckler).

### Third Hand†

You can use the hand(s) holding a weapon or a shield to wield a single piece of non-combat gear *at the same time*. Lanterns, torches, scrolls, potions ready to drink, etc. are fine; cloaks or shields, weapons, or potions ready to hurl aren't. Maximum weight is Basic Lift/20 lbs. in one hand, BL/10 lbs. in two.

The item is considered ready – a torch offers light, a scroll can be read, a potion can be quaffed – and neither penalizes nor is endangered by fighting with the same hand(s). If the weapon or shield is dropped or taken away, however, then so is anything else in hand. Likewise, if you're stunned, you drop the object as usual.

You must specialize by armed combat skill.

### Willful Warrior‡

Concentrate maneuvers aren't strictly forbidden when grappled – you can try, but you must make the Will roll to keep your concentration *each turn*, and instead of the usual -3, the penalty equals the effective ST restraining you. This makes it *almost* impossible . . . but not for you! Each level of Willful Warrior grants +3 that you can use only to

cancel the penalty that an enemy grappler's ST imposes on this roll. This power-up also benefits spellcasting, if high skill or Adversity Casting (**Power-Ups**, p. 13) enables you to cast a spell without gestures.

### Double-Ended Mastery

5 points/skill

*Prerequisites:* Any Melee Weapon skill for a double-ended weapon *and* matching Double-Ended Weapon Training (p. 26).

Buy this separately for each Melee Weapon skill useful with the arms under *Double-Ended Weapons* (below). When wielding a suitable double-ended weapon, you can launch a single attack that targets two adjacent foes at full skill, though you must still make a separate attack roll for each opponent.

## Double-Ended Weapons

Fantasy warriors adore exotic weapons! A staff with a blade or a crushing head mounted on either end is a classic, and offers several upsides:

- The counterweight eliminates the drawbacks of weapon types that are normally unbalanced, slow to change Reach, and/or made unready by attacking. Sword-based designs become better at parrying (if not *quite* as good as a staff).
- The wielder can attack two adjacent opponents – one with either end – at Reach 1. This is considered a Dual-Weapon Attack (-4), not a Rapid Strike (-6).

• A “broken weapon” outcome smashes only *one end*. A one-ended weapon continues to work, if not as well: Parry is 0U and Reach is 1, 2\*, regardless of type, and the special Dual-Weapon Attack is no longer possible.

Downsides are cost, weight (though this helps prevent breakage), and the fact that such weapons give -2 to skill for *all* purposes (and thus -1 to Parry).

The following table presents the options.

Weapon	Damage	Reach	Parry	Cost	Weight	ST	Notes
<b>POLEARM (DX-5, Spear-4, Staff-4, or Two-Handed Axe/Mace-4)</b>							
Double-Ended Halberd	sw+4 cut	1, 2	0	\$540	16	14†	
<i>or</i>	sw+3 imp	1, 2	0	–	–	14†	[1]
<i>or</i>	thr+3 imp	1, 2	0	–	–	13†	
Double-Ended Naginata	sw+2 cut	1, 2	0	\$500	8	11†	
<i>or</i>	thr+3 imp	1, 2	0	–	–	10†	
<b>STAFF (DX-5, Polearm-4, or Spear-2)</b>							
Double-Ended Dao	sw+4 cut	1, 2	+1	\$1,700	14	13†	
<i>or</i>	thr+1 imp	1, 2	+1	–	–	12†	
Double-Ended Sword	sw+3 cut	1, 2	+1	\$1,500	10	12†	
<i>or</i>	thr+3 imp	1, 2	+1	–	–	12†	
<b>TWO-HANDED AXE/MACE (DX-5, Axe/Mace-3, Polearm-4, or Two-Handed Flail-4)</b>							
Double-Ended Axe	sw+4 cut	1, 2	0	\$500	12	13†	
Double-Ended Maul	sw+5 cr	1, 2	0	\$460	20	15†	
Double-Ended Scythe	sw+3 cut	1, 2	0	\$330	6	12†	
<i>or</i>	sw+1 imp	1, 2	0	–	–	12†	[1]
Double-Ended Warhammer	sw+4 imp	1, 2	0	\$500	10	13†	[1]
<b>TWO-HANDED FLAIL (DX-6, Flail-3, Kusari-4, or Two-Handed Axe/Mace-4)</b>							
Double-Ended Flail	sw+4 cr	1, 2	0	\$500	12	14†	[2]

### Notes

[1] May get stuck; see Picks (p. B405).

[2] Attempts to *parry* this weapon are at -4. Fencing weapons (“F” parry) can't parry it at all! Attempts to *block* it are at -2.

Additional strikes from All-Out Attack (Double) or Extra Attack can use either end against anyone in reach. You *can't* combine Double-Ended Mastery with Rapid Strike – the two are mutually exclusive.

**Techniques:** Dual-Weapon Attack (H) Skill+0 [5].

## Greater Weapon Bond

5 points/weapon

**Prerequisites:** Any Melee Weapon skill *and* either Armoury (Melee Weapons) or Connoisseur (Weapons).

You own a melee weapon so suited to you that you enjoy +1 to skill rolls (including Melee Weapon and Fast-Draw rolls), +1 to Parry, and +1 to damage with it. This is a higher level of standard Weapon Bond; the two don't "stack." Like that perk, this gift doesn't supply the weapon – obtain that by buying it, finding it, taking Signature Gear, etc.

There are two catches. First, if you permanently part ways with the weapon, you lose the 5 points spent on this power-up – no refunds! Second, any melee fought without the weapon in hand puts you off-kilter. You must fight *another* battle using the weapon at no bonuses before the benefits return. The GM decides what a "battle" is, but cheesy tricks like squishing vermin and sparring with allies never count.

**Advantages:** Higher Purpose (Always use this one weapon) [5].

The rules for losing and regaining bonuses cover the built-in Code of Honor.

## Heroic Reserves

3 points/level

**Prerequisites:** Special (see below).

You have hidden reserves of vigor that barbarians call "rage," martial artists know as "chi," holy warriors term "faith," and knights and swashbucklers measure in glasses and pints (of blood or booze). You may spend Heroic Reserves (HR) as FP to fuel athletics, martial feats, and physical extra effort – including *Extra Effort in Combat* (p. B357) and nonmagical special abilities such as Botte Segrete, Breaking Blow, Chandelier Leap, Chi Blasts, Flying Leap, Great Rage, Hand of Death, Heroic Lifts, Kiai, and Power Blow.

You can't burn HR on spells, *magical* abilities (e.g., Emergency Casting or Healing), or extra effort the GM deems "mental." However, effects that sap FP – starvation, and some spells, poisons, and monster abilities – never deplete HR. You can tap HR even at fully negative FP! Moreover, HR recharges separately from FP regardless of your activities: 1 point per 10 minutes normally, or 1 point per 5 minutes with Fit or Very Fit.

You may purchase one level of HR per *full* 10 points in combat skills (melee, ranged, or unarmed – but chi skills *don't* count). For instance, a swashbuckler with 31 points in Brawling, Fast-Draw, Main-Gauche, Rapier, Thrown Weapon, and Wrestling could buy up to HR 3.

**Advantages:** Energy Reserve (Heroic) [3/level].

## Interdiction

5 points/skill

**Prerequisites:** Any melee combat skill, plus Trained by a Master or Weapon Master.

Interdiction lets you make a quick, low-damage melee attack against anyone who tries to charge past you in combat. Your target must be moving from in front of you to behind you (consulting the diagram on p. B389, from any white hex to any gray or black one) *and* pass within reach of an attack currently possible for the skill for which you have this power-up. For example, a greatsword (Reach 1, 2) could cut at anybody running within one or two yards to flank you, while a halberd held at Reach 3 could only intercept a foe who's exactly three yards away at some point during his pass.

Roll against Parry for your combat skill as your opponent moves by. This never gets a bonus from retreating, shield DB, Shield spells, or special parry options – though Combat Reflexes and Enhanced Parry help as usual, and any *penalties* for bad footing, repeated parries, etc. apply. Failure means your foe slips past untouched. Success lets you roll against skill to attack a *random* hit location.

A successful skill roll means a potential hit. Your target defends normally. If he fails, you inflict your attack's damage at -2 or -1 *per die*, whichever is worse. Though you're technically "parrying" your foe's entire body, contact is sufficiently light that this move doesn't count as a parry against a heavy weapon.

## Under the Hood: Interdiction

Using the *GURPS Martial Arts* technique-design system, Interdiction starts life as Parry and acquires these adjustments:

**Benefit:** *Parry counts as low-damage attack.* There's no offsetting adjustment for low damage, though – Aggressive Parry sets the precedent that this is simply a natural property of damaging defenses. -1.

**Benefit:** *Parry engages someone who isn't attacking.* Enables a "pre-emptive" defense, allowing the fighter to exploit his parry when not being attacked. -1.

**Benefit:** *Parrying a running person doesn't count as parrying a heavy weapon.* Lets the fighter "parry" even a huge opponent without regard for mass, relative ST, etc. -1.

**Defense against "runaround" attack** (p. B391). -2.

**Drawback:** *Limited target selection.* Works only on a foe running from front to back within reach (which he could easily avoid if he anticipates this response!), and even then mandates a random hit location. +1.

**Drawback:** *Most Parry bonuses don't apply.* Common Parry bonuses – those from shield DB and retreating in particular – are lost. +1.

That makes the default Parry-3. "Uses up a parry" and "Triggers penalties for multiple parries" don't affect this – those amount to "A parry is a parry." Similarly, "Opponent defends normally" is irrelevant; *most* hits let aware opponents defend.

This cinematic technique is Hard because it's defensive. Like any Parry-based technique, it's limited to full Parry.

Failure on your skill roll indicates that you didn't even make light contact – again, your opponent slips past untouched.

Whatever the outcome, each Interdiction attempt counts as a parry with the weapon or hand used (thus, it cannot be used after you All-Out Attack). You may try Interdiction more than once per turn – and intersperse it with true parries – subject to standard penalties for successive parries in a turn. For instance, if you use Interdiction and then parry with the same hand (or vice versa), the second roll suffers the usual penalty for repeated parrying.

You must specialize by melee combat skill.

**Perks:** Unique Technique (Interdiction) [1].

**Techniques:** Interdiction (H) Parry+0 [4].

## Killer Hair

10 points

You have a long braid with a weight at the end, weave razors into your dreadlocks, or sculpt your hair into a saw-blade Mohawk or sharp spikes using jamming glue (*Treasure Tables*, p. 36) . . . and you've studied on maiming with this. You may strike at Reach C using Brawling or Karate – at full skill, even when grappled – as though using a weapon. Armed par-ries *won't* harm your head! This inflicts thrust crushing damage, at +1 *per die* plus skill bonuses.

You *can* wear a helmet and still use this ability. If the realism of this bothers you, just specify that your headgear is modified to match.

**Advantages:** Striker (Limb, Head, -20%) [4].

**Perks:** Unique Technique (Grappled Strike) [1].

**Techniques:** Grappled Strike (H) Skill+0 [5]. Buys off the -4 to DX while grappled for one *specific* hands-free attack – usually biting or a Striker.

## Peerless Slayer Training

Variable

**Prerequisites:** At least *three* Melee Weapon skills, one at 20+ or all three at 18+.

You're not a specialist at a targeted blow with a *particular* weapon – you're an expert at that strike with *all* weapons. You can use this power-up with any Melee Weapon skill in which you have at least a point, if your current weapon can deal a suitable blow to the specified hit location. Varieties include:

*Peerless Slayer Swing at Neck:* Any swinging attack on the neck is at -2, not -5. *12 points.*

*Peerless Slayer Swing at Skull:* Any swinging attack on the skull is at -3, not -7. *15 points.*

*Peerless Slayer Thrust to Eye:* Any thrusting attack to the eyes is at -4, not -9. *18 points.*

*Peerless Slayer Thrust to Vitals:* Any thrusting attack to the vitals is at -1, not -3. *9 points.*

This is an improved form of Slayer Training (*Power-Ups*, p. 13). The GM may require you to learn that for one and then two Melee Weapon skills before “upgrading” to this version.

**Techniques:** Targeted Attack! at maximum. Price such a “wildcard technique” like the usual technique and then triple cost to allow it to work with *all* applicable skills – here, Melee Weapon skills.

## Two-Weapon Mastery

20 points

**Prerequisites:** At least *three* one-handed Melee Weapon skills, and Trained by a Master or Weapon Master.

Lets you use Two-Weapon Fighting (*Power-Ups*, p. 13) with *any* two melee weapons you're capable of wielding simultaneously, regardless of Melee Weapon skill. As a side benefit, you're fully ambidextrous and never suffer -4 for using the “off” hand.

There's no need for Two-Weapon Fighting if you have Two-Weapon Mastery. Those with the former may upgrade to the latter by paying the cost difference. The GM might *require* this progression – or call for delvers to acquire one, two, and then three kinds of Two-Weapon Fighting – and specify a minimum number of adventures between steps.

**Advantages:** Ambidexterity [5].

**Techniques:** Dual-Weapon Attack! Skill+0 [15]. This is another “wildcard technique,” tripled in cost to allow it to work with *all* one-handed Melee Weapon skills.

## Ultimate Ramming Speed

15 points

If you can move even a yard, figure all your slams at *full* Basic Move, regardless of encumbrance, injury, or *actual* speed! This power-up includes Ramming Speed (p. 26).

**Example:** Honus has HP 25, Basic Move 7, and Ultimate Ramming Speed. Medium encumbrance gives him Move 4, and his wounds make this Move 2. Still, if he slams – even with a step – he figures damage using Move 7. That's  $(7 \times 25)/100 = 1.75d$ , which rounds up to 2d.

**Advantages:** Enhanced Move 3.5 (Ground; Accessibility, Only to offset lost Move in a slam, -80%) [14]. The  $\times 12$  this gives is more than enough to cancel the  $\times 0.2$  for Extra-Heavy encumbrance *and*  $\times 0.5$  for being at less than 1/3 HP.

**Perks:** Ramming Speed [1].

## Wizard-Hunter

Variable

**Prerequisite:** A combat skill at 18+ when floated from DX to Per.

Your aim is so keen that you can penetrate magical defenses with mundane weapons! Spells cannot block your armed attacks, permitting you to shoot arrows through Missile Shields, stab across the edges of Force Domes, ignore Shield and Armor spells, and so forth. For most fighters, this is intensive mundane training, not a supernatural gift, and costs 15 points; for holy warriors, it's a Holy ability worth 14 points.

Martial artists may opt for a version that benefits unarmed attacks instead of weapons. This changes the prerequisite to Judo or Karate at 18+ when floated to Will. It costs only 11 points and *is* supernatural – a chi-based gift.

**Advantages:** Blessed (Anti-Magic Weapon) [15], Blessed (Anti-Magic Weapon; Holy, -10%) [14], *or* Blessed (Anti-Magic Weapon; Accessibility, Unarmed Only, -20%; Chi, -10%) [11]. This new form of Blessed costs 15 points by comparison to Blessed (Ghost Weapon) in *GURPS Powers: Divine Favor* – but despite the name, it isn't always Holy.

## BARBARIAN POWER-UPS

These gifts stem from being strong, angry, and from a harsh climate. The GM may permit them to non-barbarians who meet those conditions.

### Barbarian Perks

These are Combat Perks (*Power-Ups*, pp. 11-12) that only barbarians can buy.

#### Mountain of Meat

You're just *that big*. Seriously. Where a "normal" barbarian can increase HP as high as 1.5×ST, *you* can buy HP up to 2×ST (as usual, with Size, -10%).

#### Sure-Footed†

You're familiar with fighting on a specific type of inhospitable terrain, which lets you ignore the -2 to attack and -1 to defend (*not* general DX or Move penalties) for a specific type of bad footing. Options include:

*Sure-Footed (Icy)*: Frozen streams and lakes, windswept glaciers, etc.

*Sure-Footed (Rocky)*: Loose rocks and pebble-strewn slopes.

*Sure-Footed (Sandy)*: Soft-packed beach or desert that yields underfoot.

*Sure-Footed (Snowy)*: Snow, however deep.

*Sure-Footed (Soggy)*: Swamps, mud, and similarly boggy ground.

#### You're Next!

A steroidal, barbarian-specific version of Follow-Through (*Power-Ups*, p. 11): At the end of any turn on which you *knock down* or *kill* enemies, you may attempt Intimidation against the same number of remaining opponents as a *free action*. Use *Taunt and Bluster (Dungeons)*, p. 12). You roll once; multiple rivals resist separately. This an ideal follow-up to Cleaving Strike – scaring away everyone makes being defenseless less of a risk!

### Greater Cleaving Strike

20 points/skill

*Prerequisites*: Any Melee Weapon skill capable of swinging attacks and ST 18+.

As Cleaving Strike (*Power-Ups*, p. 10), with one major difference: You can just keep going! For as long as you continue to meet all the criteria for proceeding with a Cleaving Strike, you can hew through *any number* of foes, provided that they're in front of you, adjacent to each other, attackable given your weapon's current Reach, and unobstructed (by cover or figures you *can't* attack). Consulting the diagram on p. B388, a greatsword (Reach 1, 2) would let you hack up to eight targets in your three front hexes and the five marked "2," while a halberd held at Reach 3 could mow through up to seven victims in the hexes marked "3." You must still attack from left to right, turning in place.

There's no need for Cleaving Strike if you have Greater Cleaving Strike – but as with all power-ups that offer improved versions, the GM may require a gradual progression.

*Perks*: Unique Technique (Greater Cleaving Strike) [1].

*Techniques*: Greater Cleaving Strike (H) Skill+0 [19].

## Under the Hood: Cleaving Strike

Under the *GURPS Martial Arts* technique-design rules, Cleaving Strike (*Power-Ups*, p. 10) is an All-Out Attack (Strong) with these modifications:

*Benefit: Sheer power.* The enemy has -1 to DX and HT rolls to stay standing. -1.

*Drawback: All you can do.* Forbids all other activity; e.g., no Dual-Weapon Attack, and not even a free action like Fast-Draw. +1.

*Drawback: Limited target selection.* The only option is swings, in a fixed order (L-R or R-L), against frontal foes. +1.

*Drawback: Reduced movement.* All-Out Attack usually allows up to half Move forward – but here, not even a step is permitted, only the mandatory rotation to face foes. +1.

*Drawback: Successive attacks contingent on previous ones.* The warrior suffers the built-in Rapid Strike penalty even if he never gets the extra attacks – earlier blows must miss, be avoided by a dodge or a retreat, dismember, or put the target down. A weak hit or an enemy block or parry ends the fun. +1.

*Rapid Strike.* Attacking up to three enemies adds two strikes to the basic one allowed by All-Out Attack (Strong). While normally -12, Trained by a Master or Weapon Master makes this -6.

That makes the default skill-3. Losing defenses and gaining bonus damage come with All-Out Attack (Strong), and don't alter this. Letting ST 18+ work like Trained by a Master or Weapon Master merely substitutes an equally steep and fitting prerequisite, and isn't a real benefit.

This technique is Hard because it involves multiple strikes, and limited to full skill because it defaults to less than full skill.

### Greater Cleaving Strike

Though this variant technically gives "unlimited" attacks, the *practical* limit is around eight (every frontal foe at Reach 1, 2). Five more than Cleaving Strike adds -15 to the Rapid Strike penalty, for skill-18.

### Naked Rage

35 points

*Prerequisites*: Berserk, Gigantism, and High Pain Threshold.

When your Berserk goes off, it isn't just pain you don't feel – injury genuinely affects you less! While berserk *and* clad in at most ordinary DR 0 skivvies (loincloth, leopard-skin bikini, etc.), subtract any non-armor DR (Armor spells, other barbarian power-ups, etc.) from damage, apply wounding modifiers, and *halve* the final HP loss. Round down, but penetrating damage always inflicts at least 1 HP.

As with Great Rage (*Power-Ups*, p. 19), the GM may allow barbarians seeking this trait to exchange other disadvantages for Berserk. Unlike that power-up, this one *does* require the user to flip out!

**Advantages:** Injury Tolerance (Damage Reduction 2; Accessibility, Only when not wearing armor, -10%; Only When Berserk, -20%) [35]. The Accessibility is just -10% due to the rarity of armor-wearing barbarians in general and because stripping down is free and easy (whether it's a good idea is another matter, but Naked Rage makes it a *less-bad* one). The GM is advised to forbid full-spectrum Damage Reduction without building in similar downsides!

## HOLY WARRIOR POWER-UPS

These capabilities flow from faith. The knight power-ups Rallying Cry (below) and Weapon-and-Shield Fighter (p. 32) also fit the holy warrior's modus operandi.

### Emergency Casting

5 points/spell

*Prerequisite:* Holiness.

You can sacrifice to your gods to cast a specific clerical spell in times of need. Only a few combat-specific spells are available; each is its own power-up. All require Holiness equal to the spell's usual Power Investiture level:

*Holiness 1:* Armor, Might, Shield, Vigor.

*Holiness 2:* Resist Cold, Resist Fire, Resist Pain, Resist Poison.

*Holiness 3:* Flaming Weapon.

Spells have normal casting times, effects, and durations. All are cast at base Will, not IQ, and Holiness *doesn't* add – it isn't Power Investiture! Energy costs are paid in HP, not FP.

**Perks:** Charm (Cleric Spell) [1/spell]. The modified casting rules (Will and HP vs. IQ and FP) are considered a wash.

**Spells:** Clerical Spell (H) Will [4/spell].

### Holy Weapon

15 points

*Prerequisite:* Holiness 5+.

Any weapon you wield has the ability to harm evil spirits! Treat it as having Affects Insubstantial (p. B102) against malevolent, supernatural beings (GM's decision). When battling an extraplanar entity that cannot truly be slain, you can still banish it: at -HP or worse, it must make *Will* rolls when mortals would make HT rolls, and at -5×HP, it fails automatically. This sends the creature away exactly as a successful Banish spell would.

**Advantages:** Blessed (Ghost Weapon; Holy, -10%) [14]. Blessed (Ghost Weapon) hails from **GURPS Powers: Divine Favor**, and acquires the Holy modifier for symmetry with other forms of Blessed in **Dungeon Fantasy**.

**Perks:** Shtick (Spirits "slain" personally are banished) [1].

## KNIGHT POWER-UPS

Knights are leaders and protectors, and get power-ups to assist those duties. The GM may offer these to other "team player" warriors, too.

## Bodyguard

5 points/level

*Prerequisites:* Combat Reflexes *and* either Code of Honor (Soldier's or Chivalry) or Sense of Duty (Adventuring companions).

You're adept at hustling hapless squishies out of harm's way. You get +1 per level (maximum three levels) when you attempt a sacrificial dodge (p. B375) or a sacrificial dodge and drop (p. B377). This never benefits *your* defenses!

**Advantages:** Enhanced Dodge 1-3 (Sacrificial) [5/level]. This variant is much cheaper for reasons that should be obvious!

### Rallying Cry

5 points

*Prerequisites:* Born War Leader 2+, Leadership 12+, *and* either Code of Honor (Soldier's or Chivalry) or Sense of Duty (Adventuring companions).

With a mighty holler, you can snap allies out of *mental* stun caused by surprise, Fright Checks, etc. This is a *free* action and requires no special combat maneuver; simply roll against Leadership, at -1 per stunned ally past the first. The affected radius is HT yards (HT+3 yards with Penetrating Voice). You may try this once per turn.

Success gives your friends immediate *Will* rolls to recover from mental stun, at +1 if you have Penetrating Voice. Those who succeed recover instantly; they shed the defense penalties for being stunned and may act normally on their next turn.

**Advantages:** Rapier Wit (Reversed) [5]. This variant has the opposite of the usual effect at the same price.

### Tactician

5 points/level

*Prerequisites:* Special (see below).

You can avert many combat disasters through strategy and leadership. You may buy one level of Tactician (maximum three levels) per *full* 12 points in the Born War Leader advantage and Leadership, Strategy, and Tactics skills. Each level gives you one Tactics Point per game session to spend as a character point on *Buying Success* (p. B347), for you or anybody you can see on your side! Tactics Points refill at the start of each game session.

There are limits on what Tactics Points can accomplish. First, they work only in battle. Second, they can aid attack, defense, and DX rolls, and all of the mundane tasks under **Combat (Dungeons)**, pp. 10-12 – feigning death, hasty bandaging, identifying monster weaknesses, shouting advice, taunting, and even backstabbing by your friendly assassin – but cannot affect passive HT or resistance rolls, spellcasting, or supernatural abilities. Finally, you can't buy *critical* success; you're limited to turning failures into successes (1 point), or critical failures into failures (2 points) or successes (3 points).

**Advantages:** Destiny [5, 10, or 15]. This cribs Destiny Points from **GURPS Power-Ups 5: Impulse Buys** and gives them

the faster regeneration of Wildcard Points in return for extra prerequisites tying them to specific feats.

## Weapon-and-Shield Fighter

10 points

*Prerequisites:* Combat Reflexes, a one-handed Melee Weapon skill at 17+, and Shield at 17+.

You're accomplished at coordinating your one-handed melee weapon and shield. Whenever you have a suitable weapon ready to parry *and* a shield ready to block, and are attacked in a way that would permit you to choose either defense, you get +1 to Block or Parry vs. that attack. A side effect of being so well-coordinated is that you don't suffer shield DB as a penalty to one-handed weapon attacks in close combat (p. B392).

The active defense bonus doesn't work against attacks you can't parry (strikes from the shield side, most missiles, extremely heavy weapons, etc.) or ones you can't block (notably attacks from the weapon side or on weapons). It also vanishes if you don't have both a shield *and* a weapon ready. On the upside, it's cumulative with all other defense bonuses, including shield DB and additional Enhanced Block and Enhanced Parry.

**Advantages:** Enhanced Block 1 (Accessibility, Requires weapon, -20%; Limited, Attacks that can be parried, -20%) [3]; Enhanced Parry 1 (All; Accessibility, Requires shield, -20%; Limited, Attacks that can be blocked, -20%) [6].

**Perks:** Rules Exemption (No DB penalty on one-handed weapon attacks in close combat) [1].

## MARTIAL ARTIST POWER-UPS

These abilities flow from chi. See *Wizard-Hunter* (p. 29) for another example. The GM decides whether other supernatural powers enable similar gifts.

### Chi Blasts

Variable

*Prerequisites:* Chi Talent 2+ and Trained by a Master.

You can channel your chi into superheroic energy attacks! See the *Chi Blast Table* (below) for point costs. Several kinds of Chi Blasts exist, but all share these rules:

1. You cannot buy higher damage dice than *thrust* figured only from basic ST plus Striking ST with the Chi modifier (ignore ST and damage adjustments from high skill, Power Blow, items, etc.). The exception is Chi Edge, which can't exceed *swing* figured from that ST. You may always use less damage than you paid for.

2. If you have several of these abilities, you pay full cost only for the *most expensive*. The others become "alternative attacks" (p. B61) that cost 1/5 normal, rounded *up*.

3. They can harm insubstantial beings: ghosts, phased-out wizards, etc.

4. Chi Talent adds to all attack rolls!

### Chi Edge

A blade of chi appears in hand, allowing you to inflict *cutting* damage, and to parry, as though you had a Reach 1 sword. You may opt to create two, one in each hand, for Dual-Weapon

Attacks and additional parries. The blades persist at no FP cost. Wielded with any sword skill.

**Advantages:** Cutting Attack (Affects Insubstantial, +20%; Chi, -10%; Melee Attack, Reach 1, Dual, -15%; Variable, +5%) [7/die].

### Chi Thrust

As Chi Edge, but *impaling*. With both power-ups, you create a cut-and-thrust blade, but you can only use one damage type per turn.

**Advantages:** Impaling Attack (Affects Insubstantial, +20%; Chi, -10%; Melee Attack, Reach 1, Dual, -15%; Variable, +5%) [8/die].

### Dragon's Breath

An exhaled flame jet strikes a single target for *burning* damage. It counts as a Reach 1-5 *melee* attack that can be blocked or dodged, but not parried. Costs 1 FP/use. Roll against Karate to hit.

**Advantages:** Burning Attack (Affects Insubstantial, +20%; Blockable, -5%; Chi, -10%; Costs Fatigue, 1 FP, -5%; Increased 1/2D x2, +5%; Jet, +0%; Reduced Range x1/2, -10%; Variable, +5%) [5/die].

### Flying Fists

Punching at air, you smite a distant target for *crushing* damage. This attack has Acc 3, 1/2D 10, and Max 100. A visible, fist-shaped distortion lets the victim attempt any active defense. Costs 1 FP/use. Roll against Karate to hit.

**Advantages:** Crushing Attack (Affects Insubstantial, +20%; Blockable, Can Be Parried, -10%; Chi, -10%; Costs Fatigue, 1 FP, -5%; Variable, +5%) [5/die].

### Yin/Yang Blast

A shining psychic bolt disrupts the victim's chi, doing *fatigue* damage. This requires a Concentrate maneuver and *winning* a Quick Contest of your Karate, at -1 per yard of distance, against the target's Will. A mentalist's Psychic Armor or similar psychic DR works against this damage. Costs 1 FP/use.

**Advantages:** Fatigue Attack (Based on DX, Own Roll, +20%; Chi, -10%; Costs Fatigue, 1 FP, -5%; Malediction 1, +100%; Psychic Armor protects normally, -10%; Variable, +5%) [20/die].

### Chi Blast Table

Damage Dice	Point Cost				
	Chi Edge	Chi Thrust	Dragon's Breath	Flying Fists	Yin/Yang Blast
1d-2	3	4	2	2	8
1d-1	5	6	4	4	14
1d	7	8	5	5	20
1d+1	10	11	7	7	26
1d+2	12	13	8	8	32
2d-1	12	14	9	9	34
2d	14	16	10	10	40
2d+1	17	19	12	12	46
2d+2	19	21	13	13	52
3d-1	19	22	14	14	54
3d	21	24	15	15	60



## Fists of Power

8 points

**Prerequisites:** Karate at 18+, Trained by a Master, and either Claws (Blunt) or Iron Hands.

You can launch devastating hand strikes taught only in certain monasteries in remote reaches of distant lands. These count as punches but are so forceful that they're hard to intercept – they enemy's Parry and Block are at -1 (Dodge is unpenalized). A hit does +2 damage or +1 *per die*, whichever is better. However, the strike is so vigorous that you can lose your balance! On a miss, or if your opponent successfully dodges, you must roll vs. Karate or DX to avoid falling down.

Fists of Power is the generic term for something that inevitably has a cool local name: Buddha's Palm, North Star Fist, Hammer of Oyama, or something equally badass.

**Perks:** Unique Technique (Fists of Power) [1].

**Techniques:** Fists of Power (H) Karate+0 [7].

## Grand Flying Kick

20 points

**Prerequisite:** Seven Secret Kicks (**Power-Ups**, p. 30).

You can launch a massive flying kick capable of plowing through multiple foes. This has the potential to strike *everyone* in the path of your forward jumping movement. It's a variation of All-Out Attack (Strong) that uses the following rules instead of the standard ones.

Start with a running broad jump, which requires a DX or Jumping roll. Then roll vs. Karate to attack the first target in line. He parries at -2 (Dodge and Block are unaffected) – and because your entire body is behind the kick, it's considered a weapon with weight equal to your ST in pounds.

If you hit, damage is that of your usual kick, at +2 or +1 *per die*, whichever is better. This stacks with Seven Secret Kicks, Unarmed Master, etc., but you cannot combine it with Lethal Kick. Your victim suffers -1 to all DX and HT rolls to avoid falling down due to knockback or knockdown.

If you miss (and don't fall!), if your opponent successfully dodges, or if you knock him back or down (automatic if he's killed), *you keep going*. You must roll this attack on the *next* person in the path of your jump – who *can* be a previous victim, knocked back along that line! If you hit but your rival blocks, parries, or isn't knocked down or back – and in any event, when you run out of jumping movement – your attack ends.

Failure on the initial roll to jump, or on any attack roll, requires a DX-8 roll to avoid falling down. Regardless, you must make the same roll to stay standing when your attack ends! A fall inflicts damage for a collision with an immovable object (the ground) at an effective Move equal to the full distance of your run and jump.

You cannot defend yourself on a turn when you use Grand Flying Kick.

**Perks:** Unique Technique (Grand Flying Kick) [1].

**Techniques:** Grand Flying Kick (H) Karate+0 [19].

## Under the Hood: Fists of Power

Using the **GURPS Martial Arts** technique-design system, Fists of Power is a punch that gets -3 because it gives -1 to enemy Parry and Block, and another -4 for +2 damage or +1 per die – but *also* +1 due to the DX roll to avoid falling if the attack misses or is dodged. That comes to Karate-6. It's Hard mostly because it requires Unique Technique!

## Under the Hood: Grand Flying Kick

Grand Flying Kick is Greater Cleaving Strike (p. 30) – which defaults to skill-18 – with tweaks. It replaces the +1 for reduced movement with -2 for *increased* movement (full Move plus a jump): -3. It gets -4 for -2 enemy Parry, and another -1 for counting as a heavy weapon. However, the need for a DX or Jumping roll to start gives +1, the DX-8 roll to avoid falling adds another +3, the mandatory DX-8 roll at the end gives a *sep-arate* +3, and serious damage on a fall gives +1. Thus, the default remains skill-18. (Seven Secret Kicks removes the -2 to hit with a kick, so that isn't built into the default.)

## Hundred-Handed Strike

Variable

**Prerequisites:** Chi Talent 2+, Trained by a Master, and Karate.

You launch 100 high-speed punches, 50 with each of two hands! Roll twice to attack a *single* foe at Reach C with Karate. Both attacks have -4 for Dual-Weapon Attack, +6 for 50 blows, and a bonus equal to Chi Talent. Each success lands one punch plus extras equal to *twice* your margin, to at most 50 per hand.

Your target may dodge, parry, or block separately against each hand, at the standard -1 for a Dual-Weapon Attack if both hands hit. Each success lets him avoid one hit plus extras equal to *twice his* margin. No matter how he defends, intercepting your punches cannot harm you!

Damage per hit is purchased specially for this attack, and cannot exceed that of your basic Karate punch. When finding your limit, only traits that benefit *every* punch matter. Ordinary ST, Striking ST, Karate skill, and any power-up that's always on (like Claws or Unarmed Master) all count. Conditional bonuses, equipment bonuses, and abilities with FP costs, recharge times, or limited uses do not, eliminating things like Higher Purpose, brass knuckles, and Power Blow. Starting with whole dice, treat each ±1 to damage as ±0.3 die, multiply effective dice by 15, and round *up* to find cost.

**Example:** Chong Li boasts ST 13, DX 16, Chi Talent 2, Claws (Blunt), Striking ST 2, and Karate-17. His basic punch inflicts 1d+3 crushing; that's 1.9 dice, for 29 points. He attacks a troll with Hundred-Handed Strike: 17, -4 for Dual-Weapon Attack, +6 for 50 punches, +2 for Chi Talent, and +1 for target SM gives effective skill 22. He rolls 10 and 11, succeeds by 12 and 11, and thus lands 25 and 23 punches. The troll retreats and tries two dodges at -1, making one roll by 2 and the other by 1, avoiding 8 punches; the other 40 hit. The GM uses average damage for 1d+3 (trolls have DR 0) or 6.5 points, and calls this 260 HP of injury. That takes the troll past instant death at 220 HP, buying Li's party just under four minutes to incinerate it and allowing them to focus on the *other* trolls.

This attack is **EXTREME!** You must use the full 50 strikes/hand and cannot pull your punches. You're left without active defenses that turn, as on an All-Out Attack. And it's so demanding that you can try it just once per day – and doing so costs you 1 FP and 1 HP.

**Advantages:** Crushing Attack (All-Out, -25%; Chi, -10%; Cosmic, Rapid Fire on melee attack, +100%; Costs Fatigue, 1 FP, -5%; Costs Hit Points, 1 HP, -10%; Limited Use, 1/day, -40%; Melee, Reach C, Dual, -20%; Rapid Fire, RoF 50, Very Rapid Fire, +210%) [15/die].

## Martial Artist Perks

These Combat Perks (**Power-Ups**, pp. 11-12) are reserved for martial artists.

### Chain Belt

**Prerequisites:** High Pain Threshold and Trained by a Master.

You're a karate man – you bruise on the inside. Whatever your injuries, they don't show! If an enemy injures you, you may try Intimidation against that foe as a *free action* at the start of your very next turn. Roll as explained in *Taunt and Bluster* (*Dungeons*, p. 12). You receive the *best* applicable bonus from among the following: +1 if the injury was a major wound, +2 if it reduced you to 0 or fewer HP or crippled a limb, +3 if it sent you to -HP or worse, or +4 if anything was dismembered.

### Inner Alchemy†

**Prerequisites:** Chi Talent and Trained by a Master.

You can adjust doshas, yin/yang, or similar aspects of your being to make your *bare hands* (never weapons!) equal to other forces for the sole purpose of exploiting monster weaknesses. Each equivalence requires its own perk (the GM may invent others):

**Inner God:** Barehanded blows count as a *holy* weapon.  
**Prerequisite:** Chi Talent 3+.

**Magic Touch:** Barehanded blows count as a *magical* weapon.  
**Prerequisite:** Chi Talent 4+.

**Pitta Fist:** Barehanded blows count as *fire*, though damage doesn't become burning.  
**Prerequisite:** Chi Talent 2+.

**Silver Soul:** Barehanded blows count as a *silver* weapon.  
**Prerequisite:** Chi Talent 1+.

### Mr. Pushy

You can turn *any* Karate strike into a shove (p. B372). Declare this before resolving the attack. On a hit, roll damage normally and double it, but count it only for knockback – it inflicts no injury. The victim has -2 on the DX roll to avoid falling due to knockback if you hit a leg, -3 if you struck the skull, face, or neck. You *can* combine Mr. Pushy with Grand Flying Kick (p. 33) to shove multiple foes!

## Master of Lethal Strikes

4 points

**Prerequisites:** Karate and either Iron Hands or Unarmed Master.

You've mastered the art of converting your unarmed strikes from crushing to *piercing* attacks. When making a Lethal Strike (p. B404) with a punch or a kick, ignore the extra -2 to

hit. The standard -1 to damage still applies, but bonuses for Karate, Claws (Blunt), Unarmed Master, etc. add normally. Punches require handwear with individual fingers (e.g., gauntlets); mitten-style garb or anything that fully encloses the hand won't work.

**Perks:** Unique Technique (Lethal Blows) [1].

**Techniques:** Lethal Blows (H) Karate+0 [3]. This buys off the -2 for Lethal Strike with kicks *and* punches. It's more fairly priced than buying Lethal Kick and Lethal Strike in *Dungeon Fantasy*.

## Rolling Throw

5 points

**Prerequisites:** Trained by a Master and Judo.

You know a secret Judo throw (p. B203) that launches *you* over your rival. Until it's time to decide where your victim lands, treat this like a standard throw: it requires empty hands and a previous parry or grapple, is an attack at Judo skill, and can be parried. If it works, however, *you* are the one who moves! You land behind your foe, with any facing you like, in his hex or one of his back hexes (you pick).

This differs from but isn't much more effective than *Evading* (p. B368), with two exceptions. First, as size and weight are no obstacle, you can use it to travel a long way over a huge monster; e.g., you could force an SM +4 dragon to head-toss you 10 yards, regardless of your Move. Second, all movement counts as a step, so if you use Rolling Throw first in a series of multiple attacks, and it works, you can execute the remaining attacks from behind; they count as "runarounds" (p. B391), giving -2 to defenses.

**Perks:** Unique Technique (Rolling Throw) [1].

**Techniques:** Rolling Throw (H) Judo+0 [4].

### Under the Hood: Rolling Throw

This starts life as a Judo Throw, but acquires -1 for the special benefit of changing who moves, plus the -2 for a technique that gives (significant!) bonus step distance. It defaults to Judo-3.

## Serenity

10 points/level

**Prerequisites:** Trained by a Master, plus Chi Talent 1+ for Serenity 1 or Chi Talent 4+ for Serenity 2.

Once per game session, you can enter a state of flawless physical grace. Roll 1d per level (maximum two levels) and add the result to DX. This bonus lasts for 3d seconds, after which DX reverts to normal.

The GM may allow a variant which adds 1d to Basic Speed (boosting Dodge and Move). If so, these are *separate* power-ups, and it's possible to take two levels in both.

**Advantages:** Blessed 1 or 2 (Heroic Feats) [10 or 20]. This version replaces the implicit requirement for pious behavior with the drawbacks of Chi, -10%; thus, that limitation applies but doesn't affect cost.

## Unarmed Master

25 points

*Prerequisites:* Chi Talent 2+, Trained by a Master, and Karate.

Four of your existing limbs – two arms and two legs, unless the GM rules otherwise – are considered weapons when you strike or parry. You aren't subject to the free attacks on your limbs specified under *Parrying Unarmed Attacks* (p. B376), and enemies cannot elect to shift an attack to your limb if you fail at *Parrying Unarmed* (p. B376). You also ignore *Hurting Yourself* (p. B379) against high DR – even on critical failures at Breaking Blow. Attacks aimed at your limbs can still injure them normally, however.

Perhaps better, you enjoy +1 *per die* to your usual punching and kicking damage. This *is* cumulative with the per-die bonus from Claws (**Power-Ups**, p. 29) and Seven Secret Kicks (**Power-Ups**, p. 30).

**Advantages:** Striker (Crushing; Chi, -10%; Cosmic, Stackable\*, +50%; Limb, -20%) [6] *four times* – twice for arms, twice for legs – for a net 24 points.†

**Perks:** Rules Exemption (Cannot hurt self) [1].

\* Cosmic, Stackable allows *this* instance of Striker to add its damage bonus atop that of Claws or *other* instances of Striker.

† These *aren't* bought as alternative abilities because they work simultaneously. The martial artist could kick with both legs and parry with both arms, all in one turn, and not worry about “switching” between Strikers to gain the benefits.

## SCOUT POWER-UPS

Being a swift, outdoorsy archer has its advantages. These gifts rarely suit non-scouts, though one is shared with barbarians.

### Mifter Teef (“Mr. Teeth”)

10 points

*Prerequisite:* Heroic Archer.

You've practiced pulling arrows from your quiver using the hand that holds your bow (maneuvering the weapon around your body) and, more impressively, drawing and shooting the bow with one arm and your *teeth*. This enables one-handed archery, avoiding the difficulties of losing an arm, and freeing a hand to wield a shield, melee weapon, or another bow (though you can only shoot one at a time without additional mouths). The incredible neck and jaw strength this entails

grants +3 to ST and HT whenever you bite or roll to resist chokes, strangles, Neck Snaps, etc.

**Advantages:** Striking ST 3 (One Attack Only, Bite, -60%) [6].

**Perks:** Hands-Free (Draw Bow) [1]; Hands-Free (Ready Arrow) [1]; Hands-Free (Shoot Bow) [1]; Iron Neck [1].

### Scout Perks

These are Combat Perks (**Power-Ups**, pp. 11-12) specially suited to scouts.

### Flawless Fast-Draw

*Prerequisites:* Heroic Archer and Fast-Draw (Arrow) at 16+.

You've practiced quickly drawing arrows to the point where you no longer fail under ordinary circumstances. As long as your effective Fast-Draw (Arrow) skill is 16+, don't bother rolling – you succeed *automatically*. If penalties (e.g., shock from injury) reduce effective skill below 16, though, you must roll the dice.

### Flawless Nocking

*Prerequisites:* Heroic Archer, plus *either* Bow at 19+ or Weapon Master (Bow) and Bow at 17+.

You've honed the art of quick-readying a bow (**Adventurers**, p. 14) to such an extent that you don't normally fail. As long as your effective Bow skill is 16+, you needn't roll against Bow for this purpose. This has no effect on the ensuing attack roll.

This feat is normally at -3, so this perk requires Bow at 19+. With Weapon Master (Bow), the roll is at -1 and Bow 17+ suffices. Regardless, if penalties reduce effective skill below 16, you must roll the dice.

### Sure-Footed†

See p. 30.

### Wind in the Trees‡

Any scout may increase Basic Move by up to six levels. If you find that inadequate, each level of this perk (maximum three levels) lets you buy *another* level. Effectively, Basic Move +1 to +6 cost the usual 5 points/level, while +7 to +9 cost 6 points/level.

## SWASHBUCKLER POWER-UPS

These abilities are restricted to ultra-fast masters of whippy swords and stylish couture.

*Then there came before him the burly leader of the Nagas, who threw down his weapons and stripped off his tunic, saying, “I will wrestle with you, deathgod.”*

*– Roger Zelazny, Lord of Light*

## Great Void

10 points

*Prerequisites:* Combat Reflexes, Weapon Master, and Basic Move 7+.

You're *very* mobile when fighting. When retreating, you may step an *extra* yard away from your foe. This doesn't boost your retreat bonus – it just lets you cover more ground when falling back.

**Perks:** Unique Technique (Great Void) [1].

**Techniques:** Great Void! Defense+0 [9]. This “wildcard technique” is priced as if Hard and then tripled in cost to allow it to work with *all* active defenses.

## Relinquishment

5 points/skill

*Prerequisites:* Combat Reflexes, Weapon Master, and any fencing or sword skill at 20+.

You can sense when your blade is about to shatter on a parry, and allow it to be swept from your grasp instead. This transforms weapon breakage on a parry into a disarm (this power-up synergizes nicely with Not Without My Weapon). Such a parry still counts if odds of breakage don't exceed 6 in 6 (p. B376). If they do, you're disarmed and the parry *doesn't* count – but you may try a dodge at +1 for the heroic effort, and if you retreated on the parry, the dodge gets the retreat bonus, too.

You must specialize by sword or fencing skill.

**Perks:** Unique Technique (Relinquishing Parry) [1].

**Techniques:** Relinquishing Parry (H) Parry+0 [4].

### *Under the Hood: Great Void*

In the *GURPS Martial Arts* technique-design system, a defensive technique that lets you retreat *two* steps defaults to the defense at -2. Being defensive, it's automatically Hard and cannot be improved past the defense to which it defaults. Normally, buying off that penalty costs 3 points – but a “wildcard” version triples this to 9 points.

### *Under the Hood: Relinquishment*

Relinquishing Parry is another Hard defensive technique, capped at full Parry. It has -1 from the special benefit of turning weapon breakage into a mere disarm, another -1 from the potent ability to use a backup dodge without needing All-Out Defense (Double Defense), and a *further* -1 for the +1 to that dodge. Default is Parry-3.

## Swashbuckler Perks

Only swashbucklers are slick enough for these Combat Perks (*Power-Ups*, pp. 11-12).

### Blinding Strike‡

You're hard to beat to first blood. For the sole purpose of determining *who acts first* in a situation settled by Basic Speed – usually but not limited to the combat sequence – add your Blinding Strike level (which cannot exceed Basic Speed) to your Basic Speed. For instance, with Basic Speed 7.00, you

could buy up to Blinding Strike 7 – and if you did, you'd act when someone with Basic Speed 14.00 would act, though Basic Move and Dodge would still be determined from 7.00.

This is priced by noticing that Basic Speed [20/level] is equivalent to Basic Move [5/level] and Enhanced Dodge [15/level], leaving little room for the price of acting first. Rather than call that a zero-cost feature, this power-up makes it a leveled perk.

## Caped Crusader

When wearing a loose cape or cloak that weighs at least 2 lbs., you can baffle foes by swirling it in their faces. Once per battle *per opponent*, you may invoke this perk for +1 on a Feint (thus, victory means an extra -1 to defenses) or a Deceptive Attack (half as effective, but works immediately).

## Like Lightning‡

Where most swashbucklers are stuck raising Basic Speed by at most +4.00, you can break the rules further. Each level of this perk (maximum two levels) allows you to buy a *further* +1.00 – with Like Lightning 2 [2], you could buy Basic Speed +6.00.

## Van Gogh My Van Dyke

There's a reason for those snappy beards swashbucklers favor – they can save your life! Once per *adventure*, you may declare that a successful frontal attack on your *face*, however nasty, merely lopped off your beard. You suffer no other ill effects. After that, you must grow out your beard . . . which conveniently happens in time for the next adventure.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Peter V. Dell'Orto of New Jersey started gaming with *Dungeons & Dragons* in 1981, and has played *GURPS* since *Man to Man*. He has been writing, editing, and playtesting *GURPS* books since 1996. Peter is the author of numerous *GURPS* articles for *Pyramid* magazine; author or co-author of several e23 items (including *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 12: Ninja*; *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1* and *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 15: Henchmen*, both with Sean Punch; and *GURPS Martial Arts: Gladiators*, with Volker Bach); and a co-author of *GURPS Martial Arts* and *GURPS Low-Tech*. He is also an enthusiastic martial artist, and has competed both in Japan in amateur MMA and in the United States in submission grappling. He currently trains Kachin Bando and holds a shodan rank in Kendo. His other interests include fitness, reading, painting miniatures, and studying Japanese.

Peter presently runs a *Dungeon Fantasy* campaign for his long-time victims, err, players, where he tests out his many rule and monster ideas . . .

Sean “Dr. Kromm” Punch set out to become a particle physicist in 1985, ended up the *GURPS* Line Editor in 1995, and has engineered rules for almost every *GURPS* product since. He developed, edited, or wrote dozens of *GURPS Third Edition* projects between 1995 and 2002. In 2004, he produced the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition* with David Pulver, followed by many supplements, including the *GURPS Action, GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*, and *GURPS Power-Ups* series . . . and the list keeps growing. He lives in Montréal, Québec with his wife.

# SWORDS AGAINST EVIL

BY SEAN PUNCH

The swashbuckler isn't *just* the leading man of Age of Sail costume pieces. He's also a fashionable figure in adventure fantasy, including *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*. Like his more-or-less historical counterpart, such a dungeon explorer might be a valiant hero, an honor-bound gentleman, a rakish showoff, a somewhat antiheroic snob, or a borderline-villainous pirate. Here to illustrate this range are four re-imaginings of the swashbuckler template from pp. 11-12 of *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 1*.

All of these archetypes are specialists with the sword. Each has unique strengths and weaknesses, however: the *aristocrat* is a knight-swashbuckler hybrid, after a fashion; the *buccaneer* falls somewhere between a barbarian sailor and a seafaring scout, though with a preference for light blades; the *duelist* is a "pure" swashbuckler minus the bard's frou-frou and the thief's cunning; and the *rogue* swipes an extra share of that frou-frou and cunning. Like the basic swashbuckler, these fighters master one specific variety of blade and should aim to acquire a superior sword of that kind, ideally as Signature Gear – see *Choose Your Weapons!*

*I shall need a map. And a pistol.*

– Donna Thorland,  
*The Turncoat*

## ARISTOCRAT

250 points

You're a hero of noble blood, which truth is evident in your manner. A born leader of men, you're destined to rally warriors to glorious causes. If you lack the bodily might of the traditional knight, this is only because your tutors prudently taught you more than the physical arts. Indeed, among your teachers were some of the finest fencing masters money could hire, whose lessons have left you *quite* capable of schooling others – especially those who doubt your quality.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0]; DX 15 [100]; IQ 11 [20]; HT 12 [20].

**Secondary Characteristics:** Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 10 [-5]; Per 10 [-5]; FP 12 [0]; Basic Speed 7.00 [5]; Basic Move 7 [0].

**Advantages:** Born War Leader 4 [20]; Higher Purpose (Blood will tell)† [5]; Luck [15]; Wealth (Comfortable) [10]; Weapon

Bond (Any starting weapon) [1]; *and* Weapon Master (Weapon of choice) [20]. • Another 45 points chosen from among ST or HT +1 to +4 [10/level], DX or IQ +1 or +2 [20/level], Basic Speed +1 [20], Basic Move +1 to +3 [5/level], Alcohol Tolerance [1], Allies (see *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 15: Henchmen*) [Varies], Ambidexterity [5], Appearance (Attractive, Handsome, or Very Handsome) [4, 12, or 16], Charisma [5/level], Combat Reflexes [15], Enhanced Dodge 1 [15], Enhanced Parry 1 to 3 (Weapon of choice) [5/level], Extra Attack 1 [25], No Hangover [1], Penetrating Voice [1], Rapier Wit [5], Serendipity [15/level], Signature Gear [Varies], Striking ST 1 to 3 [5/level], replace Luck [15] with Extraordinary Luck [30] for 15 points *or* with Ridiculous Luck [60] for 45 points, *or* increase Wealth from Comfortable [10] to Wealthy [20] for 10 points *or* to Very Wealthy [30] for 20 points.

**Disadvantages:** Code of Honor (Gentleman's) [-10]. • Another -30 points chosen from among Bad Temper [-10\*], Bully [-10\*], Chummy [-5] *or* Gregarious [-10], Compulsive Carousing [-5\*], Compulsive Generosity [-5\*], Compulsive Spending [-5\*], Greed [-15\*], Honesty [-10\*], Impulsiveness [-10\*], Jealousy [-10], Laziness [-10], Lecherousness [-15\*], Obsession ("Become the best swordsman in the world!") [-10\*], Overconfidence [-5\*], Selfish [-5\*] *or* Selfless [-5\*], Sense of Duty (Adventuring companions) [-5], Sense of Duty (Nation) [-10], Short Attention Span [-10\*], Vow (Use only weapon of choice) [-5] *or* (Never refuse a challenge to combat) [-10] *or* (Challenge every swordsman to combat *or* Never wear armor) [-15], *or* intensify Code of Honor from Gentleman's [-10] to Chivalry [-15] for -5 points.

**Primary Skills:** Leadership (A) IQ+3 [1]-14‡; *and* Strategy and Tactics, both (H) IQ+3 [2]-14‡. • *Either* Crossbow *or* Thrown Weapon (Knife), both (E) DX+1 [2]-16. • *One* of these three 20-point melee skills packages:

1. *One* of Broadsword, Rapier, Saber, or Smallsword, all (A) DX+3 [12]-18; *one* of Shield or Shield (Buckler), both (E) DX+3 [8]-18, *or* Cloak or Main-Gauche, both (A) DX+2 [8]-17.
2. *One* of the sword skills in option 1 at DX+4 [16]-19; *one* of Shield or Shield (Buckler), both (E) DX+2 [4]-17, *or* Cloak or Main-Gauche, both (A) DX+1 [4]-16.
3. *One* of the sword skills in option 1 at DX+5 [20]-20 *or* Two-Handed Sword (A) DX+5 [20]-20!

**Secondary Skills:** Fast-Draw (Sword *or* Two-Handed Sword) and Jumping, both (E) DX [1]-15; Acrobatics (H) DX-1 [2]-14; *and* Savoir-Faire (High Society) (E) IQ+1 [2]-12.

**Background Skills:** Six of Fast-Draw (any) (E) DX [1]-15; Boxing, Climbing, Dancing, Riding (Horse), Stealth, or Wrestling, all (A) DX-1 [1]-14; First Aid or Gesture, both (E) IQ [1]-11; Armoury (Body Armor or Melee Weapons), Connoisseur (any), Fast-Talk, Gambling, Heraldry, Merchant, Public Speaking, or Teaching, all (A) IQ-1 [1]-10; Diplomacy (H) IQ-2 [1]-9; Carousing (E) HT [1]-12, Sex Appeal (A) HT-1 [1]-11; Intimidation (A) Will-1 [1]-9; Observation (A) Per-1 [1]-9; or 1 point to raise one of those skills or any one-point primary or secondary skill by a level.

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

† Gives +1 to all rolls made in one-on-one conflicts against *sapient* (IQ 6+), *civilized* beings of “lesser” social position, provided that the aristocrat is unwavering in his belief that high birth trumps all else, taking as read that lowborn folk cannot best him and that nobility of blood implies nobility of intent.

‡ Includes +4 for Born War Leader (*Dungeon Fantasy 1*, p. 14).

### Customization Notes

The aristocrat is defined first by his ability to formulate strategies and lead others. He may lack the bard’s Charisma, wizard’s IQ, and holy warrior’s drive to eradicate evil, but he makes a credible party leader nonetheless. Still, because his role is a supporting one in many ways – flashy swordsmanship notwithstanding – the GM might steer players away from the archetype in a campaign where *Onward to Victory!* (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons*, p. 11) is unlikely to matter much and the PCs won’t occasionally get to command sword-fodder. In games where the aristocrat is a viable PC, he can go in any of several directions.

The *dissipated fop* leads commoners out of duty, but lives to dress nicely, party, and impress high-born girls with embroidered tales of his daring exploits. He’s prone to flaws like Compulsive Carousing, Compulsive Spending, Lecherousness, Laziness, and Short Attention Span, and even darker impulses such as Greed, Jealousy, and Selfish, but he’s no coward. His lifestyle would benefit from several noncombat advantages, particularly Alcohol Tolerance, Appearance, No Hangover, Rapier Wit, and higher Wealth. Sword skills favor courtly blades (Smallsword or perhaps Rapier); other abilities are several of Carousing, Connoisseur, Dancing, Fast-Talk, Gambling, and Sex Appeal at serviceable levels.

The *heartless snob* knows that his underlings’ lives are his to spend to buy objectives, preferably ones that increase his fortune or power. He has several of Bad Temper, Bully, Greed, Overconfidence, and Selfish – though he’s also convinced of his Code of Honor and Higher Purpose, which stave off full-on Megalomania. His advantage points are split between combat abilities (good for putting others in their place), Serendipity and extra Luck (evidence of his gods-given station), and higher Wealth. He’s likely a member of the equestrian classes, implying Riding and either Broadsword or Saber. Other skills aid snarling orders (Intimidation and Public Speaking) and building fortunes (Connoisseur and Merchant).

The *selfless hero* believes in his nobility but doesn’t lord it over others. He takes his Code of Honor seriously and may even elevate it to Chivalry. Alongside this come traits like Chummy, Compulsive Generosity, Honesty, Selfless, and Sense of Duty. Advantage points are likely to buy not just better combat abilities (particularly decent ST), but also warrior Allies, Penetrating Voice for rallying the troops, and Charisma and higher IQ to assist with leadership. Such swashbucklers are “lead from the front” types who prefer military weapons wielded with Broadsword and Shield – or Two-Handed Sword. Round out the package with chivalrous background skills, especially Diplomacy, Heraldry, and Riding.

## One for All, All for One

When several gamers want to play dashing swordsmen, consider using these templates to maintain niche protection. This might even lead to a party made up of one adventurer of each archetype! Such a group could handle *most* of what a knight, a scout, a standard swashbuckler, and a thief could tackle. “Most” isn’t “all,” however.

First, while all four templates include some ranged combat ability, they could benefit from more. The GM may want to encourage players to spend points from quirks to learn or improve Bow and Fast-Draw (Arrow). With a swashbuckler’s DX, respectable skill comes cheap. The lowest baseline DX on these templates is 14; thus, quirk points alone could buy *at least* Bow (A) DX+1 [4]-15 and Fast-Draw (E) DX [1]-14.

Thieving ability could be better, too. The rogue leans farthest in that direction, and as he already has respectable ranged ability, he might spend quirk points to improve criminal skills instead. With complementary advantage picks (Flexibility, High Manual Dexterity, and Perfect Balance), he would be a respectable burglar indeed.

The biggest hole is magical capability – and as a few points cannot fill this, it’s probably best to add “swashbuckling spellcasters” to the party. Bards are already in keeping with the theme, and so are clerics of gods of messengers and rogues (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 7: Clerics*, pp. 22-23). In pirate-themed campaigns, druids, clerics of sea or storm gods (*Dungeon Fantasy 7*, pp. 25-28), and water-attuned elementalists (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 9: Summoners*, pp. 9-12) are also fitting. To enable players of such characters to participate in swordplay, add Enhanced Parry 1 (Weapon of choice) [5], Weapon Bond (Any starting weapon) [1], and Weapon Master (Weapon of choice) [20] to each template’s advantage options; swap existing Melee Weapon skills for a choice of Broadsword, Rapier, Saber, Shortsword, or Smallsword; and permit Cloak, Main-Gauche, or Shield (Buckler) to replace Shield. With these changes, almost *any* spellcaster might fit in!

## BUCCANEER

250 points

Surefooted and at one with the ocean, you’re a born seafaring warrior. While many a pirate favors whatever weapon slays his enemies most quickly, you have a sense of style, and prefer to swing from the rigging with cutlass, saber, or scimitar in hand. Your rough lifestyle has left you mighty enough to battle inhuman foes – you’ve faced krakens and sea serpents, after all! – while your experience fighting alongside a ragtag band makes you a natural for the delver’s life.

**Attributes:** ST 13 [30]; DX 14 [80]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 13 [30].

**Secondary Characteristics:** Damage 1d/2d-1; BL 34 lbs.; HP 13 [0]; Will 10 [0]; Per 10 [0]; FP 13 [0]; Basic Speed 7.00 [5]; Basic Move 7 [0].

**Advantages:** Luck [15]; Perfect Balance [15]; Seafarer 2 [20]; Weapon Bond (Any starting weapon) [1]; and Weapon Master (Weapon of choice) [20]. • Another 40 points chosen from among ST or HT +1 to +4 [10/level], DX +1 or +2 [20 or 40], Per +1 to +6 [5/level], Basic Speed +1 [20], Basic Move +1 to +3 [5/level], Absolute Direction [5], Acute Vision [2/level], Alcohol Tolerance [1], Ambidexterity [5], Appearance (Attractive) [4], Breath-Holding 1 [2], Charisma [5/level], Combat Reflexes [15], Daredevil [15], Enhanced Dodge 1 or 2 [15 or 30], Enhanced Parry 1 to 3 (Weapon of choice) [5/level], Extra Attack 1 [25], Fearlessness [2/level], Flexibility [5], Hard to Kill [2/level], High Pain Threshold [10], No Hangover [1], Rapier Wit [5], Seafarer 3 or 4 [10 or 20], Serendipity [15/level], Signature Gear [Varies], Temperature Tolerance 1 or 2 [1 or 2], or replace Luck [15] with Extraordinary Luck [30] for 15 points.

**Disadvantages:** Code of Honor (Pirate's) [-5] and Greed (12) [-15]. • Another -15 points chosen from among Appearance (Unattractive or Ugly) [-4 or -8], Bad Temper [-10\*], Bloodlust [-10\*], Callous [-5], Chummy [-5] or Gregarious [-10], Compulsive Carousing [-5\*], Odious Personal Habit (Unrefined manners) [-5], One Eye [-15], Overconfidence [-5\*], Sense of Duty (Adventuring companions) [-5], Wounded [-5], Xenophilia [-10\*], or worsen Greed from (12) [-15] to (9) [-22] for -7 points or to (6) [-30] for -15 points. • A further -15 points chosen from the previous list or Compulsive Spending [-5\*], Impulsiveness [-10\*], Jealousy [-10], Lecherousness [-15\*], Obsession ("Become the best swordsman in the world!") [-10\*], Trickster [-15\*], or Vow (Use only weapon of choice) [-5] or (Never refuse a challenge to combat) [-10] or (Challenge every swordsman to combat or Never wear armor) [-15].

**Primary Skills:** Boating (Unpowered) (A) DX+1 [1]-15†; Climbing (A) DX+1 [2]-15‡; Knot-Tying (E) DX+2 [1]-16†; Seamanship (E) IQ+2 [1]-12‡; Survival (Island/Beach) (A) Per+2 [2]-12‡; and Swimming (E) HT+2 [1]-15†. • Thrown Weapon (Harpoon) (E) DX+3 [2]-17† or Thrown Weapon

(Axe/Mace or Knife) (E) DX+1 [2]-15. • One of these three 20-point melee skills packages:

1. One of Broadsword, Saber, or Shortsword, all (A) DX+3 [12]-17; one of Shield (Buckler) (E) DX+3 [8]-17, or Axe/Mace or Main-Gauche, both (A) DX+2 [8]-16.
2. One of the sword skills in option 1 at DX+4 [16]-18; one of Shield (Buckler) (E) DX+2 [4]-16, or Axe/Mace or Main-Gauche, both (A) DX+1 [4]-15.
3. One of the sword skills in option 1 at DX+5 [20]-19.

**Secondary Skills:** Brawling, Fast-Draw (Sword), and Jumping, all (E) DX [1]-14; Wrestling (A) DX [2]-14; and Acrobatics (H) DX [2]-14‡.

**Background Skills:** Seven of Fast-Draw (Knife) or Forced Entry, both (E) DX [1]-14; Stealth (A) DX-1 [1]-13; First Aid or Gesture, both (E) IQ [1]-10; Navigation or Weather Sense, both (A) IQ+1 [1]-11‡; Streetwise (A) IQ-1 [1]-9/11‡; Fast-Talk, Gambling, or Smuggling, all (A) IQ-1 [1]-9; Carousing (E) HT [1]-13/15‡; Hiking or Sex Appeal, both (A) HT-1 [1]-12; Intimidation (A) Will-1 [1]-9; Scrounging (E) Per [1]-10; Observation, Search, or Tracking, all (A) Per-1 [1]-9; or 1 point to raise one of those skills or any one-point primary or secondary skill by a level.

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

† Includes +2 for Seafarer (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 11: Power-Ups*, p.19). This bonus also benefits Carousing and Streetwise rolls in port towns.

‡ Includes +1 for Perfect Balance.

## Customization Notes

Greedy, tough, deadly with a sword . . . the buccaneer is arguably the swashbuckler best-suited to a traditional *Dungeon Fantasy* campaign! His only "special need" is for occasional oceangoing adventure. Otherwise, all the points diverted from pure combat ability to Perfect Balance, Seafarer, and nautical skills might sit unused. As with most delver archetypes, there's a good range of possibilities.

The *black-hearted raider* is a murderous ruffian of the high seas. He boasts endearing flaws like Bad Temper, Bloodlust, Callous, Jealousy, and severe Greed, and likely has an unspeakable fondness for maidens (Lecherousness). To better slaughter enemies and take their booty, he spends advantage points almost exclusively on abilities that aid combat. He favors an intimidating scimitar (Broadsword) and a knife (wielded with Main-Gauche and Thrown Weapon) in combat. To his fighting skills he adds Stealth for sneaking up anchor lines on night raids, Search and Forced Entry for locating and smashing open fat chests of loot, and Intimidation for making prisoners talk.

The *dashing pirate* might not be an actual pirate – just a charming, well-traveled chap with a passion for banter and treasure. He mixes Charisma, Daredevil, Enhanced Dodge, Rapier Wit, and decent Appearance with traits such as Chummy, Compulsive Carousing, Sense of Duty, Trickster, and Xenophilia. He's always up for daring adventure in far-off lands, provided that it promises rum and companionship! He favors flashy fighting with Saber, and prefers to leave a hand free for swinging from lines. His background skills are the likes of Carousing, Fast-Draw, Fast-Talk, Gambling, and Sex Appeal . . . a couple of them even at reliable levels.

## Ultimate Weapons

With modest ST and light weapons, swashbucklers have low damage output even with their Weapon Master bonus. Consider some modifications to remedy this:

- *Fine* (+3 CF) or *very fine* (+19 CF), for +1 or +2 damage, respectively.
- *Penetrating Weapon* enchantment (+\$5,000), for armor divisor (2).
- *Puissance* enchantment (+\$5,000), for +1 damage.
- *Silver coating* (+2 CF), for bonus damage vs. many monsters (p. B275).

Everything here "stacks." Multiply the price of a good weapon by (1 + total CF) and add enchantment costs at the end. Divide final cost by \$500 to calculate the blade's point cost as Signature Gear.

## Choose Your Weapons!

Swashbucklers favor stabbing and cut-and-thrust blades. Good choices from pp. B271-274 are the cavalry saber, rapier, saber, smallsword, and thrusting broadsword in one hand; the large knife, small knife, and dagger wielded with Main-Gauche in the “off” hand (alternatively,

use two one-handed swords!); and the thrusting bastard sword and thrusting greatsword in two hands. Gamers without *GURPS Low-Tech* might find some additional variants interesting.

Weapon	Damage	Reach	Parry	Cost	Weight	ST	Notes
<b>BRAWLING or DX</b>							
Backsword	thr cr	C	0	\$550	3	–	[1, 2]
Cutlass	thr cr	C	0	\$500	2	–	[1, 2]
<b>BROADSWORD (DX-5, Rapier-4, Saber-4, Shortsword-2, or Two-Handed Sword-4)</b>							
Backsword	sw+1 cut	1	0	\$550	3	10	[2]
<i>or</i>	thr+1 imp	1	0	–	–	10	
Edged Rapier	sw cut	1, 2	0	\$1,000	3	10	
<i>or</i>	thr+1 imp	1, 2	0	–	–	10	
Longsword	sw+1 cut	1	0	\$700	4	10	
<i>or</i>	thr+2 imp	1, 2	0	–	–	10	
<b>MAIN-GAUCHE (DX-5, Knife-4, Rapier-3, Saber-3, or Smallsword-3)</b>							
Long Knife	sw-1 cut	C, 1	0F	\$120	1.5	7	[3]
<i>or</i>	thr imp	C, 1	0F	–	–	7	
Main-Gauche	sw-3 cut	C, 1	0F	\$50	1.25	6	[2, 3]
<i>or</i>	thr imp	C, 1	0F	–	–	6	
Stiletto	thr-1 imp	C	0F	\$20	0.25	5	[3, 4]
<b>RAPIER (DX-5, Broadsword-4, Main-Gauche-3, Saber-3, or Smallsword-3)</b>							
Edged Rapier	sw cut	1, 2	0F	\$1,000	3	10	
<i>or</i>	thr+1 imp	1, 2	0F	–	–	10	
Light Edged Rapier	sw-1 cut	1	0F	\$700	2.25	8	
<i>or</i>	thr+1 imp	1	0F	–	–	8	
Light Rapier	thr+1 imp	1	0F	\$400	2	8	
<b>SHORTSWORD (DX-5, Broadsword-2, Knife-4, Saber-4, or Smallsword-4)</b>							
Cutlass	sw cut	1	0	\$500	2	8	[2]
<i>or</i>	thr+1 imp	1	0	–	–	8	
Long Knife	sw-1 cut	1	0	\$120	1.5	7	
<i>or</i>	thr imp	C, 1	0	–	–	7	
Shortsword	sw cut	1	0	\$400	2	8	
<i>or</i>	thr+1 imp	1	0	–	–	8	
<b>SMALLSWORD (DX-5, Main-Gauche-3, Rapier-3, Saber-3, or Shortsword-4)</b>							
Dress Smallsword	thr imp	C, 1	0F	\$300	1	5	
<b>TWO-HANDED SWORD (DX-5 or Broadsword-4)</b>							
Longsword	sw+1 cut	1	0	\$700	4	9†	
<i>or</i>	thr+3 imp	1, 2	0	–	–	9†	

### Notes

[1] Hilt punch. Receives Brawling damage bonuses.

[2] Metal hilt gives hand (only) DR 4, cumulative with glove DR, but is too cramped to accommodate *metal* gauntlets.

[3] Cannot be thrown!

[4] Reduces penalty for targeting chinks in armor (p. B400) by -2.



The *salty dog* is a seaman first. He shares the dashing pirate's respect for fellow crew (Chummy and Sense of Duty), but years far from land have left him gruff (Bad Temper and Odious Personal Habit). Advantage points go toward traits that aid survival at sea: even more ST, HT, and Seafarer, plus some of Absolute Direction, Acute Vision, Breath-Holding, Fearlessness, Hard to Kill, and Temperature Tolerance. He's likely to fight with cutlass and boarding axe (Shortsword and Axe/Mace), and sometimes chuck the axe or possibly a harpoon (choose Thrown Weapon appropriately). Background skill points go toward nautical pursuits: Navigation, Weather Sense, and higher Boating, Knot-Tying, Seamanship, and Swimming.

In all cases, don't overlook advantages that benefit key skills: Absolute Direction is good for +3 to Navigation, Flexibility grants +3 to Climbing, and boosting Seafarer aids *all* nautical pursuits.

## DUELIST

250 points

Like all adventurers identified as "swashbucklers," you're a master of the sword. You leave chandelier-swinging wisecracking to dandies and drunkards, however. Your way is that of the slayer of men in formal contests. Unmatched in speed and precision with light blades, you're willing to sell your skills to anyone who can offer gold, even if this means facing monstrous opponents that call for more than a single, swift stab. What doesn't kill you makes you stronger – and of course *wealthier*.

**Attributes:** ST 11 [10]; DX 16 [120]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 12 [20].

**Secondary Characteristics:** Damage 1d-1/1d+1; BL 24 lbs.; HP 11 [0]; Will 10 [0]; Per 10 [0]; FP 12 [0]; Basic Speed 8.00 [20]; Basic Move 8 [0].

**Advantages:** Enhanced Parry 1 (Weapon of choice) [5]; Luck [15]; Weapon Bond (Any starting weapon) [1]; *and* Weapon Master (Weapon of choice) [20]. • Another 45 points chosen from among ST *or* HT +1 to +4 [10/level], DX +1 *or* +2 [20/level], Will +1 to +6 [5/level], Basic Speed +1 [20], Basic Move +1 to +3 [5/level], Ambidexterity [5], Combat Reflexes [15], Daredevil [15], Enhanced Dodge 1 *or* 2 [15 *or* 30], Enhanced Parry 2 *or* 3 (Weapon of choice) [5 *or* 10], Extra Attack 1 [25], Fit [5] *or* Very Fit [15], Hard to Kill [2/level], Perfect Balance [15], Serendipity [15/level], Signature Gear [Varies], Striking ST 1 *or* 2 [5 *or* 10], Unfazeable [15], Wealth (Comfortable) [10], *or* replace Luck [15] with Extraordinary Luck [30] for 15 points *or* with Ridiculous Luck [60] for 45 points.

**Disadvantages:** -15 points chosen from among Code of Honor (Professional *or* Gentleman's) [-5 *or* -10], Greed [-15\*], Obsession ("Become the best swordsman in the world!") [-10\*], Overconfidence [-5\*], Vow (Use only weapon of choice) [-5] *or* (Never refuse a challenge to combat) [-10] *or* (Challenge every swordsman to combat *or* Never wear armor) [-15]. • Another -35 points chosen from among those traits *or* Bad Temper [-10\*], Bloodlust [-10\*], Callous [-5], Impulsiveness [-10\*], Jealousy [-10], Loner [-5\*], No Sense of Humor [-10], One Eye [-15], Sense of Duty (Adventuring companions) [-5], Stubbornness [-5], *or* Wounded [-5].

**Primary Skills:** Fast-Draw (Sword) (E) DX [1]-16. • *One of* these three 20-point melee skills packages:

1. *One of* Rapier, Saber, *or* Smallsword, all (A) DX+3 [12]-19; *one of* Shield (Buckler) (E) DX+3 [8]-19, *or* Cloak *or* Main-Gauche, both (A) DX+2 [8]-18.
2. *One of* the sword skills in option 1 at DX+4 [16]-20; *one of* Shield (Buckler) (E) DX+2 [4]-18, *or* Cloak *or* Main-Gauche, both (A) DX+1 [4]-17.
3. *One of* the sword skills in option 1 at DX+5 [20]-21!

**Secondary Skills:** Acrobatics (H) DX-1 [2]-15; Intimidation (A) Will+2 [8]-12; Jumping (E) DX [1]-16; *and* Wrestling (A) DX [2]-16. • *Either* Brawling (E) DX+1 [2]-17 *or* Boxing (A) DX [2]-16. • *Either* Thrown Weapon (Knife) (E) DX [1]-16 *or* Throwing (A) DX-1 [1]-15.

**Background Skills:** *Seven of* Fast-Draw (any) (E) DX [1]-16; Climbing *or* Stealth, both (A) DX-1 [1]-15; First Aid, Gesture, *or* Savoir-Faire (High Society), all (E) IQ [1]-10; Armoury (Melee Weapons), Connoisseur (Weapons), Fast-Talk, Gambling, Teaching, *or* Streetwise, all (A) IQ-1 [1]-9; Hiking *or* Running, both (A) HT-1 [1]-11; Search (A) Per-1 [1]-9; *or* 1 point to raise one of those skills *or* any one-point primary *or* secondary skill by a level.

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

### Customization Notes

The duelist aims to make high skill pay off, substituting it for raw power by striking rapidly at vital areas. Be warned that not all dungeon denizens can be defeated through such tactics! On the other hand, even the toughest dragon can't ignore someone who's agile and precise enough to seriously consider leaping onto its back and driving a blade into an eye socket . . . and not all duelists fight the same way.

The *fencer* believes that since fighting can get you killed, it's crucial to look to one's defenses. Give him Combat Reflexes to boost all of his active defenses, and then add as much Enhanced Dodge and Enhanced Parry as possible. A sword-and-buckler loadout favors defense, and even-numbered skill levels are optimal for Parry and Block; e.g., Rapier-20 and Shield (Buckler)-18. Heavier fencing blades are more likely to survive parries, so he prefers the Rapier skill. Everything else is up to the individual, though the canny fencer uses Stealth, Fast-Talk, and Streetwise to avoid trouble – and Running to escape it.

The *purist* lives for the first, truest strike. He sacrifices everything – even defense – to skewer his opponent before the hapless victim can react. Give him higher Basic Speed, extra Basic Move to bridge the gap (Move 11 gives a two-yard step!), and conceivably Combat Reflexes to be this speedy in surprise situations. One skill at 21 is the way to go here, and Rapier affords the longest reach and thus the earliest hit. Other handy skills are better Fast-Draw for contests where swords start sheathed, Savoir-Faire *or* Streetwise to know the local "code," and Armoury *or* Connoisseur to judge blades.

The *scrapper* favors damage and plans for multiple opponents and inhuman monsters. He needs ST and Striking ST for power, and Ambidexterity *or* Extra Attack for multiple attacks. Perfect Balance makes it easier to stand atop behemoths before stabbing them in the eye, Unfazeable lets him bring the fight even to Elder Things, and Hard to Kill offers insurance when things go south. Saber exploits swing cutting damage, making it a good primary weapon choice vs. monsters; take it on its own (use two blades!) *or* pair it with Cloak *or* Shield (Buckler) for defense against groups.

Practical backup skills are those valuable to all delvers: Climbing, First Aid, Hiking, Running, Search, and Stealth.

Regardless of *skill* set, duelists tend toward a few basic *mindsets*. The *hired sword* has Greed as his primary motivation, Code of Honor (Professional) as a “selling point,” Bloodlust and Callous to stomach killing for a price, and probably Loner and No Sense of Humor as consequences of his grim profession. The *hot-tempered gent* accepts duels out of Code of Honor (Gentleman’s), Impulsiveness, and/or a Vow, often displays Bad Temper and Jealousy, yet is fiercely loyal to allies (Sense of Duty). And the *perfectionist* is an athlete motivated by Stubbornness and an Obsession to become the best; he’s his own biggest fan in the form of Overconfidence (showing Jealousy toward those who might rival him), and sets himself challenges by taking as many Vows as the gods (GM) will sustain.

## ROGUE

### 250 points

You combine a gift for swordsmanship with a love for procuring wealth through skill and cunning. You’re no thief, and would rather win a fortune in an up-front contest than steal it. You’re also no fool, however – you know that fighting can get you *killed*, so you avoid needless violence. Still, you’re an exceptional warrior when the mood takes you, and aren’t easily intimidated by monstrous foes . . . it’s just that you prefer to stab them from behind.

**Attributes:** ST 11 [10]; DX 15 [100]; IQ 12 [40]; HT 12 [20].

**Secondary Characteristics:** Damage 1d-1/1d+1; BL 24 lbs.;

HP 11 [0]; Will 12 [0]; Per 12 [0]; FP 12 [0]; Basic Speed 7.00 [5]; Basic Move 7 [0].

**Advantages:** Luck [15]; Weapon Bond (Any starting weapon) [1]; and Weapon Master (Weapon of choice) [20]. • Another 45 points chosen from among DX or IQ +1 or +2 [20 or 40], Per +1 to +6 [5/level], Basic Speed +1 [20], Basic Move +1 to +3 [5/level], Alcohol Tolerance [1], Ambidexterity [5], Appearance (Attractive, Handsome, or Very Handsome) [4, 12, or 16], Catfall [10], Charisma [5/level], Combat Reflexes [15], Daredevil [15], Enhanced Dodge 1 or 2 [15 or 30], Enhanced Parry 1 or 2 (Weapon of choice) [5 or 10], Extra Attack 1 [25], Flexibility [5] or Double-Jointed [15], High Manual Dexterity 1-4 [5/level], No Hangover [1], Perfect Balance [15], Rapier Wit [5], Serendipity [15/level], Signature Gear [Varies], Smooth Operator 1-3 [15/level], Striking ST 1 or 2 (Only on surprise attack, -60%) [2 or 4], Wealth (Comfortable or Wealthy) [10 or 20], or replace Luck [15] with Extraordinary Luck [30] for 15 points or with Ridiculous Luck [60] for 45 points.

**Disadvantages:** One of Greed (12) [-15], Kleptomania (12) [-15], or Trickster (12) [-15]. • Another -15 points chosen from among those traits or Bloodlust [-10\*], Code of Honor (Pirate’s) [-5], Compulsive Carousing [-5\*], Compulsive Gambling [-5\*], Compulsive Lying [-15\*], Compulsive Spending [-5\*], Curious [-5\*], Laziness [-10], Lecherousness [-15\*], or Social Stigma (Criminal Record) [-5]. • A further -20 points chosen from the two previous lists or Callous [-5], Chummy [-5] or Loner [-5\*], Cowardice [-10\*], Impulsiveness [-10\*], Jealousy [-10], Obsession (“Become the best swordsman in the

world!”) [-10\*], One Eye [-15], Overconfidence [-5\*], Post-Combat Shakes [-5\*], Sense of Duty (Adventuring companions) [-5], Short Attention Span [-10\*], or Vow (Use only weapon of choice) [-5] or (Never refuse a challenge to combat) [-10] or (Challenge every swordsman to combat or Never wear armor) [-15].

**Primary Skills:** Stealth (A) DX [2]-15. • One of these three 20-point melee skills packages:

1. One of Rapier, Saber, Shortsword, or Smallsword, all (A) DX+3 [12]-18; one of Shield (Buckler) (E) DX+3 [8]-18, or Cloak or Main-Gauche, both (A) DX+2 [8]-17.
2. One of the sword skills in option 1 at DX+4 [16]-19; one of Shield (Buckler) (E) DX+2 [4]-17, or Cloak or Main-Gauche, both (A) DX+1 [4]-16.
3. One of the sword skills in option 1 at DX+5 [20]-20!

## Power-Ups

The general power-ups in *Dungeon Fantasy 11* – particularly the *combat* power-ups – suit swordsmen built on any of these templates. The swashbuckler power-ups could use some fine-tuning, however.

All swashbucklers may buy these power-ups:

- Any advantage or skill on their template.
- Basic Speed up to +3 [20/level].
- Blind Fighting, Flying Leap, Kiai, and Power Blow skills *without* needing Chi Mastery.
- Extra Attack up to 2 [25/level].

Further options are template-specific. Those with an asterisk (\*) come from *Dungeon Fantasy 11*.

**Aristocrat:** Armor Familiarity\* [1]; Armor Mastery\* [5]; Born War Leader up to 6 [5/level]; Combat Haberdashery\* [1]; Enhanced Block up to 3 [5/level]; Higher Purpose (Blood will tell) up to 3 [5/level]; Sheer Speed\* [1]. The aristocrat may also spend character points for henchman Allies (family retainers) or portable Signature Gear (inheritance) at any time, *if* the GM feels that his clan’s people could reach him.

**Buccaneer:** Chandelier Leap\* [10]; Combat Haberdashery\* [1]; Damage Resistance 1 or 2 (Tough Skin, -40%) [3 or 6]; Ragnar’s Breath\* [5]; Ridiculous Luck [60]; Seafarer\* up to 6 [10/level]; Sheer Speed\* [1]; Sure Grasp\* [5/level]. Buccaneers may also replace One Eye, One Hand, Missing Legs, and so forth with Distinctive Features [-1] by paying the point difference – against all sense, the eye patch, hook, peg leg, or whatever is just as good as the original!

**Duelist:** Basic Speed up to +4 [20/level]; Botte Segrete\* [20]; Coup de Jarnac\* [15]; Enhanced Time Sense [45] (replacing Combat Reflexes [15]); Sheer Speed\* [1]. Duelists may also expand Weapon Master to “two weapons” [25], “fencing weapons” [30], or “swords” [35], if they learn the associated skills.

**Rogue:** Chandelier Leap\* [10]; Combat Haberdashery\* [1]; Craftiness\* up to 4 [5/level]; Enhanced Dodge up to 3 [15/level]; Jack of All Trades\* up to 3 [10/level]; Serendipity [15/level], with *no* upper limit; Sheer Speed\* [1]; Street-Smart\* up to 4 [5/level].

**Secondary Skills:** Acrobatics (H) DX-1 [2]-14; Jumping (E) DX [1]-15; and Streetwise (A) IQ [2]-12. • *One* of Crossbow or Thrown Weapon (Knife), both (E) DX [1]-15; Bow or Throwing, both (A) DX-1 [1]-14; or Blowpipe or Sling, both (H) DX-2 [1]-13. • *Five* of Brawling, Fast-Draw (any), Forced Entry, or Garrote, all (E) DX+1 [2]-16; Climbing, Filch, or Wrestling, all (A) DX [2]-15; Escape, Pickpocket, or Sleight of Hand, all (H) DX-1 [2]-14; Fast-Talk, Gambling, Holdout, Lockpicking, Shadowing, Smuggling, or Traps, all (A) IQ [2]-12; Poisons (H) IQ-1 [2]-11; Intimidation (A) Will [2]-12; Observation, Search, or Urban Survival, all (A) Per [2]-12; or 2 points to raise one of those skills or any two-point primary or secondary skill by a level.

**Background Skills:** Six of Dancing (A) DX-1 [1]-14; First Aid, Gesture, or Panhandling, all (E) IQ [1]-12; Cartography, Connoisseur (any), Disguise, or Merchant, all (A) IQ-1 [1]-11; Carousing (E) HT [1]-12; Hiking, Running, or Sex Appeal, all (A) HT-1 [1]-11; Scrounging (E) Per [1]-12; 1 point to raise one of those skills by a level; or 1 point to acquire another secondary skill option at one level lower.

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

### Customization Notes

The rogue is arguably what most gamers think of when they imagine a swashbuckler: a swift fighter, surely – but also a *smart* one. In many ways, while the buccaneer might be the best all-around combatant and the duelist has more to offer by way of sheer skill, the rogue is the *most versatile* swashbuckler. Possible subtypes range widely.

The *dark rogue* turns his superior swordsmanship to the art of assassination. Greed leads him to sell his skills, after which Bloodlust takes over, likely complemented by negative traits like Compulsive Lying, Cowardice, or Loner (often leading to a Social Stigma). Combat advantages become very important – particularly Extra Attack, and Striking ST for blows from the shadows. Weapons-wise, cutting blades work best on throats, which suggests Saber or Shortsword skill, and this is likely to go with Cloak or Main-Gauche for literal cloak-and-dagger work. Beyond that, ranged weapons aren't a bad idea (Crossbow is deadliest), and consider Garrote, Poisons, and Shadowing.

The *sneaky rogue* resembles a thief with better combat skills. Greed or Kleptomania is *de rigueur*, along with foibles such as Compulsive Spending and Laziness to explain the need to steal, possibly resulting in Social Stigma. To be any good at this, improve DX and consider advantages like Cat-fall, Flexibility, High Manual Dexterity, and Perfect Balance. Higher Stealth is smart, and usually goes with a few of Climbing, Filch, Lockpicking, Pickpocket, and Traps. Background skill points buy even more thieving skills, or supporting abilities like Cartography for the dungeon and Connoisseur and Merchant for fencing goods. As for all swashbucklers, combat skills are a focus, but discretion suggests smaller weapons wielded using Main-Gauche, Shortsword, and Smallsword – perhaps alongside Holdout.

The *witty rogue* is like a bard minus the magic. His outgoing personality shows up in such traits as Chummy, Compulsive Carousing, Compulsive Gambling, Overconfidence, Sense of Duty, and Trickster. He has an intelligent, charming manner, as evidenced by high IQ and some of positive Appearance, Charisma, Rapier Wit, and Smooth Operator. Combat skills vary, but Smallsword paired with Cloak or Main-Gauche can allow him to go armed in social situations. A knack for manipulating people is also important – which in this case means superior Fast-Talk, Intimidation, and Streetwise, alongside Carousing, Dancing, Disguise, Merchant, Panhandling, and Sex Appeal.

Rogues should take care to match advantage choices to skills: Flexibility (or Double-Jointed) helps Climbing and Escape; High Manual Dexterity adds to Pickpocket, Sleight of Hand, and many applications of Lockpicking and Traps; Perfect Balance is great for Acrobatics and Climbing; and Smooth Operator aids Carousing, Fast-Talk, Intimidation, Panhandling, Sex Appeal, and Streetwise.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sean “Dr. Kromm” Punch set out to become a particle physicist in 1985, ended up the **GURPS** Line Editor in 1995, and has engineered rules for almost every **GURPS** product since. He developed, edited, or wrote dozens of **GURPS** *Third Edition* projects between 1995 and 2002. In 2004, he produced the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition** with David Pulver. Since then, he has created **GURPS Powers** (with Phil Masters), **GURPS Martial Arts** (with Peter Dell’Orto), **GURPS Zombies**, and the **GURPS Action, GURPS Dungeon Fantasy, and GURPS Power-Ups** series . . . among other things. Sean has been a gamer since 1979. His non-gaming interests include cinema, mixology, and Argentine tango. He lives in Montréal, Québec with his wife, Bonnie.



# JUST REWARDS

## BY SEAN PUNCH

A standard premise of hack 'n' slash fantasy gaming is that the heroes will develop in play. And by "develop," most players mean "improve." That's definitely true in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*, where improvement takes two forms:

1. *Character points*. These buy permanent increases in innate capabilities: attributes, advantages, skills, spells, etc.

2. *Gear*. Some loot is intrinsically useful; e.g., magical weapons and armor, potions and scrolls, and fancy jewels that make wonderful power items. The rest – second-rate goods, not-so-fancy jewels, tacky objets d'art that only bluebloods could love, heaps of coins, etc. – can be exchanged for better equipment. A delver who improves his loadout grows more powerful without spending a point: weapons that boost damage output are almost as good as ST, armor with high DR is often superior to natural DR (nastiness like contact poison stays *outside*), high-capacity power items are essentially limited Energy Reserves, and so on.

Players are *expected* to have their characters' best interests at heart, never spending a precious point if mere gold would do, and always seeking the best possible deals. Such "munchkinism" is part of hack 'n' slash fantasy because much of the excitement comes from escalating stakes. With 250 points and \$1,000 to spend, *Dungeon Fantasy* delvers hardly start at rock bottom – but the "zero to hero" arc is a big part of the fun!

If the arc is too steep, though, the adventurers may become demigods the GM cannot challenge without dangers so overpowered that the game teeters perpetually on a knife-edge between "cakewalk" and "total party kill." If the delvers don't die, they'll soon end up retired because either the players get bored or the GM gives up. Thus, it's important to make character improvement gradual enough that players and GM alike have time to adapt to the growing power level, keeping the game fun for all.

For gear, this is simple. The GM has complete control over what treasures are found on adventures and what goods are sold in town. Occasional errors in judgment are easily remedied: troublesome items can be broken, stolen, dropped down chasms, cursed, eaten by monsters, confiscated by the King, and so on. These are measures of last resort, to be sure, but *legitimate* ones. Someone who wants prized possessions to become permanent abilities should "insure" them by spending points on Signature Gear – an option included on almost every template and reiterated in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 11: Power-Ups*. Failure to do so means accepting the risks.

Character points are trickier. The GM *does* control how many points are awarded. The players *are* normally limited to spending those on the traits and power-ups for their heroes' templates. Yet much comes down to player discretion . . . and all too often, that means not-so-discreetly trying to "game the game" via legitimate purchases.

Fortunately, this puzzle admits a straightforward solution: Awarding specific, fitting abilities instead of discretionary character points. That still increases point totals, but in a way the GM can control, exactly as with gear. A fixed  $n$ -point trait differs little from an artifact that gives a particular boost that would cost  $n$  points to buy innately, but neither option is "Here's  $n$  points to spend on whatever fits your profession." The GM can hand out a mixture of these rewards to ensure that growth is *constant* but not *uncontrolled*.

To make this attractive to the players rather than a source of friction, it's crucial to link fixed rewards to the heroes' actions: Tell everyone *up front* what they're getting into, on behalf of whom, and for what potential gains. If they're hoping for better archery abilities, they might select the outdoor adventure involving elves. If they smell profit in being made honorary dwarves, choosing to tackle the Menace of the Mines would be a better bet. And if divine favor is appealing, temples are always seeking champions. See *Special Snowflakes* (p. 45) and *Black Sheep* (p. 52) for additional advice.

As for the specific abilities, *anything* is possible. Below are numerous examples, each with notes on point value, origins, and in-game effects. Many come in levels, with more or more-impressive achievements bringing larger rewards. This list is inspirational, not canonical – the GM is encouraged to be creative!

## MUNDANE BOONS

The simplest rewards are those bestowed by community leaders, rulers, guilds, the wealthy, and so on. These mostly fall into the realms of influence and material gain.

### *Claim to Hospitality*

#### Variable

A mission undertaken for a business, organization (guild, temple, etc.), conspiracy, or polity may lead that group to be disposed to help the hero. This is particularly true if the patron values secrecy and prefers to avoid ostentation. Give such a reward a better name than "Claim to Hospitality"; e.g., "Favor of the Wizards' Guild" or "Agent of the Secret Hand."

*Benefits:* Once per week *in town*, you may roll 3d against effective skill 14 to contact members of the group you helped. Success means they cover your expenses for the week; critical failure indicates you must serve them free of charge for the week (you're free to refuse, but that costs you this reward!). You may also request small favors, each of which calls for a reaction roll at +3, scoring at least a Good reaction. For further details, see *Power-Ups*, p. 16.

**Traits:** Claim to Hospitality [Varies]. This is worth 1 point for a specific establishment in a particular town; 5 points for a group spanning a kingdom; or 10 points for a vast conspiracy, religion, etc. found everywhere but on other planes of existence.

## Hero

5 points/level

The *most obvious* reward for heroism is recognition as a true hero! This isn't the *most common* outcome, however. "Heroism" in service to dark or selfish causes is unlikely to make many friends. This benefit accrues mainly to adventurers who defend the innocent, rescue the weak, and expect no compensation.

**Benefits:** You get +1 per level (maximum four levels) to reactions from almost everyone. For details, see *Power-Ups*, p. 16.

**Traits:** Reputation (Everyone; All the time) [5/level]. The GM can scale this to a single kingdom (x1/2) or town (x1/3), but if a hero earns enough Reputations that a single, global one would be cheaper, merge them into full-fledged Hero.

## Items of Power

Variable

A classic reward for heroic deeds is an artifact befitting a hero. This might differ from party member to party member – the wealthy and powerful often imagine that they're the perfect judges of who needs what, giving bows to scouts, wands to wizards, etc. even if these aren't especially needed.

**Benefits:** You get a unique or hard-to-come-by item that's chosen specially for you. The GM decides what this is, but will match the size of the reward to the scope of the action that earned it, and at least *try* to ensure that each delver in the group is (more-or-less) equally rewarded.

**Traits:** Unusual Background (Artifact) [Varies]; see *Power-Ups*, p. 6. The GM might give out Signature Gear instead, if it would make sense for the item to enjoy "plot protection"; such goods often have strange origins (temples, the Wizards' Guild, ancient vending machines of power, etc.).

## Let Me Adjust That For You

1 point/item

A minor-but-useful reward offered by smiths, tinkers, gnomes, and other lovers of craftsmanship is to fine-tune a delver's gear to work better. Such people most often wish to thank adventurers for assistance with procuring parts or artifacts.

**Benefits:** Your new friend takes one or more of your tools, tool kits, or weapons into his shop, bangs on them, and makes them better-suited to you. You gain +1 to effective skill when using them. The bigger the favor, the more gear gets modified.

**Traits:** Equipment Bond [1/item] or Weapon Bond [1/weapon].

## Riches

Variable

Money is *by far* the most common reward for ordinary services of all kinds. It's also the standard "consolation prize" for delvers who can't for some reason accept *Thanks of a Race* (pp. 46-49) or *Rewards from the Gods* (pp. 49-52).

**Benefits:** You gain not just a pile of money but also the connections to legitimize it, giving you a leg up for future business dealings. Each level improves Wealth by a step, to a maximum of Very Wealthy, *and* pays cash equal to the difference in starting funds between your new and former levels. Thus, "haves" get paid more than "have-nots" – that's par for the course in *Dungeon Fantasy* worlds.

**Traits:** Wealth increases by a level. The price is the difference in point cost. Those who are Very Wealthy *do not* become Filthy Rich – the truly powerful see delvers as just plain filthy, and would never elevate them that high – but *do* get their coffers filled to the tune of \$20,000. At the GM's option, a Very Wealthy adventurer may bargain for special training instead; since most Wealth levels are worth 10 points, that's the limit (e.g., 10 points of Magery, if the Wizards' Guild is involved).

## SPECIAL SNOWFLAKES

Some players are happy only with unspent points. They would sooner receive 1 point to spend however they want than 2, 3, or more points in predetermined traits. The diplomatic solution suggests itself: Let them exchange points in preset rewards for discretionary points at ratio of 2:1, 3:1, or worse! This means some delvers will fall behind in points, but that's the price of being a special snowflake – and since strategic spending typically boosts core competencies in a way that plot-oriented rewards don't, such heroes won't lag in actual *effectiveness*.

The GM sets the exchange rate, but 2:1 is usually fair. Save stingier ratios for rewards so generally useful that rejecting them amounts to arguing its own sake. For instance, an Extra Life – worth 25 points – is an *astounding* boon for any delver, and the GM would be within his rights to offer "An Extra Life or 10 points" or even "An Extra Life or 5 points."

Not all rewards are so negotiable – especially when a *deity* is doing the giving. A truly ineffable force would bestow the ability regardless. A temperamental one might turn whimsical or decide to teach a lesson, setting the "exchange rate" by tacking on disadvantages; e.g., turning down a god's free Extra Life for 5 points might mean 25 discretionary points *plus* Social Stigma (Excommunicated) [-10] and Unluckiness [-10] . . . which is, after all, a 5-point gain. Severe offense could mean no compensation or *just* disadvantages! Demons are particularly prone to such behavior.

All this assumes the *player* disputes the reward. If it's genuinely inappropriate for the *character*, see *Black Sheep* (p. 52) instead.

## THANKS OF A RACE

An *entire race* might end up indebted to a hero for a great service. Rewards given by more-or-less ordinary mortal species tend to be comparable to *Mundane Boons* (pp. 44-45); those from supernatural beings can be extraordinary! Where a reward resembles one of the race's innate abilities and a higher level makes no sense, members of the race are likely to be rewarded with social benefits instead.

The following examples are associated with races described in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 3: The Next Level*.

### Blue (Green) Tongue

7 or 14 points

Nymphs (*The Next Level*, p. 9) of the tree- or river-bound kind might reward heroes who save their homes by having their wizards cast an enchantment on their saviors. The catch? To merit such favor, the adventurers must face a threat that's beyond the powers of spellcasters who can casually grant permanent magical abilities . . .

*Benefits:* You gain the ability to speak while, to, and from underwater (Blue Tongue) or the capacity to speak with plants (Green Tongue), depending on the nymphs. Being kind, the nymphs might agree to grant the missing capability if you already have the one they initially offer. These gifts work only where there's mana.

*Traits:* Speak Underwater (Interface Crossing, +50%; Mana Sensitive, -10%) [7] or Speak with Plants (Mana Sensitive, -10%) [14].

### Brotherhood of Ghouls

1 point

Corpse-eaters (*The Next Level*, pp. 5-6) rely on secrecy for survival, but occasionally they're discovered . . . usually with disastrous consequences. An adventurer who looks past his prejudices to *help* a colony of corpse-eaters may be rewarded with an invisible supernatural mark.

*Benefits:* You gain the race's unique perk, becoming inoffensive to ghouls.

*Traits:* Brotherhood of Ghouls [1].

### Cool Blood

3 points

Lizard men (*The Next Level*, p. 15) may honor heroes who save their desert or swamp homes from monstrous incursions and magical menaces. The most interesting reward is a sweaty day-long ritual that transforms the recipient.

*Benefits:* A day drinking strange, bitter brew in a sweltering lizard-man sweat lodge has left you more heat-tolerant. Add 3×HT degrees to the "hot" end of your temperature comfort zone. Lizard men cannot "stack" this reward with racial Temperature Tolerance; instead, they undergo similar rituals that grant them their racial power-ups (*Power-Ups*, p. 42), 3 points at a time.

*Traits:* Temperature Tolerance 3 [3].

### Dragon Sigil

1, 3, 5, or 6 points

Few civilized races trust reptilians, so dragon-blooded (*The Next Level*, p. 15) need go-betweens for "polite" missions. Success at these can earn an introduction to dragons, who may award Items of Power (p. 45), Riches (p. 45), or occasionally a mystical mark visible only to dragonkind.

*Benefits:* You bear a sigil that leads true dragons who see you to react at +1 per level. Dragon-blooded effectively start with three levels of this reward, while four levels is the maximum for anyone.

*Traits:* Reputation +1 (Dragons; All the time) [1], +2 [3], +3 [5], or +4 [6].

### Dwarven Riches

Variable

Dwarves (*The Next Level*, p. 6) reward nearly all service with *stuff*. The heroics they deem worthy of recompense inevitably involve seriously scary monsters in dangerously deep tunnels.

*Benefits:* You gain shopping privileges (the race's unique perk: 10% off the price of dwarven gear); Items of Power (p. 45), almost always weapons or armor; and/or Riches (p. 45), backed by dwarven gold deposited with the right people. The exact mix can vary and is often negotiable, but its point value invariably tracks the risks faced to earn it.

*Traits:* Any combination of Dwarven Gear [1], Unusual Background (Artifact) [Varies], or Wealth [Varies].

### Elder Gift

5 points/level

Philosophers among the dark ones (*The Next Level*, p. 6) and elder-spawn (*The Next Level*, p. 12) claim that every mortal has Elder Thing heritage. If you help them enough, they'll prove it by offering you a foul potion that awakens this permanently. This gesture means revealing a secret, so they save it for truly great deeds – the sort involving visiting horrid Elder Thing sites and retrieving unspeakable artifacts.

*Benefits:* You're "awakened" and acquire the special Talent of these races, gaining +1 per level to Alchemy, Hidden Lore, Occultism, and Thaumatology. Members of most races are limited to four levels of this reward – one per favor – and must make a Fright Check at a penalty equal to twice the new level. If you're a dark one or elder-spawn, you can rack up *eight* levels (including racial levels) sans Fright Checks.

*Traits:* Elder Gift [5/level].

### Elven Training

Variable

Elves (*The Next Level*, pp. 6-8) value heroes who save Nature in a big way: defeating an orc army bent on chopping down a forest to construct siege engines, braving the spirit world to locate the missing Spirit of the Mountain, etc. Rewards take the form of shared wisdom.

**Benefits:** Some elves know the secret of awakening magical aptitude; others can offer advanced archery training. If you agree to live among the elves and train for a while after an adventure that merits a special reward, you'll earn from 5 to 20 points (depending on your actions) toward Heroic Archer, Magery, or Weapon Master (Bow). Every 5 points of training takes a mere week . . . and there are no living expenses. However, there *will* be a training montage – elves are cool that way. If this reward doesn't let you afford the advantage you desire, you can save up to acquire it later, but you won't see these "free" points until you can cover the difference with unspent points.

**Traits:** Any of Heroic Archer [20], Magery 0 [5], +1 or +2 to Magery [10 or 20], or Weapon Master (Bow) [20]. In the interest of niche protection, scouts may *always* opt for an equal number of points in scout power-ups (**Power-Ups**, pp. 32-33), while non-scouts *do not* gain access to these. Similarly, wizards may improve Magery up to 6, or take an equal number of points in wizard power-ups (**Power-Ups**, pp. 36-37), but non-wizards are limited to Magery 2 and cannot acquire wizard power-ups.

## Fauned Memories

3, 6, 10, or 13 points

Thankful fauns (**The Next Level**, p. 8) may put their musical talents to work for their new pal. Saving a piece of wilderness is the classic way to earn such gratitude. Throwing a legendary party – one with food, drink, and music dangerously obtained – is an off-beat possibility.

**Benefits:** Your name is lauded by the fauns, who spread it far and wide – both in conventional song that bards of all races will eventually adopt and on the wings of birds. Each level (maximum four levels) grants a general +1 to reactions; this is similar to the Hero power-up (**Power-Ups**, p. 16), but recognized by everyone *other than* underground denizens.

**Traits:** Reputation +1 (Everyone who doesn't live in a hole) [3], +2 [6], +3 [10], or +4 [13].

## Hero Ink

1, 4, 5, or 8 points

Goblin-kin (**The Next Level**, pp. 10-11) respect fighting and destruction. "Heroes" who serve goblin-kind well in this capacity – and this often involves affronts against *other* races – may be given tattoos normally reserved for gobs, hobs, and orcs.

**Benefits:** Goblin-kin who see your tattoos will react at +1 per level. Anybody might earn two levels; full-blood goblins, hobgoblins, and orcs can have up to four. At the first or second level, this ink *also* gives you -1 to Disguise and Shadowing, and +1 to others' attempts to identify you; at the third or fourth level, double these drawbacks.

**Traits:** Reputation +1 (All goblin-kin; All the time) [2], +2 [5], +3 [7], or +4 [10]. Also add Distinctive Features 1 [-1] at the first or second level, Distinctive Features 2 [-2] at the third or fourth.

## WHERE ARE THE HALF-SPIRITS?

The half-spirit "races" are catchall categories for remarkable *individuals*. Such beings lack extensive societies and repositories of cultural wisdom to leverage for rewards. Services for them are *personal* and repaid with treasure; see *Items of Power* (p. 45) and *Riches* (p. 45). Where a half-spirit represents an associated higher power, the GM should choose something suitable from *Rewards from the Gods* (pp. 49-52):

**Celestials** (**The Next Level**, p. 12): A god of any sphere might be Good, but constructive and life-affirming rewards are most fitting. Consider Heal-ing Hands (p. 50), Look of Love (p. 51), Righteous Repair (p. 51), Savior of the Harvest (p. 51), and Sunlit Soul (pp. 51-52).

**Infernals** (**The Next Level**, pp. 12-13): Any kind of deity might be Evil, too – but rewards tied to stealth and bloodshed fit best, notably Debt of Death (p. 50), Fear Not the Night (p. 50), Holy Haste (pp. 50-51), Master of the Hunt (p. 51), and War-Bringer (p. 52).

**Infused** (**The Next Level**, p. 13): Fair-Weather Friend (p. 50) suits air-infused; Faith Moves Mountains (p. 50), earth-infused; Burning Faith (pp. 49-50) or Sunlit Soul (pp. 51-52), fire-infused; and Sea Servant (p. 51), water-Infused. Where bestowed by greater elemental spirits rather than true gods, replace Divine, -10% with Mana Sensitive, -10%.

Elder-Spawn (**The Next Level**, p. 12) are an exception. These creepy beings grant Elder Gift (p. 46).

## Lucky Bastard

Variable

Despite their famous crankiness, leprechauns (**The Next Level**, p. 9) *do* thank saviors of green glens and similarly wholesome heroes. Contrary to myth, they *do not* give away Charms or pots of gold; rather, they bestow a magical blessing.

**Benefits:** Each level makes you one step luckier. If you have Ridiculous Luck – say, you're a leprechaun yourself – you enjoy lucky breaks (Serendipity) instead. These gifts work only in areas with mana. And if you're Cursed, you're out of luck . . . leprechauns can be little jerks.

**Traits:** To price this, find the difference in point cost between the new and old levels of luckiness – Unluckiness [-10], nothing [0], Luck [15], Extraordinary Luck [30], or Ridiculous Luck [60] – and apply -10% for Mana Sensitive. At Ridiculous Luck, add levels of Serendipity (Mana Sensitive, -10%) [13.5]. In all cases, round final cost *up*. Not everyone gets the same number of points, and Cursed delvers get nothing.

## Made Man

10 or 15 points

Ordinary halflings (**The Next Level**, p. 14) are too small and provincial to offer much more than food and tobacco. Adventuring-grade ones dominate the criminal underworld.

Doing them a favor – almost always an illegal favor – can get you in *tight*.

**Benefits:** Word is out that Not-So-Big (But Oh-So-Scary) Al will whack anyone who messes with you. In all civilized towns, treat critical failure while shopping or selling on the black market as mere failure – and failure at shoplifting, cheating, or picking pockets results in no consequences worse than no gains. Getting caught at these crimes, or even betraying a quest sponsor, won't trigger *Scum and Villainy* (**GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons**, p. 4). You still can't offend the King by debasing coin, waylaying people on the roads between towns, etc.

**Traits:** Legal Immunity [10]. This is mutually exclusive with Social Stigma (Criminal Record) [-5], so this reward *also* eliminates that disadvantage for those who have it, for a net 15-point gain.

## Mingled Trollblood

3 points

Trolls (**The Next Level**, p. 16) don't have an organized society. However, doing a big favor for an individual troll – not always a *nice* favor, but sometimes nothing worse than killing everything in a dungeon and releasing a troll imprisoned there – can earn the rare opportunity to be gashed open and mingle blood, which is mostly beneficial. Trolls do not reward fellow trolls.

**Benefits:** Troll blood stays with you forever because it constantly regenerates inside you! The upside is that you heal 1 HP per hour – even HP inflicted by fire or acid. The downside is that you suffer 50% more injury from fire.

**Traits:** Regeneration (Regular) [25] and Vulnerability (Fire  $\times 1.5$ ) [-22]. This is a lower-than-usual level of Vulnerability to a Common danger; use -7, -15, or -30 points for 1.5 $\times$  injury from Rare, Occasional, or Very Common threats, respectively. A troll PC *can* give this reward! He must sacrifice 3 unspent points to a *willing* recipient.

## Pixilated

Variable

Pixies (**The Next Level**, p. 9) often need help with troubles that are resistant to magic and beyond the physical capabilities of 5"- to 6"-tall beings – menaces like ogre hordes. The classic reward is a sprinkling of pixie dust (yes, that exists).

**Benefits:** Once per day, you can shrink to pixie size. Your gear does *not* scale down, but your Move, HP, DR, etc. do (see *Shrinking*, p. B85); thus, use is best avoided where combat is likely. This gift works only where there's mana.

**Traits:** Shrinking 6 (Limited Use, 1/day, -40%; Mana Sensitive, -10%) [15] for SM 0 folk – but Shrinking 7 [18] for SM +1 ogres and barbarians, Shrinking 5 [13] for SM -1 gnomes, Shrinking 4 [10] for SM -2 halflings, and Shrinking 2 [5] for SM -4 leprechauns.

## Queen-Scent

1 point

Coleopterans (**The Next Level**, p. 5) are neither bright nor good with outsiders, but saving a whole hive might earn a minor reward: being sprayed with a queen's lingering pheromone signature. This isn't easily removed (never accidentally, and even deliberate attempts are at -10), but only social insects can smell it.

**Benefits:** Members of *social* insect species weaker than coleopterans (any such race whose template costs less than 75 points) remain neutral toward you if you stay out of their way. You can walk through their lair and they'll *ignore* you as long as you aren't hostile. They'll shove you aside if you get in the way, or attack you if you do anything actively unfriendly: injure them, vandalize their home, steal from them, etc.

**Traits:** Brotherhood (Low-powered social insect races) [1].

*I proclaim you, Sir Lancelot of the Lake, a Knight of the Round Table. By custom, you are entitled now to ask one boon, which I will grant if it be in my power.*

– King Arthur, *The Adventures of Sir Lancelot* #1.1

## Rocks

1 point

Do a favor for gargoyles (**The Next Level**, p. 9) and they'll say, "You Rock!" Since these creatures are dimwitted and socially maladjusted, they think lots of people Rock. This easy-to-earn title (get a gargoyle chieftain admitted to a fancy inn and it's yours) is appropriately irrelevant.

**Benefits:** Gargoyles – a relatively rare and most insignificant race – like you. You get +1 to reactions from them. There are no higher levels; gargoyles can barely count. They can *fly*, though, so word spreads quickly.

**Traits:** Reputation +1 (Gargoyles; All the time) [1].

## Scratch of Honor

5 points

Pleasing the cat-folk (**The Next Level**, p. 5) might earn ritual scarification that even primitive felines recognize. Cat-folk save this honor for heroes who do deeds their kind have trouble with: organizing the race against adversity ("herding cats"), solving serious problems involving ocean journeys or underwater menaces, and so on.



*Benefits:* Any feline who sees your scarred face will accord you respect. Nonsapient ones will warn you of their intentions (roll vs. IQ to *interpret* this) and respond to your Influence skills. Sapient ones will react to you at +2. This mark gives you -1 to Disguise and Shadowing, and +1 to others' attempts to identify you.

**Traits:** Animal Empathy (Specialized, Felines, -60%; Vision-Based, -20%) [1]; Distinctive Features [-1]; and Reputation +2 (All sapient felines; All the time) [5].

## Widgets

4 points/level

Gnomes (*The Next Level*, p. 10) are generous to benefactors. They greatly appreciate assistance with whatever technological wonder they're currently perfecting.

*Benefits:* The gnomes shower you with small gifts and tailor your clothing, armor, etc. to have pockets, loops, and hooks to carry it all. The result is one Gizmo per level (no upper limit) on top of any Gizmos your profession allows. Record these separately as "Widgets." If you're ever permanently relieved of all gear, you lose Widgets until you can reconnect with the gnomes (who invented the lifetime warranty).

**Traits:** Gizmos (Can Be Stolen, -20%) [4/level]. Can Be Stolen is normally worth -10% if you must be forcefully stripped, but there's an extra -10% because while Widgets aren't strictly Breakable, anything that destroys your whole load-out – e.g., immersion in acid – suspends the advantage.

## Wilderness Peace

2, 5, 7, or 10 points

Though wildmen (*The Next Level*, p. 16) are neither brilliant nor socially advanced, they *do* have a society and *will* reward those who defend it – or their wilderness habitat – by bestowing a shamanic blessing of sorts.

*Benefits:* Tribal elders stand you in good stead with their spirit guardians, who in turn put in a good word for you with nature spirits everywhere. Add +1 per level (maximum four levels) to the reactions of entities that would qualify as "nature spirits." At the GM's discretion, this may sometimes affect rolls for the *consequences* of such spirits' indirect actions (e.g., rolls to check whether wild animals attack), where these don't depend on reactions.

**Traits:** Reputation +1 (Nature spirits; All the time) [2], +2 [5], +3 [7], or +4 [10]. The GM might also allow a *fifth* level, which adds Spirit Empathy (Specialized, Nature Spirits, -50%) [5], for a total of 15 points.

*If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.*

– Henry David Thoreau

## Wun Fre Beetin'

5 points

Minotaurs (*The Next Level*, p. 14) and ogres (*The Next Level*, pp. 14-15) are – to be brutally honest – socially marginal dim-bulbs that often need help, typically with matters involving towns, magic, or thinking. Being near-outcast idiots, they can really offer only one reward . . .

*Benefits:* Enough minotaurs or ogres have pledged to help you, *once*, that if you shout enough – or blow the horn the minotaurs gave you, or bang the ogre drum – there's a 9 or less chance that 1d+5 goons will show up to help you fight a battle. Except on a 3 or a 4, they'll then forget your name and leave, and you'll lose this trait until you earn it anew. The GM should build these helpful thugs on 50% of the delver's points: 40 points for the racial template, the rest in attributes (anything but IQ) and combat skills.

**Traits:** Allies (1d+5 minotaur or ogre thugs; 50% of PC's points; 9 or less; Summonable, +100%) [24] as a Favor [5]. These are *not* supernaturally summoned per se, but as the Power of Plot brings them to where you are, even in the dungeon or on another plane of existence, they're *effectively* conjurations and cost extra for the accessibility. If the GM finds this silly, he can remove Summonable, yielding a 3-point Favor that works only where these creatures live.

## REWARDS FROM THE GODS

Doing favors for temples is a time-honored way to earn the thanks of gods! Many of these rewards are modified with Divine, -10%. For most delvers, this means the ability is sensitive to sanctity (like clerical spells), and can be temporarily or permanently withheld for religious transgressions. For clerics and holy warriors, it's the just the standard Holy modifier; for druids, it's identical to Druidic; and for shamans, it's the same as Shamanic Gift.

The examples below are associated with general classes of deities found in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 7: Clerics*. Any god might grant Destiny (p. 52), too.

### Burning Faith

3 or 5 points

A fire god (*Clerics*, pp. 16-17) counts you as a favorite. This doesn't *have* to involve arson; it might have something to do with reigniting holy fires or braving a fiery test of faith.

*Benefits:* You burn with faith! This has no effect on temperature comfort zone, but your ardor keeps you warm in cold places and makes hot ones seem homey. The first level adds +3 to HT rolls against heat or cold; the second level, +8.

This *does* include resistance vs. such supernatural effects as Burning Death and Frostbite spells.

**Traits:** Resistant to Heat/Cold (+3) (Divine, -10%) [3] or Resistant to Heat/Cold (+8) (Divine, -10%) [5].

## Debt of Death

25 points/level

You did a favor for a death god (**Clerics**, pp. 13-14). This often involves things best left unmentioned, like killing people who've cheated Death. Don't get cocky.

**Benefits:** You'll return from death – however “permanent” – once per level. You turn up naked at the nearest allied temple. Your *gear's* fate depends on how and where you died, so too bad if you were killed by Elder Things or an acid pit. This holy reward can't be revoked: death gods play for keeps, for better or for worse.

**Traits:** Extra Life [25/level].

*Never to be cast away are  
the gifts of the gods, magnificent,  
which they give of their own  
will, no man could have them for  
wanting them.*

– Homer, *Iliad*

## Fair-Weather Friend

9 points/level

A storm god (**Clerics**, pp. 27-28) goes easy on you out of recognition for your service. Such deeds most often take the form of violent, direct action on behalf of the temple.

**Benefits:** The wind is at your back! Each level (maximum seven levels) means one day per week with ideal weather for your endeavors. If a dice roll is involved – against Weather Sense for *Getting There Quickly* (**Dungeons**, p. 5), on a table, etc. – just skip it and choose the best possible outcome. Random weather disasters (cold snaps, tornados, and so on) won't strike that day, either. These benefits extend to traveling companions; thus, a group with seven or more levels among them always enjoys flawless weather. However, there's *no effect* in areas where the weather is either supernaturally warped or unrelated to winds, rains, and temperatures (as on weird planes of existence).

**Traits:** Serendipity (Accessibility, Only where there's natural weather, -10%; Aspected, Weather, -20%; Divine, -10%; Game Time, +0%) [9/level]. The GM may interpret the Accessibility as Environmental, -5% (requires recognizable weather) combined with Supernatural Countermeasures, -5% (cannot override unnatural curses).

## Faith Moves Mountains

5 points/level

An earth god (**Clerics**, pp. 14-15) is indebted to you. A classic way to earn such favor is to aid faithful, respectful miners or to end the operations of faithless, destructive ones.

**Benefits:** You're shielded against cave-ins, earthquakes, falling stalactites, mudslides, and so on. Each level grants DR 5 vs. such rocky threats, and there's no maximum level. This has no effect on Earth spells, boulders hurled by giants, and so on – it's protection against the *earth itself* harming you.

**Traits:** Damage Resistance 5 (Divine, -10%; Limited, Natural disasters involving falling earth or stone, -80%) [5].

## Fear Not the Night

4 points/level

You've impressed a god of night (**Clerics**, pp. 23-25). There are as many ways to do so as there are night gods; a *heroic* example is taking personal risks to exonerate the cult of an essentially benevolent deity from charges of deception and dark works.

**Benefits:** The night protects you with a cloak of darkness. Each level (maximum four levels) gives you – including your eyes and your gear – an additional DR 1 *at night*. This benefit is suspended in artificial light (spells, torches, etc.) bright enough to eliminate all darkness penalties to Vision.

**Traits:** Damage Resistance 1 (Accessibility, Only at night, -20%; Divine, -10%; Force Field, +20%; Mundane Countermeasures, Artificial light, -10%) [4/level].

## Healing Hands

9 points/level

You did well by a god of healing (**Clerics**, pp. 20-21). You found time to *heal* lots of people or one cosmically significant figure – directly or by fetching them to safety – at serious risk and cost (simply casting Great Healing doesn't count!).

**Benefits:** You enjoy supernatural guidance at mundane healing (direct healing powers are still “clerics only”). Each award gives a level of Healer. Clerics, druids, and shamans can have four *extra* levels, beyond usual limits; e.g., a cleric could get Healer 10! Others are limited to four levels. Any recipient may buy Diagnosis, Esoteric Medicine (Holy or Druidic), First Aid, Pharmacy (Herbal), Surgery, and Veterinary, even when such skills aren't on their template.

**Traits:** Healer (Divine, -10%) [9/level].

## Holy Haste

3 points/level

Doing dirty work – or even something honest – for a god of messengers and rogues (**Clerics**, pp. 22-23) can pay off. Running a gantlet to deliver a message, or “procuring” something the temple needs, is a good start.

**Benefits:** You become much faster at *noncombat* running, gaining +1 per level to Basic Move, with no upper limit. This aids cross-country travel and evading pursuit; when fleeing combat, it kicks in the turn *after* your sprint bonus does.

**Traits:** Basic Move (Accessibility, Only while running long-distance or fleeing pursuit, -30%; Divine, -10%) [3/level].

## Look of Love

### Variable

A favor for a god of love or fertility (**Clerics**, pp. 18-20) is tricky to fit into *Dungeon Fantasy*. If you battle adversity to unite the right people in True Love – say, helping the Princess rescue the Prince from demons in a kingdom where royalty enjoy Divine Right – there might be something in it for you.

**Benefits:** You gain a radiance that affects anybody likely to be influenced by looks. Each level improves Appearance by a step, to a maximum of Transcendent.

**Traits:** Appearance increases by one level. To price this, find the difference in point cost between the new and old levels, apply -10% for Divine, and round up. This is worth 4 points in most cases, 8 points for those who are Hideous or Attractive, but keep track of the modifier – it matters for multiple levels!

## Master of the Hunt

### 5 points/level

You impressed a god of the hunt (**Clerics**, pp. 17-18). Possibilities include protecting hunting grounds and dealing with disrespectful people or monsters who needlessly slay game.

**Benefits:** When actively hunting an opponent – tracking elusive quarry, chasing him, setting traps for him, etc. – you roll at +1 per level (maximum three levels) for all relevant tasks. You get the same bonus to hide your tracks from him, evade pursuit, or spot his traps when the tables are turned. This applies only against the most dangerous rival you're currently pursuing/pursued by, and never affects combat rolls.

**Traits:** Higher Purpose (The Hunt) [5/level].

*I grant one boon, mortal. And it will be given to you as it is given to everyone – when the time comes.*  
– Anubis, **Gargoyles** #2.31

## Righteous Repair

### 22 points

Your acts benefited an artificer god (**Clerics**, pp. 9-10). Perhaps you retrieved some holy gizmo from a dungeon, or secured materials or parts for the deity's priests.

**Benefits:** Your gear may break, but it gets better. Each piece of damaged equipment regains one HP per 12 hours you wear or carry it without interruption; lost DR heals at the same rate. Destroyed – though not *disintegrated* – items reassemble in days equal to their original HP. Corrosion, dents, and scrapes too small to inflict HP vanish instantly.

**Traits:** Affliction 1 (Accessibility, Only on gear, -20%; Advantage, Slow Regeneration, +100%; Aura, +80%; Divine, -10%; Melee Attack, Reach C, -30%) [22].

## Saint of the City

### 5 points/level

You did something to please a city god (**Clerics**, pp. 11-12). Defending the associated city is always good, but perhaps you cleaned out the dungeon in its sewers or expelled an evil cult.

**Benefits:** In that specific city, your efforts are blessed while you uphold the standards that earned this reward. You enjoy +1 per level (maximum three levels) to any roll you make there that doesn't involve betrayal, crime, vandalism, etc. against the place or its residents.

**Traits:** Higher Purpose (Honest work within the city) [5/level].

## Savior of the Harvest

### 1 point/level

You've done a great deed for an agricultural god (**Clerics**, pp. 8-9); e.g., dealing with monsters that were tearing up cropland or dungeon effluent that was poisoning it.

**Benefits:** Wherever plants grow – outdoors, anywhere but on solid ice or rock – you'll "luck into" food regularly. Each level (maximum four levels) means you find about five meals per week without pausing to forage, cutting ration use by 25% on the road. Meals must still be prepared and consumed.

**Traits:** Gizmos (Accessibility, Only for food, -50%; Divine, -10%; Environmental, In arable land, -20%; Game Time, +0%) [1/level].

## Sea Servant

### 9 points/level

A sea god (**Clerics**, pp. 25-27) has your back after you took perilous ocean journey on behalf of the temple, defeated Squid Cult efforts to open an undersea vortex to the Elder Things, etc.

**Benefits:** The god lends you assistance at nautical matters. Each award grants a level of Seafarer (**Power-Ups**, p. 19). Barbarians and scouts can have four extra levels, or as many as eight; everyone else is limited to four. Recipients may also buy any of Boating, Fishing, Knot-Tying, Navigation, Seamanship, Survival (Island/Beach), Swimming, Thrown Weapon (Harpoon), and Weather Sense that aren't on their template.

**Traits:** Seafarer (Divine, -10%) [9/level].

## Sunlit Soul

### 6 points/level

You've assisted the efforts of a sun god (**Clerics**, pp. 28-29); e.g., you wiped out a stronghold of creatures of the night, or brought light to a place cursed with darkness.

**Benefits:** You glow from within with spiritual sunlight. This has no effect on most beings, but genuine creatures of darkness – entities supernaturally susceptible to light's cleansing power – suffer 1d of burning damage per level (maximum four levels) upon touching or being touched by you. The victim's DR does protect; Insubstantiality doesn't.

**Traits:** Burning Attack (Accessibility, Only on opponents with disadvantages such as Dread, Vulnerability, or Weakness toward light, -40%; Affects Insubstantial, +20%; Aura, +80%; Divine, -10%; Melee Attack, -30%) [6/level]. This is Always On in the sense that it always attacks suitable targets on contact, but as it doesn't cause a glow that compromises Stealth or social skills, there's no discount.

## BLACK SHEEP

There are times when a reward suits the player just fine but not the character. Perhaps the delver already has the highest or only level of that trait. Maybe the hero has taken *and lived up to* a moral code that makes the boon inappropriate; e.g., a Vow of poverty when the prize is unabashedly material. The adventurer might even belong to a faction that opposes the party's benefactor – heck, his companions may barely tolerate him! – and there's no way that patron would give him anything but a kick in the pants. Such cases differ from *Special Snowflakes* (p. 45), and require the GM to take other approaches:

1. *A different reward of equal value.* If friendly nature spirits give everybody Animal Empathy, the delver who already has it might gain Animal Friend 1. If the King grants Wealth, the martial artist whose Wealth (Dead Broke) represents conscious asceticism might give it all away and gain a Reputation. If the God o' Good refuses to reward Blackheart the Evil, a demon might see the value of an infiltrator in a group of goodie-goodies and tempt Blackheart with power.

2. *Points.* If no alternative suggests itself, through no fault of the player, don't be mean – fork over the points. Justify this with whatever excuse is necessary. For instance, while the other heroes are attending state dinners in their honor and signing the paperwork that goes with Wealth, the poor martial artist might meditate on minimalism and gain new insight into Karate and Power Blow.

3. *Too bad, so sad.* If someone is an outsider “just because” – because he has no special code but refuses to play nice, because he has a code he routinely ignores, etc. – the GM needn't give any compensation. This is the court of last resort! Use it only if the *player* didn't respect his character's code and/or support the team on the mission that earned the reward.

## War-Bringer

5 points/level

A war god (*Clerics*, pp. 30-31) would like to thank you for your support. This tends to be the predictable kind of thing: starting a much-needed war or ending a needless one.

**Benefits:** You enjoy +1 per level (maximum three levels) to rolls to *provoke conflicts* (whether that's Singing as a taunt or the brazen attack that touches off a fight), *lead from the front* (nearly always Leadership or Tactics), or *avoid impersonal misfortunes of war* (typically defense rolls against wide-area attacks and accidental hits). Except for the last effect, this never affects attacks, defenses, or other combat rolls after violence has begun. The skills used are unimportant – intent is what matters. This reward is liable to be suspended or revoked if honorable combat is an option yet you choose another path!

**Traits:** Higher Purpose (War) [5/level].

## RARE GIFTS

Rewards granted by seers, ancient masters (of magic, martial arts, or saying “Om” a lot), village wise women, etc. often aren't holy in the regular sense, yet aren't mundane, either. Such benefits are almost always earned by questing for moldering scrolls, cracked wooden cups, and other oddities that aren't obviously valuable. Two examples appear below.

### Destiny

5 points/level

A common reward for assisting someone important, powerful, and slightly weird is being “shown one's path.” This brings the hero's life into focus, enabling him to cheat Fate by knowing more about what is destined to succeed or doomed to fail.

**Benefits:** You gain “Destiny Points” to spend on *Buying Success* (p. B347) as if they were character points – ostensibly because this makes it more likely that you'll survive to fulfill your destiny. These refresh at the rate of one per game session, to a maximum of the original Destiny Points.

**Traits:** Destiny [5/level], tweaked to be more compatible with the behavior of *Dungeon Fantasy* heroes.

### Psychic Awakening

10 points

Certain mystics and secret masters might even reach into and transform a delver's mind in return for some great service, awakening hitherto-unrealized potential.

**Benefits:** You gain the option to acquire psionic abilities – either the ones on p. 40 of *The Next Level* or those in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 14: Psionics*. These cost points, as usual.

**Traits:** Unusual Background (Psionic) [10]. Those who *already* have psionic abilities may pick up to 10 points of additional ones; unused points are lost.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sean “Dr. Kromm” Punch set out to become a particle physicist in 1985, ended up the *GURPS* Line Editor in 1995, and has engineered rules for almost every *GURPS* product since. He developed, edited, or wrote dozens of *GURPS Third Edition* projects between 1995 and 2002. In 2004, he produced the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition* with David Pulver. Since then, he has created *GURPS Powers* (with Phil Masters), *GURPS Martial Arts* (with Peter Dell'Orto), *GURPS Zombies*, and the *GURPS Action, GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*, and *GURPS Power-Ups* series . . . among other things. Sean has been a gamer since 1979. His non-gaming interests include cinema, mixology, and Argentine tango.

# CLERICS OF ORDER AND CHAOS

BY COLE M.B. JENKINS

The primal forces of order and chaos may have existed since before the world began, but their gods still need followers to work within the world. Using the same format found

in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 7: Clerics*, holy warriors and clerics of order or chaos can now join the party!

## GODS OF ORDER

Gods of order may be primal deities concerned with order in a cosmic sense. They care mostly about ensuring that the stars move on their tracks. When such deities intervene in the affairs of mortals, it may be only so that civilizations rise and fall in an orderly fashion. Other gods of order may be stern law-givers that seek to regulate and organize the day-to-day affairs of mortals. Either way, they are concerned with preventing world-shaking threats that wreak havoc on a global scale.

Civilization likes order, so elaborately constructed temples of order are typically welcome in most towns and cities. Order cults are more likely than most to rise to power, since the way everybody else does it is so *disorderly*. They may actually *be* the government.

### *Gods of Order and Morality*

While some fantasy games treat order and chaos as its own moral axis, this isn't necessarily the case. Primal gods of order are aligned with Nature and typically see themselves as above conventional morality. Less cosmic gods of the law-giver archetype may be Good if they promote wise systems of justice and reward honorable behavior. Evil gods of order may promote brutal authoritarian regimes with byzantine and draconian legal systems, which seek to enslave the world. All gods of order are opposed to Insane forces in general and to Elder Things in particular.

### *Elements*

The obvious (and mandatory) element is Order. Servitors of purely primal Nature-aligned gods should take the Elemental lens (p. 54) and the Primal element (p. 54). Otherwise take

either Evil or Good as required. Peace is appropriate for Good gods of order, while Fear suits Nature and Evil.

*Good order is the foundation of all things.*

– Edmund Burke

## SPECIAL POWERS

Order grants a special set of Holy Might abilities (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 1: Adventurers*, p. 22): Delete Spirit Empathy. Change Detect for good and evil to order and chaos. Add Dictum of Fate (see p. 55) [35; +5 per additional level]; Luck (Active, -40%; PM, -10%; Normalizing\*, -30%; Wishing†, +100%) [18] or with Extraordinary Luck [36] or with Ridiculous Luck [72]; Resistant to Chaos Powers (+3) or (+8) (PM, -10%) [5 or 7]; and Resistant to Transformation‡ (+3) or (+8) (PM, -10%) [5 or 7]. Replace True Faith (PM, -10%; Turning, +65%) [24] with True Faith (Cosmic, Affects Elder Things, +50%; Turning, +65%; PM, -10%) [31].

\* Take the roll that is *closest* to average, that is, number of dice × 3.5, rounded up.

† See *GURPS Powers*, p. 59.

‡ Protects against Shapeshift Other, Flesh to Stone, a medusa's petrification attack, and similar hostile transformations.

The powers granted by Evil gods of order are still *orderly*, and are the same as the Holy Might abilities above, except that Resistant to Evil Supernatural Powers is replaced by Resistant to Good Supernatural Powers. The power modifier requires Excommunicated as usual.

## SERVITORS OF ORDER AND CHAOS

**GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 5: Allies** recommends that all divine servitors take one of the Good, Evil, or Nature elements. However, for primal Nature-aligned servitors, none of these seem especially appropriate. Good and Evil are moral positions unsuited to the neutrality of Nature, and the Nature element is primarily concerned with living things as opposed to elemental natural forces.

### *New Lenses for Divine Servitor*

The following lenses are more suitable for divine servitors of Nature-aligned gods of order and chaos and for servitors of primal natural forces in general.

#### **New Lens: Elemental (+0 points)**

This servitor is an intelligent emanation of some cosmic force or classical element. Unlike other elementals, these are physical manifestations of a cosmic power rather than free-willed spirits. Reduce IQ to 8 [-80] and Will and Per to 8 [0]. Remove Blessed [-10], the Holy Might moral code [10], Dependency [25] and the five quirks [5]. Add Doesn't Breathe [20], Doesn't Eat or Drink [10], Doesn't Sleep [20], Injury Tolerance (Homogenous) [40], Single-Minded [5], and Unfazeable [15]. Add Fragile (Unnatural) [-50] and Obsession (Promote my element above all else) (12) [-10]. Change the Hidden Lore to (Elementals) and the *Class* to Elemental.

#### **New Lens: Fae (+0 points)**

This servitor is a powerful faerie summoned from some idyllic realm. It is most appropriate for servitors of faerie deities. Regardless of deity served, these beings may always take Beauty as an element. Reduce ST to 11 [-10]. Increase DX to 13 [20]. Remove Immunity to Metabolic Hazards [-30], the Holy Might moral code [10], and Wealth (Dead Broke) [25]. Change the Dependency to (Mana; Very Common, Constantly). Add Magery 0 [5], Callous [-5], and Sense of Duty (Nature) [-15]. Change the Hidden Lore to (Faeries) and *Class* to Faerie.

### *New Elements*

Two new descriptive elements expand the potential spheres of influence for deities.

#### **Primal**

This element, which has the Elemental lens (above) as a prerequisite, is for the servitors of cosmic gods of natural forces. Like Evil, Good, or Nature, this element fleshes out the servitor. It can be used independently or combined with any of those elements.

**Attributes:** ST+4 [40].

**Secondary Characteristics:** HP+1 [2]; Will+4 [20].

**Perks:** Primal Rage\*. [1]

**Disadvantages:** Berserk (12) [-10]; Cannot Speak [-15].

**Skills:** Brawling (E) DX+2 [4]-15; Intimidation (A) Will+1 [4]-13; Mental Strength (E) Will+2 [4]-15.

\* The servitor gets +3 to the Will Roll to deliberately go berserk.

#### **Primal (Doubled)**

As above, plus:

**Secondary Characteristics:** HP+5 [10].

**Advantages:** DR 2 [10]; Patron (Primal deity; 6 or less; Highly Accessible, +50%; Minimum Intervention, -50%; Special Abilities, +100%) [30].

#### **Faerie**

Servitors with the Fae lens (above) may take this element. It fleshes out the template for servitors of Nature aligned faerie lords and ladies who are more associated with natural elements than other things. It can also be used alongside Good, Evil, or Nature. As creatures of magic, Faerie servitors are empowered both with magic and the power of their god. They may learn and cast wizard spells as though they had Magery equal to their Power Investiture as well as learn the spells of their religion. They cannot use clerical or druidic spells as prerequisites for wizardry spells. *All* of their spells are subject to *both* Mana and Sanctity (or the druidic modifiers).

**Attributes:** IQ+2 [20].

**Secondary Characteristics:** Per -3 [-15].

**Advantages:** Power Investiture 3 (Faerie Servitor) [45].

**Disadvantages:** Duty (To the faerie courts; 12 or less)\* [-10] and *either* Lecherousness (12) [-15] *or* Trickster (12) [-15].

**Skills:** Connoisseur (any) (A) IQ-1 [1]-13; Innate Attack (any) (E) DX [1]-13; Naturalist (H) IQ-2 [1]-12; Savoir-Faire (Faerie Courts) (E) IQ [1]-14; Thaumatology (VH) IQ-3 [1]-11.

**Spells:** 20 wizard spells or the spells of the servitor's patron, which will be either (H) IQ+1 [1]-15 or (VH) IQ [1]-14 with the +3 for Power Investiture.

\* Roll whenever the servitor is summoned. If the duty comes up, it means the servitor has been given some other task in addition to aiding the summoner while it's in the mortal realm.

#### **Faerie (Doubled)**

As above, and:

**Advantages:** Patron (Deity; 6 or less; Highly Accessible, +50%; Minimum Intervention, -50%; Special Abilities, +100%) [30]; Wild Talent 1 (Focused; Magical, -20%) [18].

**Skills:** Increase two skills by 1 point or take two additional spells.

## PRIESTS OF ORDER

Order's priests use the standard cleric template from *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 1: Adventurers*, p. 6, with the following modifications.

**Disadvantages:** Change the required disadvantages to one of Honesty (12) [-10], Sense of Duty (Coreligionists) or Vow (Maintain order and prevent change) [-10]. • Delete Weirdness Magnet [-15] and add Callous [-5], Intolerance (Servants of Chaos\*) [-5], No Sense of Humor [-10], and Odious Personal Habit (Relentlessly Logical) [-5] to the list of further disadvantages.

**Secondary Skills:** Add "Elder Things" to the allowed specialties for Hidden Lore. • Add Law (Civilized Lands) (H) IQ-2 [1]-12.

**Background Skills:** Choose only four (instead of five) background skills.

\* Anarchists, criminals, cultists, divine servitors with the Chaos element, Elder Things, most Faeries and so on.

Evil priests of order use the evil cleric template from *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 3: The Next Level* (p. 23) with the following lens.

**Disadvantages:** Add Bully [-10\*] to the first list of disadvantages. • Delete Weirdness Magnet [-15] and add Intolerance (Servants of Chaos) [-5], No Sense of Humor [-10], Odious Personal Habit (Relentlessly Logical) [-5], Sadism [-15\*], and Vow (Maintain order and prevent change) [-10] to the list of further disadvantages. Honesty [-10\*] is also appropriate for Evil priests from oppressive kingdoms with draconian laws.

**Primary Skills:** Replace Poisons (H) IQ [4] with Interrogation (A) IQ [2] and Intimidation (A) Will [2]. • Add Whip (A) DX+2 [8] and Shield (E) DX+2 [4] as a fourth melee skills package.

**Secondary Skills:** Add "Elder Things" to the allowed specialties for Hidden Lore. • Delete Interrogation (A) IQ [2] and Intimidation (A) Will [2]. • Add Law (Civilized Lands) (H) IQ [4].

**Background Skills:** Add Poisons (H) IQ-2 [1] to the list of available skills.

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

## ORDER SPELLS

Clerics of order have the following spells available.

**PI 1:** Oath (*Required*), Armor, Cleansing, Detect Magic, Final Rest, Lend Energy, Lend Vitality, Magic Resistance, Recover Energy, Relieve Paralysis, Rooted Feet, Sense Chaos\*, Sense Evil†, Shield, Silence, Soilproof, Vigor, and Watchdog.

**PI 2:** Relieve Madness (*Required*), Aura, Awaken, Bravery, Clean, Command, Compel Truth, Detect Poison, Dispel Magic, Minor Healing, Peaceful Sleep, Protection from Chaos, Protection from Evil†, Purify Air, Purify Food, Purify Water, Remove Contagion, Resist Acid, Resist Cold, Resist Disease, Resist Fire, Resist Lightning, Resist Pain, Resist Poison, Resist Pressure, Restore Hearing, Restore Memory, Restore Sight, Restore Speech, Stone to Flesh, Stop Paralysis, Stop Spasm, Test Food, Truthsayer, Turn Spirit, and Turn Zombie.

**PI 3:** Affect Spirits, Astral Vision, Bless, Body Reading, Coolness, Create Food, Cure Disease, Curse, Dispel Creation, Dispel Illusion, Dispel Possession, Glow, Great Voice, Major Healing, Neutralize Poison, Relieve Sickness, Repel Spirits, See Secrets, Sense Life, Sense Spirit, Stop Bleeding, Strengthen Will, Warmth, and Wisdom.

**PI 4:** Astral Block, Banish, Breathe Water, Continual Light, Create Water, Divination, Gift of Letters, Gift of Tongues, Healing Slumber, Instant Neutralize Poison, Instant Restoration, Monk's Banquet, Pentagram, Repair, Remove Curse, Restoration, Suspend Curse, Suspended Animation, Umbrella, and Vigil.

**PI 5:** Command Spirit, Continual Sunlight, Essential Food, Regeneration, Seeker, and Suspend Mana.

**PI 6:** Bind Spirit, Great Healing, Instant Regeneration, Planar Summons (Divine Servitor), and Suspend Time.

\* As the Sense Good/Evil and Protection from Good/Evil spells in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 11: Power-Ups* (p. 15), but for chaos instead of good or evil.

† Unholy Clerics get the versions of these spells for good instead.

## HOLY WARRIORS OF ORDER

Holy warriors of order may simply use the standard template (*Dungeon Fantasy 1*, p. 7) with the following alterations.

### DICTION OF FATE

35 points for level 1; plus 5 points for each additional level

Servants of order can use this aura to normalize the effects of random chance in their immediate vicinity. Take a Concentrate maneuver and roll Will to activate Dictum of Fate. If you fail, you may Concentrate and try again, but subsequent attempts cost 1 FP. Once activated, for the next minute, roll a Contest of Will with every foe who comes within two yards. If you succeed, they may not use Luck (or similar abilities to force rerolls, like the curse ability of Chaos Monks from *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 14: Psis*, p. 42) for a number of seconds equal to the margin of victory. If they try to use their probability-altering ability during this period, it still counts as a use and resets their "clock." Each minute, the servitor may roll Will to keep the aura up. On a failure, he may take a Concentrate and roll again for 1 FP. Each additional level doubles the affected radius.

**Statistics:** Affliction (Aura of Power, +175%; Based on Will, +20%; Negated Advantage, Ridiculous Luck, +60%; PM, -10%) [35]. Additional levels add Area Effect, +50% [+5/level]. Aura of Power is from *GURPS Power-Ups 4: Enhancements*, p. 4.

**Advantages:** Replace the mandatory Higher Purpose with Higher Purpose (Slay Elder Things) and replace Shtick (Foes slain personally do not rise as undead) [1] with Binding Oaths [1] (see below). ● Use order's Holy abilities (p. 53).

**Disadvantages:** Choose the mandatory disadvantage from the same list as order's clerics (see p. 55).

**Primary Skills:** Add (Elder Things) to the options for Hidden Lore.

Some holy warriors of order are religious police that hunt down lawbreakers and oppose disruptive forces in service to a divine mandate, rather than mortal law. They are especially dedicated to destroying Elder Things, as these chaotic beings from beyond reality pose an eternal threat to order. For these types of warriors, use the template for the justiciar (p. 5) with the following lens.

**Advantages:** Replace the mandatory Higher Purpose with Higher Purpose (Slay Elder Things) and delete Intuition [-15]. ● Add Holiness 2 [10] and Binding Oaths\* [1]. ● 25 points in order's Holy abilities (see p. 53); put leftovers into advantages. ● Take 15 points (instead of 35) in the advantages available to justiciars, Holiness 3 or 4 [5 or 10], or Intuition [15].

**Disadvantages:** Replace the mandatory Intolerance [-5] with Intolerance (Servants of Chaos) [-5]. ● Add Code of Honor (Chivalry) [-15] and Odious Personal Habit (Relentlessly Logical) [-5] to the list of further disadvantages. ● Change Sense of Duty (Nation) to (Coreligionists) [-10]. ● Delete the option to worsen Honesty.

**Primary Skills:** Reduce Observation, Search, and Tracking, all from (A) Per [2]-15 to (A) Per-1 [1]-14.

**Secondary Skills:** Add Exorcism (H) Will-1 [2]-13, Hidden Lore (Elder Things) (A) IQ-1 [1]-13, and Physiology (monster type) and Psychology (same monster type), both (H) IQ-2 [1]-12. ● Delete the section of secondary skills options (you may take them as background skills instead).

**Background Skills:** Add Religious Ritual and Theology, both (H) IQ-2 [1]-12; Meditation (H) Will-2 [1]-12; and Esoteric Medicine (Holy) (H) Per-2 [1]-13.

\* *Binding Oaths:* The holy warrior can swear oaths that are supernaturally binding by performing a short ritual of oath-taking. All parties must consent to the ritual of their own free will (any form of coercion, whether magical or mundane, will cause the ritual to fail). At least one oath-taker must have this perk (and can't have lost his powers due to transgression). See *GURPS Fantasy*, p. 147, for effects.

### *Wield the Sword of Order*

To take up the cause of order with another template, use the appropriate lens and make the changes for the holy and unholy warrior templates.

## UNHOLY WARRIORS OF ORDER

Frequently employed as the secret police and spiky-armored enforcers of evil theocracies, unholy warriors of order use the same templates and lenses as recommended above with Excommunicated [-10] in place of Honesty (12) [-10]. They may take Honesty (12) [-10] – or take it at (9) for [-15] or 6 for [-20] – as one of their disadvantage options if they serve an oppressive state with draconian justice.

*Confusion is a word we have invented for an order which is not understood.*

– Henry Miller

## GODS OF CHAOS

As with their orderly counterparts, primal gods of chaos may exist to ensure that change and progress will always counteract stasis and stagnation on a cosmic scale. Chaos may be promoted by gods of discord who seek to destabilize civilization and punish the self-important. Whimsical gods, such as those of the faerie folk, may act only according to their capricious fancies in order to make the world more “fun.” Gods of madness may be allied with (or are) Elder Things whose alien motives are entirely incomprehensible to mortals.

Clerics of primal chaos are largely indistinguishable from particularly weird druids, and they are generally treated as such, even by other druids. Clerics of chaotic faerie lords and ladies are found in cosmopolitan communities where they are warily accepted as whimsical but dangerous elements of fae culture. Cults of discord tend to be secretive and typically

illegal, but they are much more carefree than cults of elder gods. They are as likely to be hidden in palaces as in the slums. Gods of madness tend to attract only the insane or the desperate and can generally be found only in bedlams or underground (usually literally).

### *Gods of Chaos and Morality*

Gods of primal chaos are Chaotic or aligned to Nature. If they are aware of morality at all, they see it as an irrelevant restriction. Most other gods of chaos are either aligned with Nature (if they seek ordinary disorder) or Insane (if they oppose consistent reality). Whimsical gods of freedom may be Good, while sowers of discord may be Evil, but most gods of chaos are too random to define themselves in moral terms.



Deities of chaos generally are not organized enough to have a moral position, so there really are no “holy” or “unholy” chaos priests. Good religions tend to have a negative reaction to drunken cults of discord or elder madness. Members of such proscribed faiths should take Excommunicated [-10] as one of their disadvantages.

## Elements

Chaos is, of course, mandatory. Deception and Fear are always appropriate for spirits of confusion. Primal servants of chaos should take the Elemental lens (p. 54) and the Primal element (p. 54). Faerie lords and ladies of chaos prefer servants with the Fae lens (p. 54) and the Faerie element (p. 54).

As discussed above, Chaos does not necessarily intersect with morality (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 7: Clerics*, p. 5), but if it does, servants of Good or Evil gods should take those respective elements. Neutral morality needs no special element, though it *suggests* one of Faerie, Nature, or Primal. Chaotic or Insane gods may be covered adequately by Chaos or could add Deception, Elder (p. 117), Fear, or another appropriate element.

For Servitors of Elder Things, see *Elder Gods of Chaos* (below).

## SPECIAL POWERS

Service to chaos may be uninhibited, but it is not undemanding. The powers granted by chaos may use a holy power modifier that requires Sense of Duty (Wild Nature) [-15] or Trickster (12) [-15].

Alternatively, they may use the following variant druidic power modifier.

### Power Modifier: Chaos Druid

-15%

Chaos druids cast spells and use abilities that are influenced by entropy rather than nature. They are at full skill in a howling wilderness or at sea; -1 in somewhat orderly wild places like old-growth forests and messy civilized areas like bustling cities; -2 in rural areas demarked by farms and hedgerows; -3 in orderly civilized areas like quiet villages; -5 in regimented environments like monasteries, barracks, and giant-ant hills; and -10 anywhere entropy has ceased, such as in a cursed castle that’s frozen in time. Use these same modifiers for spells cast with this form of Power Investiture. Abilities that don’t require a success roll instead lose 10% of their potency, as the druidic power modifier.

Chaos druids also attract chaotic beings with their powers. Whenever a chaos druid uses a power or casts a spell, and for one minute afterward, chaos spirits, faeries, and Elder Things get +3 to Per rolls to detect the druid. This increases both the chance of attracting psionic threats when psi powers are used within 10 yards, and random encounters in dungeons and other areas strongly associated with chaos (such as faerie mounds or Elder Thing ruins).

*Holy Abilities:* Allies (Divine servant of equal points; 12 or less; PM, -15%; Summonable, +100%) [19] or (15 or less) [28]; Aura of Power: Chaos (*GURPS Power-Ups 4: Enhancements*, p. 5) (PM, -15%) [32; +5/additional level];

Channeling (PM, -15%; Specialized, Chaos Spirits, -50%) [4]; Detect (PM, -15%) for order [17], chaos [17], or supernatural beings [17]; Injury Tolerance (Diffuse; Swarm, Cannot affect the material world\*, +80%; Costs 1 FP, -5%; PM, -15%) [160]; Intuition (PM, -15%) [13]; Luck (Active, -40%; Destabilizing†, -30%; PM, -15%; Wishing‡, +100%) [17] or with Extraordinary Luck [35] or with Ridiculous Luck [69]; Medium (PM, -15%; Specialized, Chaos Spirits, -50% [4]; Patron (Deity; 6 or less; Highly Accessible, +50%; Minimal Intervention, -50%; PM, -15%; Special Abilities, +100%) [28] or (9 or less) [56]; Resistant to Order Powers (+3) or (+8) (PM, -15%) [5 or 6]; Spirit Empathy (PM, -15%) [9], and Wild Talent (Emergencies Only, -30%; PM, -15%) [11/level].

\* *Swarm variation:* See *GURPS Powers*, p. 53. The cleric turns into a flock of brightly colored butterflies, motes of pulsing light or similar swarm of harmless chaotic elements. If the effect ends for any reason (including being unable to pay the FP cost) while you are *scattered* you will be unable to act (you must take Do Nothing maneuvers) until the entire swarm has contracted. As a separate 80-point power-up, you can gain the ability to affect the material world with your ST and spells while in swarm form.

† Take the roll that is *farthest* from average, that is, number of dice × 3.5; rounded up.

‡ See *GURPS Powers*, p. 59.

## Elder Gods of Chaos

Some chaos gods are actually Elder Things. When this is the case, their granted abilities always have the Chaos Druid PM (above) rather than the holy or unholy one. The mad eye of the universe cares as much about mindwarper as ants or humans; it just spews chaos at anybody crazy enough to use it! To build divine servitors of such gods, use the lenses and elements from p. 117. (And read the rest of that article for a different take on Elder Things, in which psi replaces cleric abilities.)

## PRIESTS OF CHAOS

Worshippers of chaos don’t sit around stuffy temples reading old books; they dance around eldritch glades screaming eerie chants. Use the druid template (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 1: Adventurers*, p. 7) with the following lens.

**Advantages:** Replace Green Thumb [5] with Chaotic Mind\* 1 [5] and change the Power Investiture to Holy or Chaos Druid as appropriate. • Instead of Druidic abilities take the Chaos Druid Holy abilities (see above). • Delete Animal Friend 1-4 [5/level] and Green Thumb 2-4 [5/level] and add Chaotic Mind 2-4 [5/level] and Serendipity 1 [15] to the list of available advantages.

**Disadvantages:** One of Sense of Duty (Wild Nature) [-15] or Trickster (12) [-15]. • -30 points chosen from any of the disadvantages available to druids, Excommunicated [-10], Frightens Animals [-10], or Intolerance (Servants of Order†) [-5].

**Primary Skills:** Replace Herb Lore (VH) IQ [4]-14 with Exorcism (H) Will [4]-14. • Reduce Naturalist (H) IQ [2]-14 to IQ-1 [2]-13.

**Secondary Skills:** Add “Elder Things” as an optional specialization of Hidden Lore. ● Change “Druidic” to “Chaos Cult” for Religious Ritual and Theology.

**Background Skills:** Add Mind Block (A) Will [1]-14‡ and Gambling (A) IQ-1 [1]-13 to the list of available background skills.

**Spells:** Choose from the clerical spells of chaos (see below) instead of druidic spells.

\* *Chaotic Mind:* Adds to Hidden Lore (Faeries and Elder Things), Mind Block, Psychology (Faeries and Elder Things), and Weather Sense. *Reaction Bonus:* faeries, Elder Things and the insane.

† Guardsmen and other authority figures, followers of gods of order, divine servitors with the Order element and so on.

‡ Includes +1 from Chaotic Mind.

*Thus you can see Chaos is inevitable. We lurk not only beyond their grasp and at their gates; we lurk within the darkness of their souls, on the tip of their tongues, in their tortured dreams. We are them, but freed from the shackles of ignorance.*

*– Diuman Cilious,  
in Dawn of War:  
Soulstorm*

## CHAOS SPELLS

Worshippers of chaos can learn the following spells.

**PI 1:** Beast-Rouser, Berserker, Bravery, Clumsiness, Daze, Detect Magic, Fear, Foolishness, Ignite Fire, Itch, No-Smell, Quick March, Recover Energy, Seek Air, Seek Earth, Seek Fire, Seek Food, Seek Magic, Seek Water, Sense Emotion, Sense Foes, Sense Life, Sense Order\*, Umbrella, and Vexation.

**PI 2:** Drunkenness, Dullness, Emotion Control, Fog, Forgetfulness, Frost, Garble, Hair Growth, Hide Path, Light Tread, Mass Daze, Mental Stun, Mindlessness, Minor Healing, Mystic Mist, Nauseate, Panic, Pestilence, Predict Earth Movement, Predict Weather, Protection from Order\*, Repel Animal, Shape Air, Shape Earth, Shape Fire, Shape Plant, Shape Water, Spasm, Spider Silk, Stun, Terror, Tickle, Wall of Wind, Weather Dome, and Windstorm.

**PI 3:** Agonize, Alter Body, Animate Plant, Clouds, Compel Lie, Compel Truth, Conceal, Control Limb, Disorient, Ecstasy, Encrypt, False Tracks, Fascinate, Freeze, Glib Tongue, Melt Ice, Noise, Rain, Rain of Nuts, Resist Cold, Resist Lightning, Resist Pressure, Retch, Sleep, Sickness,

Snow, Summon Elemental, Tangle Growth, Walk Through Plants, Walk Through Wood, Waves, Weaken Will, Whirlpool, and Wind.

**PI 4:** Blight, Body of Fire, Body of Water, Body of Wind, Control Elemental, Control Person, Dispel Magic, Frostbite, Fumble, Hail, Hallucination, Healing Slumber, Lightning, Madness, Mass Sleep, Roundabout, Permanent Forgetfulness, Possession, Sandstorm, Shapeshifting (Insect Swarm†), Storm, Tide, Transform Body, and Wither Plant.

**PI 5:** Alter Terrain, Bless, Curse, False Memory, Great Hallucination, Partial Shapeshifting, Permanent Madness, Shapeshifting (any), Shapeshift Others, and Transform Other.

**PI 6:** Earthquake, Move Terrain, Transmogrification, and Volcano.

\* As the Sense Good/Evil and Protection from Good/Evil spells in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 11: Power-Ups* (p. 15), but for order instead of good or evil.

† See *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 5: Allies*, p. 9.

## CHAOS WARRIORS

Chaos often attracts people of a violent nature who leave confusion and disorder in their wake. Apply this lens to the standard holy warrior template.

**Advantages:** Remove Higher Purpose [-5] and Shtick [-1], replacing them with Brotherhood of Chaos† [1] and Daredevil [15]. ● Take Holy abilities from the Chaos list (p. 57). ● In further advantages, replace Higher Purpose with Chaotic Mind 1-4 [5/level] (see above).

**Disadvantages:** Replace this entire section with: Trickster (12) [-15]. ● Another -15 points chosen from among Bad Temper [-10\*], Berserk [-10\*], Frightens Animals [-10], Gluttony [-5\*], Greed [-15\*], Jealousy [-10], Laziness [-10], Lecherousness [-15\*], Selfish [-5\*], Social Stigma (Excommunicated) [-10], or Weirdness Magnet [-15]. ● A further -10 points chosen from among the previous traits or Bloodlust [-10\*], Bully [-10\*], Callous [-5], Code of Honor (Pirate's) [-5], Compulsive Lying [-15\*], Fanaticism [-15], Intolerance (“Good” religions) or (All other religions) [-5 or -10], Overconfidence [-5\*], or Stubbornness [-5].

**Skills:** Delete Esoteric Medicine [-1], Physiology (monster) [-4], and Psychology (monster) [-4]. Available Hidden Lore specialties are Elder Things, Elementals, Faeries, or Nature Spirits. Take *four* background skills instead of five [-1].

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

† The Brotherhood perk (*GURPS Power-ups 2: Perks*, p. 17) for hostile faeries, sapient Elder Things, chaos spirits and other *supernatural* creatures of chaos.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cole M.B. Jenkins uses his natural chaos in the service of order. He lives with his very orderly wife and cat in California. Many surprising facts about him can be found in *GURPS Thaumatology: Ritual Path Magic*. He would like to thank the Pyramid Write Club, but the first rule of Write Club is “We do not talk about Write Club.” He *can* thank Kevin Hosford (who demanded to play a holy warrior of order) and Todd Glasspoole for playtesting and peer review.

# THE SORCERER

BY ANTONI TEN MONRÓS

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

These guidelines adapt Sorcery to *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*, offering a number of rules tweaks and recommended optional mechanics, plus a template to introduce sorcerers into your *kill-them-and-take-their-stuff* games. The rules presented here assume that the reader has access to *Sorcery*, but those with access only to the original *Pyramid* article can use the rules presented there instead. Having both will expand your spell options; see *Fire Spells From The Power of Sorcery* (p. 63).

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

## THE SORCERER

250 points

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Customization Notes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Inextinguishable Power

5 points

*Prerequisite:* Sorcerous Empowerment 1+.

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

## Magical Bolt

Variable

*Prerequisite:* Varies.

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

## Magical Lineage

1 point

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

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

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

### Air-Touched

Your ascendants had an affair with air elementals.

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

### Angel-Touched

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

## BECOMING A SORCERER

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

### Lens: Sorcerer

50 points

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

## SORCERER POWER-UPS

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

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

### Accelerated Casting

10 points

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

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

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

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

### Demon-Touched

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

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

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

### Dragon-Touched

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

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

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

### Earth-Touched

Your forefathers were enchanted by earth elementals.

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

## CANTRIPS

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

*Air:* Air Jet\* and Eye of the Storm†.

*Body Control:* Alcohol Tolerance\* and Sanitized Metabolism\*.

*Communication and Empathy:* Avatar† and Deep Sleeper\*.

*Earth:* Burrower\* and Striking Surface\*.

*Fire:* Blistering Touch‡ and Puff of Smoke‡.

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

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

*Knowledge:* Focused\* and Magical Analysis†.

*Light and Darkness:* Illumination\* and Periscope\*.

*Making and Breaking:* Equipment Bond\* and Reinforce†.

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

*Movement:* Climbing Line\* and Mystic Gesture†.

*Necromantic:* Brotherhood of Ghouls\* and Corpse Smart†.

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

*Sound:* Extended Hearing\* and Penetrating Voice\*.

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

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

† Found in *GURPS Thaumatology: Magical Styles*.

‡ New perk, detailed below.

### New Perks

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

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

### Elder-Touched

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

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

### Elf-Touched

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

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

### Fae-Touched

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

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

### Fate-Touched

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

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

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

### Fire-Touched

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

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

### Water-Touched

Your primogenitors wallowed with the water elementals.

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

## SORCERY IN *DUNGEON FANTASY*

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

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

### Sorcery Power Modifier

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

### Damage

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

## Secret Teleportation Spell

28 points

**Prerequisite:** Sorcerous Empowerment costing at least 90 points.

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

## Sorcerous Mastery

Variable

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

## MORE SORCERY SPELLS

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

In order to maintain the feel of *Dungeon Fantasy*, such spells should closely mimic wizardly spells. See *Sorcery in Dungeon Fantasy* (p. 62) for additional guidelines.

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

## Lightning

**Keywords:** Missile, Obvious.

**Full Cost:** 11.5 points/level\*.

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

**Range:** 100 yards.

**Duration:** Instantaneous.

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

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

\* Calculate the total cost and then round up.

## Mental Stun

**Keywords:** Resisted (Will).

**Full Cost:** 26 points.

**Casting Roll:** Will.

**Range:** Unlimited.

**Duration:** Instantaneous.

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

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

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

## FIRE SPELLS FROM THE POWER OF SORCERY

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

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

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

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

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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

For another magic-filled article by Antoni Ten, see *More Charms* (p. 114).

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# EXPLOITS

What's the point of having awesome adventurers if you can't do awesome things with them?

In the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game*, the *Exploits* book is the home of the meat of the rules – combat, exploration, trap finding, healing, and so on. However, for our modest compilation here, this section has become the domain of those rule-heavy articles that don't fit neatly into the other areas. (And one of them – Jason “PK” Levine’s “Dungeon Brewmasters” – even has some character options that could have landed it in the *Adventurers* section. . . sneaky article!)

Looking at the articles that fit under this classification, it's interesting to note that half (err . . . that is, two of them) tie into *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 16: Wilderness Adventures*. That's not surprising, since that supplement really opened

up scenario possibilities beyond crypt crawling to the wider world. As perhaps a tangential aside, having a wider world makes it easier to present strange and different rules into distinct geographical locales. Perhaps certain options only work in one part of the world, or other campaign details are only known in another part of the setting . . . until some heroes stumble across them, of course.

Without further adieu, then, here are some more gems from the *Pyramid* vault. Although, like all *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* material, these articles draw upon and reference the *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* line (especially the aforementioned *Wilderness Adventures*), we'd also point out here that “The First Resistance” (pp. 65-67) makes use of *GURPS Thaumatology: Magical Styles*.

*The burning question, then, is “What skills do I use to get rich without getting dead?”*

– *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons*





# THE FIRST RESISTANCE

BY DAVID LICHTENSTEIN

The War of Conquest ended with the Battle of the Horns, and the armies of the Middle Kingdom scattered, leaderless. The Middle Kingdom was conquered by the Severans, and that marked the end of the Third Age. Even without their army, the people there determined to resist the occupying forces. However, unlike the recently conquered, neighboring Sredni and Ravnin, they chose not to leave their cities for a life of desperation and hunger. Instead, they pretended to become loyal subjects of the new conquerors while building secret cells of resistance.

Any resistance was fraught with danger during those first years. The Severan occupation force outlawed the possession of any weapons other than knives and the practice of any magic other than the most simple food and healing spells; scores of wizards were publicly executed for no crime other than knowing now-illegal spells. The Severan wizards were merciless in their use of Mind-Reading and Compel Truth spells to seek out any Midlanders who sought to win back their freedom with arms or magic.

The organized resistance movement had to be very subtle. Those with no talent for magic tried to stockpile weapons or poison the Severans' food supplies, but their successes were limited. It is said that the first teacher of the First Resistance style was the great wizard Ruth the Elder who went into hiding in the City of UMBER when it was first conquered. She taught her magic to those who wished to learn to resist the occupation using stealthy magic. The unique elements of the style developed into their present form under the hands of her first students, Liam the Black and Cybelle Shadowhand.

Little discrimination exists among those who resist the Severan occupiers. The First Resistance style is taught to anyone who wishes to learn it and who is committed to making the lives of the occupying army more difficult. Humans and dwarves tend to be the plurality practitioners, but many other races have been represented among the students of the First Resistance.

## STEALTHY SPELLCASTING

The First Resistance style is the magic practiced in secret by the Midlander resistance in the cities of UMBER, Sallisburg, Tzavolgorod, and other places in the Middle Kingdom. It focuses on persuasion, mind reading, and other subtleties. Experienced practitioners of the First Resistance could be formidable battlefield mages, but they almost never show their power in such a blatant way.

Those who practice the First Resistance style still have to live under the heel of the Severan occupation, and thus keep their magic use and rebellious activities a secret. Nearly all such mages have other, more mundane vocations used to deceive the Severans. Liam the Black was an apprentice cooper, and Cybelle Shadowhand went unnoticed as a street beggar.

## FIRST RESISTANCE

7 points

Aside from the style's perks, First Resistance training does offer one major benefit that most other styles do not. Students of this style are exempt from spell prerequisites from outside of the college of the spell they are currently learning.

## First Resistance in Dungeon Fantasy

The history behind the creation of the First Resistance style and the culture that might lead to an adventurer learning it is a significant addition to a *Dungeon Fantasy* campaign. However, it may be relatively easy for such a background to be explained by having the person be from a distant land questing to find artifacts or allies to help free his country.

In a *Dungeon Fantasy* setting, the First Resistance style is certainly not limited to humans and dwarves. Any race whose background allows them to have learned the style may take it.

A character using the wizard template in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 1: Adventurers* should not take 30 points in spells. Instead, they need Fast-Talk (A) IQ-1 [1], Camouflage (A) DX-1 [1], Stealth (A) DX-1 [1], Style Familiarity (First Resistance) [1], Far-Casting (Daze) [1], Limited ER 1 (First Resistance) [1], and Secret Mage [1], for 7 points. The also should have the following 23 spells (H) IQ+1 [1] or (VH) IQ [1]: Apportation, Boost IQ, Bravery, Daze, Delay, Extinguish Fire, Fear, Find Weakness, Foolishness, Ignite Fire, Keen Hearing, Mind Reading, No-Smell, Panic, Persuasion, Purify Air, Seek Earth, Sense Emotion, Sense Foes, Sense Life, Truthsayer, Weaken, and Wisdom. Such a wizard would be of the second stripe, just shy of earning his third stripe.

For example, Reshape requires Magery 1 and Weaken, but the caster need not have learned Shape Earth, Shape Plant, nor any other spells from outside the Making and Breaking college. Likewise, neither Fear nor Find Weakness have any prerequisites to a student who possesses the Style Familiarity perk for this magical style.

First Resistance members often become information brokers or leaders in urban resistance movements against their occupiers. They learn stealth very quickly, and Secret Mage is usually their first Style Perk. Find Weakness, Weaken, and similar spells are used to damage the tools and structures of the occupation, making additional work for them. The few Fire spells are useful to make sure that any arson attempts do not harm valuable resistance buildings. The various mind-affecting spells are beneficial not only for telling friend from foe, but also for subtly bending bystanders into sympathizers and sympathizers into allies.

High-level leaders teach their novices to be creative and subtle in their use of magic, since the worst thing that can happen to someone is capture by their oppressors. Keen Hearing and Keen Vision are excellent aids for spying, but Seek Earth can also be used to locate specific materials of the enemy. No-Smell is particularly valuable in fooling animals that track by scent, and Foolishness can hamper any skills that rely on IQ, including Tactics or Intelligence Analysis. Clever members of the First Resistance are continuously finding new ways to apply the spells that their style teaches.

The rank titles refer to the secret marks that practitioners place on their belts in order to show their level of advancement to other members of the First Resistance. Some non-mages have learned or been taught to discern the patterns, but since Resistance mages dress no differently from common citizens of their cities, they are by necessity subtle. Generally, the symbols take the form of black stripes on a dark brown belt; the bands of the highest ranks are merely a set of wider stripes. Novices wear a plain belt of the correct shade of dark brown.

*Required Skills:* Camouflage; Fast-Talk; Stealth.

*Required Spells:* Find Weakness; Keen Hearing or Keen Vision; Sense Foes.

*Perks:* Attribute Substitution (Sense Emotion based on Per; Sense Life based on Per); Far-Casting 1-2 (Daze); Improvised Items 1-2; Intuitive Cantrip (Reinforce); Limited ER 1-5 (First Resistance); Rule of 17 (Daze, Forgetfulness, Truthsayer); Secret Mage; Spell Resistance (Compel Truth, Foolishness, Truthsayer).

### Optional Traits

*Attributes:* Improved IQ.

*Secondary Characteristics:* Improved Will; improved Perception.

*Advantages:* Acute Senses; Charisma; Languages; Magery; Silence; Voice.

*Disadvantages:* Gregarious; Intolerance; Secret (Criminal); Selfless.

*Skills:* Body Language; Carousing; Holdout; Politics; Slight of Hand.

*Techniques:* Choke Hold (any).

### Spell List

The First Resistance style has six levels of spells that are distinguished by their rank titles as described above. Progress

through the ranks of the First Resistance is by ability alone; nepotism or other trading of favors for rank is not tolerated.

*All secrets are deep.  
All secrets become  
dark. That's in the  
nature of secrets.*

*– Cory Doctorow,  
“Someone  
Comes  
to Town,  
Someone  
Leaves Town”*

### Novice

This is the level of the lowest students of the First Resistance style. Novices are not even considered to be practicing the style until they have learned the three required spells. They are permitted to earn their first stripe when they have learned seven of the Novice-level spells.

Find Weakness	Keen Hearing	Seek Earth
Foolishness	Keen Vision	Seek Water
Ignite Fire	Light	Sense Foes
Inspired Creation	Purify Air	Sense Life

### First Stripe

Students of the First Resistance who have earned their first stripe are recognized as full members of the style. They may earn their second stripe when they have learned seven spells of the first stripe level.

Alertness	No-Smell	Truthsayer
Daze	Persuasion	Weaken
Extinguish Fire	Purify Water	Wisdom
Fear	Restore	
Hide Emotion	Sense Emotion	

### Second Stripe

A practitioner of the First Resistance who has two stripes is usually a respected agent of a resistance cell. He may earn his third stripe by learning eight spells of the second stripe.

*Those who make peaceful revolution impossible  
will make violent revolution inevitable.*

*– John F. Kennedy*

Apportation	Forgetfulness	Panic
Boost IQ	Hide Thoughts	Rejoin
Bravery	Mass Daze	Shape Fire
Delay	Mental Stun	Sleep
Dream Viewing	Mind Reading	Strengthen Will
Dye	Odor	

### Third Stripe

A practitioner who has reached the third stripe is often viewed as a leader in resistance cells, though he is not quite at the level of the style's teachers. Once a First Resistance member

has learned nine spells of the third stripe, he becomes Banded and is permitted to begin teaching new students.

Berserker	Locksmith	Reshape
Compel Truth	Loyalty	Smoke
Copy	Madness	Soul-Rider
Dream Sending	Mass Sleep	Stiffen
Emotion Control	Message	Terror
False Memory	Mind Sending	

### Banded

Banded First Resistance members are sometimes addressed as "Master" if they have taken students. They are highly respected and highly valued in resistance undergrounds. When a member has learned seven Banded spells, he is presented with a second band and permitted to learn the highest level spells of the style.

Command	Knot	Shatter
Communication	Lockmaster	Suggestion
Control Person	Manipulate	Wallwalker
Dream Projection	Mind Search	Weapon Self Repair

### Double-Banded

Double-Banded members of the First Resistance are usually addressed as "Grand Master." They are the most respected and most potent members of any resistance movement.

Charm	Insignificance	Rive
Distant Blow	Lesser Geas	Telepathy
Explode	Mass Suggestion	Toughen
Hallucination	Permanent Madness	

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Lichtenstein has been a role-player since 1979 and a devoted fan of *GURPS* since 1991. His gaming library is gradually taking over his house, but he foolishly thinks this is a good thing. He is married to another gamer, and he works as a professional sign-language interpreter in the Washington, D.C. area to help support their two cats and his addiction to gaming books. The prognosis for his addiction seems terminal since he refuses to admit he has a problem.



# DESIGNER'S NOTES

# WILDERNESS

# ADVENTURES

BY SEAN PUNCH

The top question about *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 16: Wilderness Adventures* has to be “What took you so long?” *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 1: Adventurers* kicked off the *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* series with not one, not two, but three outdoor professions – barbarian, druid, and scout – yet only the scout could hold his own wherever he traveled, thanks to being an “arrow machine gun.” The barbarian (with almost 60 points sunk into Outdoorsman and related skills) and druid (who realizes his full potential only in pristine wilderness) came up a bit short. They were overdue for a little favoritism!

What delayed this was the fact that the great outdoors is big – much bigger than the dungeons that are the main focus of *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 1-15*. And that meant I needed a good chunk of writing time to do the task justice. I finally got my chance when the *GURPS* schedule was held up by *Ogre* (the board game, not the hulking goon from *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 3: The Next Level*) . . . whereupon I discovered how right I was. At 60 pages, only *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 8: Treasure Tables* ended up longer, and only because tables are an extravagant use of space. Counting words, *Wilderness Adventures* weighs in 60% heavier than *Treasure Tables* – that is, I found a lot to say.

## AROUND THE WORLD IN 60 PAGES

Many topics demanded in-depth exploration in *Wilderness Adventures*. For specifics, see the supplement! For insights into *why* what's there is there, keep reading . . .

### Outdoorsmen

The catch with putting barbarians, druids, and scouts in starring roles is that almost everyone else becomes supporting cast. The hardest challenge I faced wasn't coming up with new and expanded rules (*Outdoor Tasks*, below), but pointing out ways to make all the *other* professions – especially the nerdy artificer, mentalist, scholar, and non-druidic spellcasters, and the civilization-loving bard and innkeeper – useful (yet not *too* useful) outdoors. In doing so, I realized that some groups would have few or no outdoorsmen, so I had better offer a lens to tack wilderness abilities onto the pastier shade of delver.

And since many heroes would sooner dump the hard work on native guides and summoned pets than go back to school, I concluded that I should also expand the roster in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 15: Henchmen* with a new breed of henchman, and discuss outdoorsy Allies. The results ended up filling a dozen pages.

### Outfitting

Naturally, since outdoorsmen require gear for camping, climbing, trekking, and the like, I had to include several pages of *that*. Rather than count beans for realism-obsessed survivalists, I took a hack 'n' slash approach, the spirit of which is captured by a pair of two-word quotes: “Doom Cleats” and “Machete Table.” And as long distances demand mounts and vehicles, those made the cut as well – in this case simplified by focusing on price, speed, and carrying capacity.

*A little favoritism for our favorite barbarians, druids, and scouts.*

### Outdoor Tasks

If I had a recipe for the bulk of this supplement, it might be: “Start by taking the brief sections on camping, foraging, tracking, etc. in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons* and expanding each to a page or three. Add outdoor extensions of the rules for mapping, scouting, signaling, physical stunts, and so on. Top up with a few pages apiece on natural hazards, outdoor traps, and wilderness battlefields.”

Writing all that was the heart of the project – about half of it. My primary goal was to ensure that each and every situation required at least one of the so-called “useless” skills that barbarians, druids, and scouts start with. The results make such abilities essential to the party that doesn't want to end up frozen, stung, sunburned, starved, and stampeded to death before reaching the dungeon! I promise that if you use these rules, you *will* gain a new appreciation for the barbarian with “wasted points” in Outdoorsman 4 and the druid who's “worthless” underground.

## Outdoor Adventures

The second-hardest part of this writing project was the chapter on setting adventures and even entire campaigns outdoors. That's because I couldn't "cheat" and use existing templates, gear lists, and rules to jump-start my brain. Indeed, when I asked a few colleagues for feedback on the outline, and Steven Marsh suggested adding a short chapter on this topic, my mind was blank at first. But then the ideas poured in like a flood: ambushes en route to the dungeon; adventures built around escorting caravans, tracking bad guys, and mapping the frontier; "dungeons" with trees and cliffs in lieu of walls; accidents such as getting lost or shipwrecked; and more. Though I included a few rules, my *real* aim was to help GMs with big-picture issues like mapping, planning encounters, and coping with delvers who want to explore a sandbox.

## And Natural Magic?

*Wilderness Adventures* lends considerable thought to interactions between Nature and magic. It examines spellcasters' roles in natural settings and recommends helpful spells – both in general and for specialized situations. It talks about reimagining clerics as nature priests, for gamers who would rather not play druids. It suggests familiars, wilderness spirits, and summoned beasts that would make valuable Allies in the great outdoors. It explores the supernatural reaction of Nature to despoilment. And *Nature's Strength* (*Wilderness Adventures*, p. 53) proposes granting druids bonuses in places of natural power, to compensate for the frequent penalties they suffer elsewhere.

All of this is incidental discussion, though. *Wilderness Adventures* doesn't set aside a chapter for variant magic rules. That oversight is easily remedied!

## DRUIDIC LENSES

Not all druids work like the "classic" one in *Adventurers*. The GM may opt to change things up in a campaign where wilderness spellcasters play a bigger role.

### Elemental Druid

Like the classic druid, the *elemental druid* (or *arcane druid*) pulls magic from natural forces – but he goes "one level up," tapping elemental energies directly instead of asking spirits to do so. He generates supernatural effects by exploiting the connection between Earth-aspected mana and the soil and mountains, Air-aspected mana and the skies and winds, Fire-aspected mana and volcanoes and the sun, and Water-aspected mana and the rivers and rains. He can manage this only because his gods have attuned him to these specific aspects – he cannot sense or use mana in general, and isn't a mage. This has several ramifications:

1. The advantage underlying his supernatural gifts is Elemental Influence (Druidic) (below). This *completely replaces* Power Investiture (Druidic).

2. His training includes an increased knowledge of magic and magical beings, at the cost of a weaker understanding of natural phenomena.

## Magical Talents for Wilderness Spellcasters

The casters described in *Druidic Lenses* (pp. 69-72) and *Wilderness Wizards* (pp. 72-73) rely on variant forms of the usual traits such delvers possess.

### Elemental Influence (Druidic)

10 points/level

This unusual variety of Elemental Influence (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 9: Summoners*, p. 10) works exactly like Power Investiture (Druidic) when learning druidic spells and rolling to use Druidic abilities (for which it serves as a power Talent). It also permits a (Per + Elemental Influence - 3) roll to sense the mana level pertinent to Earth, Air, Fire, or Water spells – which might not correspond to the *general* mana level in regions of aspected mana. Though bestowed by the higher powers worshipped by druids, and therefore tied to druidism, this trait isn't intrinsically "holy"; it doesn't count as Power Investiture in situations where that advantage aids prayers to or reactions from nature gods or spirits, or enable rolls to notice areas blessed or cursed by such entities.

### Magery (Life-Force)

5 points for Magery 0, +10 points/level

This trait works just like standard Magery (p. B66) in most ways. Notably, it counts as a prerequisite for wizardly

spells and adds to IQ when learning them; allows a (Per + Magery) roll to detect enchantments; and enables use of mage-only items. And like ordinary Magery, it bestows no special facility with blessings or holy items, and no rapport with spirits or gods of any kind. It differs from other Magery in only two ways:

1. It adds to Naturalist skill *instead of* Thaumatology.
2. The (Per + Magery - 3) roll on p. 6 of *GURPS Magic* allows the mage to sense shifts in Nature's strength, not mana.

### Power Investiture (High Druidic)

10 points/level

This new variety of Power Investiture (p. B77) is interchangeable with Power Investiture (Druidic) for the specific purposes of druidic spells and abilities (for which it acts as a power Talent). However, the High Druidic variety behaves as *clerical* Power Investiture for "incidental" effects like sensing unholy altars and shifts in sanctity level, and performing exorcisms. It doesn't count as such for learning clerical spells, though – nor is it considered Power Investiture (Druidic) where *that* trait is called for by name to represent attunement to local nature spirits (who rarely appreciate an agent of the senior management throwing his weight around).

3. His lists of spells and abilities are likewise altered to reflect a bias toward magical elements and away from living things.

4. His spells and abilities are influenced by mana level *instead of* Nature's strength. They work equally well in pristine wilderness, dungeons, and urban wastelands *as long as there's mana*. In low mana, all rolls are at -5 (if there's no roll, ability effects are at half strength). Without mana, the druid is powerless!

### Elemental Druid Lens

*Elemental Druid* (+0 points): Replace Power Investiture (Druidic) with equal levels of Elemental Influence (Druidic), at identical cost. ● Remove Spirit Empathy from advantage options (it's available as a special ability; see below). ● Add Thaumatology (VH) IQ [8]-14 to primary skills. ● Reduce Esoteric Medicine (Druidic) (H) Per [4]-14 to Per-1 [2]-13; Herb Lore (VH) IQ [4]-14† to IQ-1 [2]-13†; and Naturalist (H) IQ [2]-14† to IQ-1 [1]-13†. ● Replace all secondary skills with Hidden Lore (Elementals) (A) IQ-1 [1]-13, Religious Ritual (Druidic) (H) IQ-2 [1]-12, Theology (Druidic) (H) IQ-2 [1]-12, Weather Sense (A) IQ-1 [1]-13, and any *four* of the following choices: Camouflage (E) IQ [1]-14; Animal Handling (any), Disguise (Animals), or Hidden Lore (Faeries or Nature Spirits), all (A) IQ-1 [1]-13; Mimicry (Animal Sounds or Bird Calls), Pharmacy (Herbal), or Veterinary, all (H) IQ-2 [1]-12; or Survival (any) (A) Per-1 [1]-13. ● Add all unselected secondary skills to background skill options. ● Pick spells and abilities from the lists below.

### Elemental Druidic Spells

Elemental druids learn the spells that druids normally learn – they can combine these in the same ceremonies, read them from the same scrolls, and so on. What differs is how the elemental druid powers this magic: he bypasses invisible nature spirits and uses his gods-given gift to manipulate elemental mana personally. Thus, his castings function as *elementalist* spells (see **Summoners**) when working out magical interactions. The main game-mechanical differences are:

- They're affected by mana, not Nature's strength.
- They require Elemental Influence (Druidic), not Elemental Influence (One Element or All Elements) or Power Investiture (Druidic).
- They use a rearranged version of the druidic spell list:

**EI 1:** Detect Magic, Extinguish Fire, Find Direction, Fog, Frost, Hawk Vision, Know Location, Mystic Mist, No-Smell, Pathfinder, Predict Earth Movement, Predict Weather, Purify Air, Purify Earth, Purify Water, Quick March, Recover Energy, Seek Coastline, Seek Earth, Seek Pass, Seek Water, Shape Air, Shape Earth, Shape Water, Tell Position, Umbrella, Wall of Wind, Weather Dome, and Windstorm.

**EI 2:** Beast-Rouser, Beast-Soother, Breathe Water, Clouds, Detect Poison, Freeze, Identify Plant, Master, Melt Ice, Rain, Remember Path, Resist Cold, Resist Lightning, Resist Pressure, Seek Food, Seek Plant, Sense Life, Snow, Snow Shoes, Summon Elemental, Swim, Water Vision, Waves, Whirlpool, and Wind.

**EI 3:** Animal Control, Beast Link, Beast Seeker, Beast Speech, Bless Plants, Body of Water, Body of Wind, Control Elemental, Create Spring, Cure Disease, Dispel Magic, Dry Spring,

Frostbite, Hail, Heal Plant, Hide Path, Light Tread, Lightning, Neutralize Poison, Plant Growth, Plant Vision, Pollen Cloud, Purify Food, Repel Animal, Rider, Rider Within, Sandstorm, Shape Plant, Spider Silk, Storm, and Tide.

**EI 4:** Alter Terrain, Animate Plant, Beast Summoning, Blossom, Conceal, Create Elemental, Create Plant, Entombment, False Tracks, Forest Warning, Instant Neutralize Poison, Plant Control, Plant Sense, Plant Speech, Protect Animal, Rain of Nuts, Rejuvenate Plant, Tangle Growth, Walk Through Plants, and Walk Through Wood.

**EI 5:** Beast Possession, Blight, Body of Slime, Body of Wood, Create Animal, Earthquake, Geyser, Move Terrain, Plant Form, Shapeshifting, Strike Barren, Volcano, and Wither Plant.

**EI 6:** Arboreal Immurement, Partial Shapeshifting, Permanent Beast Possession, Permanent Shapeshifting, Plant Form Other, and Shapeshift Others.

### Elemental Druidic Arts

This variation on the standard druidic power has the following differences:

- Power modifier is Elemental, -10% rather than Druidic, -10%. This works just like Mana Sensitive (p. B34).
- Talent is Elemental Influence (Druidic), not Power Investiture (Druidic).
- Abilities are Allies (Elementals; Built on 25-100%; 12 or less or 15 or less; PM, -10%; Conjured or Summonable, +100%; may be Minion, +50%, and/or Unwilling, -50%) [Varies]; Amphibious (PM, -10%) [9]; Damage Resistance 1-4 (Limited, Elemental, -20%; PM, -10%) [3.5/level\*]; Detect (Elemental Entities; PM, -10%) [9]; Doesn't Breathe (Oxygen Absorption, -25%; PM, -10%) [13]; Medium (PM, -10%; Specialized, Elemental Entities, -50%) [4]; Pressure Support 1 or 2 (PM, -10%) [5 or 9]; Speak Underwater (PM, -10%) [5]; Spirit Empathy (PM, -10%; Specialized, Elemental Entities, -50%) [4]; Temperature Tolerance 1-8 (PM, -10%) [1/level]; Terrain Adaptation (PM, -10%) [5] for ice, mud, snow, or other weather-related conditions; Walk on Air (PM, -10%) [18]; and Walk on Liquid (PM, -10%) [14].

\* Multiply cost by the number of levels being purchased and then round *up* to the next whole point.

### Elemental Druid Power-Ups

Elemental druids may spend earned character points on anything on their (modified) template, including more of the spells and abilities listed above, and Elemental Influence (Druidic) up to 6 [10/level]. They have access to only a limited subset of standard druid power-ups (**GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 11: Power-Ups**, pp. 24-25): Close to the Earth [5/level]; Energy Reserve 1-20 (Druidic) [3/level]; Extraordinary Luck [30]; and Eye of the Storm [1]. However, they may also buy several *elementalist* power-ups (**Power-Ups**, pp. 25-27): Alternate Forms (Elemental; PM, -10%) [Varies]; Filter [1]; Flight (PM, -10%) [36]; Injury Tolerance (Damage Reduction 2; Limited, Fire and Heat, -40%; PM, -10%) [25]; Kindle [1]; Magic Resistance (Improved, +150%) [5/level], with *no* upper limit; Pebbles [1]; Permeation (Earth; Extended, Stone, +20%, PM, -10%) [44]; Permeation (Ice/Snow; PM, -10%) [9]; Rinse [1]; and Vibration Sense (Air or Water; PM, -10%) [9].

## High Druid

The *high druid* receives power from the apex gods of Nature. All druids are priests, but the high druid comes closest to being a ceremonial, temple-dwelling cleric – though his ceremonies are outdoors and his temple is a grove or a henge. He focuses less on the practical, more on ritual and theology. He differs from the classic druid in that his spells and abilities rely on demonstrating respect for the Great Powers (Thunder God, Volcano Goddess, Sea God, et al.) rather than on negotiations with spirits on close-to-equal terms, while he diverges from the classic cleric in that he serves no single patron deity and works magic that concerns Nature rather than healing and protection. In game terms:

1. The advantage behind his supernatural gifts is Power Investiture (High Druidic) (p. 69). This *completely replaces* Power Investiture (Druidic).

2. His education includes an increased knowledge of formal religious matters at the expense of getting his hands dirty.

3. His lists of spells and abilities are also slightly altered to reflect this bias.

4. His spells and abilities are influenced by sanctity level *instead of* Nature's strength. Generally, he's affected as a cleric – not as a druid – by the holiness of the surroundings. The purity of Nature only matters where it reflects sanctity; e.g., if Elder Things deny an area to the gods, it will wither *and* lose sanctity, which will in turn affect the high druid.

### High Druid Lens

*High Druid* (+0 points): Replace Green Thumb 1 [5] with Clerical Investment (High Druidic) [5], which grants all the upsides noted for standard Clerical Investment in *Dungeons* (cheap holy water, access to a “temple,” etc.).

- Change all instances of Power Investiture (Druidic) to Power Investiture (High Druidic), at identical cost.
- Change available Green Thumb levels from 2-4 to 1-4 in advantage options.
- Add Exorcism (H) Will [4]-14 to primary skills.
- Reduce Herb Lore (VH) IQ [4]-14† to IQ-1 [4]-13 and Naturalist (H) IQ [2]-14† to IQ-1 [2]-13, to reflect missing Green Thumb.
- Replace all secondary skills with Occultism (A) IQ-1 [1]-13, Religious Ritual (Druidic) (H) IQ-2 [1]-12, Theology (Druidic) (H) IQ-2 [1]-12, and any *four* of the following choices: Camouflage (E) IQ [1]-14; Animal Handling (any), Disguise (Animals), Hidden Lore (Elementals, Faeries, or Nature Spirits), or Weather Sense, all (A) IQ-1 [1]-13; Mimicry (Animal Sounds or Bird Calls), Pharmacy (Herbal), or Veterinary, all (H) IQ-2 [1]-12; or Survival (any) (A) Per-1 [1]-13.
- Add all unselected secondary skills to background skill options.
- Pick spells and abilities from the lists below.

## Nature's Strength Revisited

Per p. 19 of *Adventurers*, druidic spells and abilities suffer penalties outside of unspoiled natural settings. Almost by definition, most adventures in the typical *Dungeon Fantasy* campaign take place in a dungeon, meaning that druids are penalized much of the time – at least, more often than wizards and clerics face mana and sanctity troubles. *Elemental Druid* (pp. 69-70) and *High Druid* (above) offer ways to resolve this asymmetry. However, the GM may want to make the *classic* druid competitive.

In an outdoor campaign, this is a trivial matter of declaring that the modifier is 0 in the wilderness and then setting every adventure there. However, in a game that bounces between town, wilds, and dungeon, this won't do – druids will still *average* a penalty. *Wilderness Adventures* suggests a simple solution: grant druids occasional bonuses, too. The goal is to make the mean modifier 0. One possible scheme:

*Indoors (building, dungeon, etc.)*\*: 0 if construction consists entirely of simple natural materials (mud, thatch, etc.); otherwise, a penalty equal in size to its TL. Ancient sites, like most “forgotten” dungeons, give -1 or -2 (flip a coin if unsure); quasi-medieval castles and dungeons give -3; and Elder Thing labyrinths and fancy dwarven fortresses give -4.

*Settlement*\*: 0 for a hamlet, -1 for a village, -2 for a town, -3 for a city, and -4 for a huge metropolis.

*Works (road, mill, mine, etc.)*\*: A penalty equal in size to its TL. That's -1 or -2 for ancient civilizations, -3 for early medieval ones, and -4 for late medieval ones (usual in *Dungeon Fantasy*). Add another -1 for incidental supernatural pollution if spells or alchemy are involved but not specifically to blight the land.

*Supernatural Blight*\*: Penalty depends on the strength of the power backing the despoilment: -10 for a clerical/wizardly curse in very high sanctity/mana, -6 for high sanctity/mana, -3 for normal sanctity/mana, or -1 for low sanctity/mana.

*Distance*†: If *none* of the above apply, the modifier is 0. Leaving the structure, town limits, road, etc. usually suffices. If the nearest despoilment severe enough to give -1 or worse isn't just a few steps away but truly distant, though, there's a bonus: +1 if 30 miles away, +2 for 100 miles, +3 for 300 miles, or +4 for 1,000+ miles.

*Nature Worship*†: A grove or a henge long used for worship by druids, elves, faerie, or spirits grants a bonus: +1 if used for 20 years or more, +2 for 50 years, +3 for 100 years, +4 for 500 years, or +5 for 1,000+ years.

*Sanctity*†: +3 in an area of high sanctity to high druids; +5 if very high sanctity for such druids.

*Aspected Mana*†: +3 if the region has high mana for Animal or Plant spells; +5 if very high mana. Where expressed as a modifier, use that value instead. This is regardless of the spell or ability used – all of the classic druid's powers flow from life.

\* Penalties aren't cumulative! If multiple situations apply, use the *worst*. A druid can take an hour and roll vs. Religious Ritual (Druidic) to “purify” a camp-sized area enough to remove -1. One attempt only.

† Bonuses aren't cumulative! If multiple situations apply, use the *best*. Bonuses *can* offset penalties, where both would logically apply.

Effects of bonuses mirror those of penalties: they add to rolls for druidic spells and abilities, and where an ability requires no roll, each +1 gives +10% to effect.

## High Druidic Spells

High druids use the standard druidic spell list for the most part, and can share scrolls, items, and ceremonies with other kinds of druids. However, the high druid calls upon the power of gods – not merely local nature spirits – to cast spells, so his magic is considered *clerical* for the purpose of magical interactions. In game terms, the important differences are:

- They're affected by sanctity, not Nature's strength.
- They require Power Investiture (High Druidic), not Power Investiture (Druidic).
- They include nine clerical spells as well as all the standard druidic spells (this could be considered the *real* benefit of Clerical Investment):

**PI 1:** Final Rest.

**PI 2:** Turn Zombie.

**PI 3:** Dispel Possession and Oath.

**PI 4:** Banish and Suspend Curse.

**PI 5:** Remove Curse.

**PI 6:** Bless and Curse.

## High Druidic Arts

This variant on the standard druidic power differs as follows:

- Power modifier is Holy, -10% rather than Druidic, -10%. This works exactly as for clerics (*Adventurers*, p. 22), except that the "moral code" is -10 points of disadvantages from the *druid* template, most often Disciplines of Faith (Mysticism) [-10], but possibly a combination of Disciplines of Faith (Ritualism) [-5] and Vow (Vegetarianism) [-5], or Vow (Never sleep indoors) [-10]. The druid may pick Sense of Duty (Wild Nature) [-15]; in that case, he gets no extra discount for picking a harsher set of rules, but penance is less formal: a week of fasting, a \$250 sacrifice, a minor quest, etc.
- Talent is Power Investiture (High Druidic), not Power Investiture (Druidic).
- Abilities become Allies (Divine servant of equal points; 12 or less; PM, -10%; Summonable, +100%) [19] or (15 or less) [29]; Blessed (PM, -10%) [9]; Channeling (PM, -10%; Specialized, Nature Spirits, -50%) [4]; Damage Resistance 1 or 2 (Limited,

Elemental, -20%; PM, -10%) [4 or 7]; Detect (PM, -10%) for nature spirits [9] or supernatural beings [18]; Intuition (PM, -10%) [14]; Oracle (PM, -10%) [14]; Medium (PM, -10%; Specialized, Nature Spirits, -50%) [4]; Patron (Deities; 6 or less; Highly Accessible, +50%; PM, -10%; Special Abilities, +100%) [36] or (9 or less) [72]; and Serendipity 1 (PM, -10%) [14].

- It enables Exorcism alongside Esoteric Medicine (Druidic) and Herb Lore.

## High Druid Power-Ups

High druids may spend earned points on any capability on their (modified) template, including more of the spells and abilities described above, and Power Investiture (High Druidic) up to 6 [10/level]. They have access to only a limited number of standard druid power-ups (*Power-Ups*, pp. 24-25): Close to the Earth [5/level]; Damage Resistance 3 or 4 (Limited, Elemental, -20%; PM, -10%) [11 or 14]; Energy Reserve 1-20 (Druidic) [3/level]; Extraordinary Luck [30]; New Realm [Varies]; and Reincarnation [20/level]. However, they may also purchase several cleric power-ups (*Power-Ups*, pp. 21-24): Dismissive Wave [10]; Focused Exorcist [1]; Great Prayer [30]; and Ridiculous Luck [60]. Finally, they can buy Serendipity (PM, -10%) [13.5/level\*], with *no* upper limit.

\* Multiply cost by the number of levels being purchased and then round *up* to the next whole point.

## WILDERNESS WIZARDS

*Druidic Lenses* (pp. 69-72) discusses druids who draw upon mana and sanctity, while *Wilderness Holy Folk* (*Wilderness Adventures*, p. 6) and *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 7: Clerics* provide guidance on clerics who rely on Nature's strength. What about *wizards* whose powers flow from Nature instead of from mana? This isn't as bizarre as it sounds . . . wizards do have a knack for despoiling wild places with curses, explosions, zombie armies, and so on, but fantasy portrays many grimoire-reading masters of the arcane as depending on the land – not some invisible field of pure magic – for their machinations.

**GURPS** Fourth Edition



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## Life-Force Wizard

The *life-force wizard* is identical to the standard wizard except in one vital regard: he uses Nature's strength – not mana – to power his spells. He differs from the druid in that his magical abilities are inborn, not bestowed by nature spirits or gods in return for faith and a respect for living things. Thaumaturgists consider this gift to be a deranged form of magical aptitude that taps “the wrong supernatural frequency.” It's worth noting that when a life-force wizard preserves Nature, it's typically out of a selfish desire to preserve his powers; consequently, many druids regard such wizards as vampires of sorts (and some are!). In game terms, the differences are:

1. He casts spells using Magery (Life-Force) (p. 69) instead of standard Magery, which is a one-for-one swap.
2. His aptitude leads him to make knowledge of nature a higher priority than usual for a wizard.
3. His spells and abilities are influenced by Nature's strength *instead of* mana level. They work equally well in no mana through very high mana, as long as there's natural power present. He *does* receive the bonuses under *Nature's Strength Revisited* (p. 71) for nature worship and sanctity (regardless of personal faith) and for aspected mana (despite his usual insensitivity to mana), because these things elevate Nature's strength.

### Life-Force Wizard Lens

*Life-Force Wizard* (+0 points): Replace Magery with equal levels of Magery (Life-Force), at identical cost.

- Replace the advantage option of Spirit Empathy with Outdoorsman 1-3 [10/level].
- Remove Pyromania as a disadvantage option (life-force wizards know better than to burn down forests) – but the GM may replace it with Lifebane [-10], if he believes he can make this a genuine problem for a PC.
- Replace Thaumatology (VH) IQ [1]-15‡ with Naturalist (H) IQ [1]-16‡ in primary skills.
- Change primary Hidden Lore options to Elementals, Faeries, or Nature Spirits (all of the usual options remain available as background skills).
- Add Thaumatology (VH) IQ-3 [1]-12 to secondary skills.
- Reduce number of background skill choices from nine to eight.

### Life-Force Wizard Spells

The life-force wizard uses the standard wizardly spell list, and can share scrolls, teachers, and ceremonies with ordinary wizards. While he draws energy from Nature, that's all he does – though he has a sixth sense for how to keep Nature's strength up, his grasp of magic is still that of a wizard. Siphoning life force is somewhat inimical to living things (often leading to Frightens Animals and Lifebane), pushing spells for controlling animals and plants even *further* beyond his reach. His spells are subject to just two differences:

- They're affected by Nature's strength, not mana.
- They require Magery (Life-Force), not regular Magery.

### Life-Force Wizard Power-Ups

Life-force wizards may spend earned character points on anything on their (modified) template – especially further

wizardly spells and Magery (Life-Force) up to 6 [10/level]. They can have any standard wizard power-up (*Power-Ups*, pp. 36-37) except for Mana Enhancer; however, the Magical Bolt, Power Reincarnate, and Secret Teleportation Spell abilities replace Mana Sensitive, -10% (p. B34) with Nature Sensitive, -10%, a limitation functionally identical to Druidic, -10% (*Adventurers*, p. 22). In addition, they can have Blood Healing [1] (*Power-Ups*, p. 36), Life-Force Burn [1/level] (*Power-Ups*, p. 24), and Vampirize [25] (*Power-Ups*, p. 31); the latter requires Magery 6 (Life-Force) and replaces Necromancy, -10% with Nature Sensitive, -10%.

## Who's Who

The biggest problem with *Wilderness Holy Folk* (*Wilderness Adventures*, p. 6), *Druidic Lenses* (pp. 69-72), and *Wilderness Wizards* (pp. 72-73) is that they blur lines that were formerly clear. A brief “cheat sheet” is in order!

### Spellcasting

When assessing whether spells can be cast:

- *Mana* affects spells cast with **Elemental Influence (Druidic)** and standard **Magery**.
- *Nature's strength* affects spells cast with **Magery (Life-Force)** and **Power Investiture (Druidic)**, though some forms of mana and sanctity may influence Nature's strength (see *Nature's Strength Revisited*, p. 71).
- *Sanctity* affects spells cast with standard **Power Investiture** and **Power Investiture (High Druidic)**.

### Everything Else

For the purpose of what kinds of scrolls a spellcaster can read, what items he can use, which ceremonial magic rituals he can participate in, and who he can learn spells from:

- Anybody with standard **Power Investiture** is considered to be a *cleric* – even if he serves a nature god.
- Anybody with **Elemental Influence (Druidic)**, **Power Investiture (Druidic)**, or **Power Investiture (High Druidic)** is considered to be a *druid*.
- Anybody with standard **Magery** or **Magery (Life-Force)** is considered to be a *wizard*.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sean “Dr. Kromm” Punch set out to become a particle physicist in 1985, ended up the *GURPS* Line Editor in 1995, and has engineered rules for almost every *GURPS* product since. He developed, edited, or wrote dozens of *GURPS Third Edition* projects between 1995 and 2002. In 2004, he produced the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition* with David Pulver. Since then, he has created *GURPS Powers* (with Phil Masters), *GURPS Martial Arts* (with Peter Dell'Orto), *GURPS Zombies*, and the *GURPS Action*, *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*, and *GURPS Power-Ups* series . . . among other things. Sean has been a gamer since 1979. His non-gaming interests include cinema, mixology, and Argentine tango. He lives in Montréal, Québec with his wife, Bonnie.

# INTO THE WILDERNESS

BY MATT RIGGSBY

Although *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Adventure 1: Mirror of the Fire Demon* is written for the *dungeon* fantasy genre, most of the action takes place in the brightly lit outdoors rather than in the dim confines of a dungeon. Adventurers spend the bulk of their time in a desert, getting from point A to point B and thereafter to point C, only briefly entering underground chambers. So if *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 16: Wilderness Adventures* had been out while I was writing *Mirror of the Fire Demon*, there would have been a lot of references to it, which might have looked something like this.

## TOWN

One of the big pitfalls in undertaking the adventure – getting from town to the sacred grotto and from there to the Goblin’s Head – is knowing how to get there. Adventurers not native to the area, which could easily be all of them, probably lack a suitable Area Knowledge skill to plan their route or even know what they’re getting into (*Wilderness Adventures*, p. 20). Fortunately, adventurers of a literary bent can go looking for references to research, while travel routes through the nearby desert are well-known by the region’s merchant community. The heroes should have little trouble finding inexpensive aid in figuring out a course to the oracle. Although the region of the grotto isn’t a regular travel destination, the area involved isn’t particularly obscure, so maps are available at the standard rates set out in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 4: Sages*: \$25 for a sketchy one, \$50 for an average one, or \$50 per point of Area Knowledge skill for an annotated one. Alternatively, they can look for a native guide (*Wilderness Adventures*, p. 11) to get them to the oracle, or at least close.

While they’re still in town, adventurers may want to stock up on suitable gear. All of these items are readily available in Wadi al-Sheik.

**Hobnails.** Poor footing (shifting sand and the uneven floors of the grotto) is common along the way. Additionally, for much of the adventure, opponents will be visible long before they can be heard, so audible stealth isn’t as big of an issue as it would be in the confines of a dungeon. Hobnails help with the former, and can often be removed in time to aid with the latter when it becomes important.

**Parasols.** One rarely imagines a group of grizzled, blood-thirsty dungeon delvers strolling through the desert under umbrellas, but the protection from heat and the sun is worth it. While pink parasols with pretty fringes are tempting,

adventurers may want to consider camouflage versions. A camouflage parasol won’t hide its user, but it won’t negate the protection of camouflage clothing.

**Rations.** The terrain is all desert, so the foraging is notably bad. Adventurers are well-advised to load up on food (which, for the purposes of wilderness adventuring, includes water) before heading out. Be sure to have water skins or similar containers for everyone!

**Sandshoes.** The Devouring Lands aren’t *all* soft sand, but there’s enough of it that using sandshoes makes a noticeable difference in long-distance travel times.

**Transportation:** In the interests of keeping encumbrance as light as possible, buying a camel or two makes good sense. If that’s too expensive, a travois for dragging gear over the soft sands of the desert is a reasonable fallback.

However, not all gear that looks good at first glance will be useful. Bug juice is fine for the kinds of minor pests whose sole ill effect is to spread disease, but it has no discernable effect on flame wasps or nest scorpions. Anyone making a Naturalist roll will know that.

## THE WILDERNESS

This, naturally, is where most of the new material from *Wilderness Adventures* comes into use. Many of these suggestions apply to both the trip from Wadi al-Sheik to the hidden grotto and from there to the Goblin’s Head.

### Routes

To get from town to the grotto, adventurers are well-advised to take the “easy,” less direct way. A few essentially interchangeable and well-traveled routes take advantage of meandering but relatively easy terrain. These routes combine areas of loose sand, packed sand, and rocky but level terrain for an average travel speed modifier of  $\times 0.75$  over an 80-mile course (sandshoes increase the speed modifier to  $\times 0.95$ ). The route also hits the occasional prepared watering hole used by the caravans that frequent the desert. Along the easy route, foraging rolls are at a penalty of 1d-5.

However, whoever plans travel could deliberately plot out a more difficult, direct course. It’s ultimately faster, but riskier. The tougher route takes a travel speed modifier of  $\times 0.5$  over a 40-mile course (sandshoes increase that to  $\times 0.6$ ). It also adds an additional item of hostile terrain to every encounter; reroll duplicate results on the *Revised Hostile Terrain Table* (p. 75).

One of the problems the heroes will face is that they've got precious little time to plan a route. If they should take the time to fully research the route (*Wilderness Adventures*, p. 20), they get a better chance of avoiding particularly bad terrain on the leg of the trip from town to the grotto. Whenever hostile terrain comes up on the *Random Encounter Table* (*Mirror of the Fire Demon*, p. 10) while following a planned route, roll against Area Knowledge. If the roll succeeds, ignore that part of the result. Wandering monsters and wandering adventurers still apply, and advance planning only removes one item of hostile terrain per encounter if taking the more difficult route. Taking the time to do research also puts the group far behind other adventurers, making encounters at the grotto that much tougher.

The desert is definitely hot, though it could be worse, so make appropriate HT rolls for *Harsh Climates* (*Wilderness Adventures*, p. 30) at -2.

### You Will, Oscar. You Will.

There's one other thing I wish I'd had before *Mirror of the Fire Demon: The Magic Desert* in *Pyramid* #3/68: *Natural Magic*. Though the more extreme magical effects might provide excessive distraction in the context of the adventure, they could be used in adjoining regions to transition to an ongoing campaign in the Devouring Lands.

## Revised Hostile Terrain Table

*Wilderness Adventures* contains a lot of events that could happen in the Devouring Lands. Instead of the *Hostile Terrain Table* on p. 12 *Mirror of the Fire Demon*, use this table.

Roll	Encounter	Notes
1, 1-2	Falling Rocks	[1]
2, 1-2	Flow	[1]
3, 1-2	Hollow Ground	[2]
4, 1-2	Hollow Ground	[2]
5, 1-2	Knife Grass	[2]
6, 1-2	Hollow Ground	[2]
1, 3-4	N Angry Sands	[3]
2, 3-4	N Burrowing Serpents	[3]
3, 3-4	N Flame Wasp Swarms	[3]
4, 3-4	N Nest Scorpion Swarms	[3]
5, 3-4	Rain of Cinders	[4]
6, 3-4	Mirage	[5]
1, 5-6	Sandstorm	[2]
2, 5-6	Sinkhole	[1]
3, 5-6	Stinging Plants	[1]
4, 5-6	Swarm	[1]
5, 5-6	Oasis With Quicksand	[6]
6, 5-6	Oasis	[2]

### Notes

[1] *Falling rocks* (rocks and other debris falling from unstable cliff sides), *flow* (sand collapsing from unstable dunes), *sinkholes*, *stinging plants*, and *swarms* are described in *Disasters* (*Wilderness Adventures*, pp. 32-34).

[2] See pp. 12-13 of *Mirror of the Fire Demon* for more details about this terrain.

[3] See pp. 45-46 of *Mirror of the Fire Demon* for more details about this monster.

[4] *A rain of cinders* is a side effect of the dark magic accompanying the rise of the fire demon. Clouds of ash and still-smoldering cinders blow through the air. Treat as bad weather (described on *Wilderness Adventures*, p. 30), but it also does a point of burning damage. Furthermore, roll a die. On a 6, there's enough vegetation in the area to start a fire (*Wilderness Adventures*, p. 32).

[5] A *mirage* looks, from a distance, like an oasis, all shimmering, watery lines. In this magic-rich desert, there might even be a hint of green. Close up, however, it's just another patch of hot sand. The main effect of mirages is to draw travelers in search of water and provisions out of their way. Adventurers who decide to approach the mirage rather than avoiding it waste an hour (or half an hour on a Survival (Desert) roll) trying to get there before realizing it's an illusion. But deceived adventurers need not feel alone; a mirage *also* attracts other wandering encounters exactly as an oasis does.

[6] An *oasis with quicksand* is just that: an oasis (*Mirror of the Fire Demon*, p. 13) surrounded by patches of quicksand (*Wilderness Adventures*, p. 33). The GM must decide how many, how large, and where they are. Oases with quicksand attract other wandering encounters like regular oases, but all parties have to negotiate the spot's hidden dangers. Adventurers may learn to approach attractive terrain with caution.

## Encounters

Sneaky travelers can scout ahead (*Wilderness Adventures*, p. 25) at suitable penalties to speed and Stealth. In case of random encounters with wandering monsters and wandering adventurers, the adventurers can have advance warning, giving them some chance of avoiding opponents or setting an ambush for them. However, wandering encounters can do the same. Groups on high alert send scouts out ahead of them, giving them a chance of spotting the oncoming heroes. Wandering encounters in an ambush disposition have already sent out scouts, detected the heroes without being seen, and taken steps accordingly. However, if the adventurers' scouts spot the ambush, they can stage a surprise attack of their own.

Since adventurers can trick out their kit with new and environment-specific items, so can traveling monsters. At least some parties of wandering adventurers and wandering monsters should have items like hobnails and sandshoes. In areas with sufficiently dense vegetation, enemy archers might use fire arrows in a deliberate attempt to set it on fire, to drive back or roast their opposition. Used as NPCs, the Aristocrat could have a number of items of elven gear (boots, cloak, and possibly a blind), the Master of the Elements some druidic fertilizer, and the Outdoorsman a few fire arrows, just in case.

## THE HIDDEN FORTRESS

The oracle's directions to the Goblin's Head indicate two possible routes, similar to the two approaches to get from town to the grotto. The direct route is 50 miles over more dangerous ground (add another hostile terrain roll for each encounter) at a travel speed modifier of  $\times 0.5$ . The less direct route has an average travel speed modifier of  $\times 0.75$  over a 70-mile course. The leg of the trip from the grotto to the Goblin's Head is also through a region of less hospitable climate; make HT rolls for *Harsh Climates* (*Wilderness Adventures*, p. 30) at -3.

## Cold-Weather Loadouts

*Mirror of the Fire Demon* isn't the only book that would have benefited from drawing from *Wilderness Adventures*. The equipment could have featured in a number of *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 13: Loadouts*. Here are a couple of special-purpose kits that can be assembled using some of the new outdoor gear.

These loadouts use the same format and notation as *Loadouts*, and alternate SM costs and weights are computed the same way except as noted.

### Cold-Weather Kit

This is an add-on lens for any adventurer traveling in cold, icy, snowy regions. It includes gear both to keep warm and to move quickly. However, it's fairly expensive (two points converted to money for starting characters).

#### Cold-Weather Kit

**\$810, 22 lbs.**

*Alternate SMs:* -6 (\$14.10, 0.28 lb.), -4 (\$55.50, 1.25 lbs.), -2 (\$188.67, 4.67 lbs.), -1 (\$438.33, 11.33 lbs.), +1 (\$1,520, 43 lbs.)

- *Doom Cleats* (16, p. 18) [Feet] \$400, 4 lbs.
- *Piolet Hatchet* (16, p. 18) [Belt] \$200, 2 lbs.
- *Sleeping Fur* (1, p. 23) [Sack or Backpack] \$50, 8 lbs.

- *Snowshoes* (16, p. 18) [Feet] \$100, 5 lbs.
- *Winter Clothing* (16, p. 16) [Torso] \$60, 3 lbs.

### Cold-Weather Group Kit

This kit is an alternative to the regular group kit on p. 6 *Loadouts*. It contains many of the items used in the group kit, but includes improved portable shelter, fire-starting capabilities, and a sledge to help drag the increased weight over the snowy wastes.

#### Cold-Weather Group Kit

**\$748, 264.25 lbs.**

*Alternate SMs:* -6 (\$82.30, 10.75 lbs.), -4 (\$113.13, 22.43 lbs.), -2 (\$219.34, 62.79 lbs.), -1 (\$424.66, 140.91 lbs.), +1 (\$1,380.50, 505.75 lbs.)

- *Alchemist's Matches* (1, p. 25) [Sack or Webbing] \$15, 0.25lb.
- *Crowbar*, 3' (p. B289) [Sack or Webbing] \$20, 3 lbs.
- *First Aid Kit* (p. B289) [Sack or Backpack] \$50, 2 lbs.
- *Group Basics* (p. B288) [Sack or Backpack] \$50, 20 lbs.
- *Pickaxe* (p. B289) [Sack or Backpack] \$15, 8 lbs.
- *Pole*, 10' (p. B288) [Torso] \$8, 5 lbs.
- *2 × Sack* (1, p. 24) [Torso] Holds 40 lbs. \$60, 6 lbs.
- *Sledge* (16, p. 18) [Torso] \$50, 20 lbs.
- *Yurt* (16, p. 18) [Sack or Backpack] \$480, 200 lbs.

There's not much of an opportunity to research these routes. If the adventurers want to try, they'll have to head south to reach Wadi al-Sheik, spend a week researching, and then east to the Goblin's Head, by which time events will have moved far ahead of them. Hope they shelled out for a map or a guide!

*New challenges to improve your adventure!*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Matt Riggsby has been playing RPGs since the only game in town came in three poorly typeset tan booklets in a white box, using cheap dice which slowly converted themselves from icosahedrons to spheres. Having been educated in the lore of lost civilizations, he still kills things and takes their stuff while working a day job for artificers of engines of great healing. The marching order for the rest of his party includes a sorceress, a sixth-level rogue, and a pack of indoor dogs.

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# DUNGEON BREWMASTERS

BY JASON “PK” LEVINE

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

The following guidelines allow non-artificers to use Alchemy for more than just identifying potions – and “power up” the artificers with even *more* options. Now it’s easy to add “potioncraft” to the list of things a delver can be awesome at. Whether it’s a hero’s entire shtick (as for the alchemist, pp. 79-80) or just something he does on the side, supplying the party with potent drafts is a great way to keep them alive in the face of danger.

## CREATING CONCOCTIONS

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

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

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

Stable creations require *Off-Camera Brewing* (p. 79) or *Standard Brewing* (below) – the only options available for most delvers. A Quick Gadgeteer may choose to make an unstable concoction instead, using *Fast Brewing* (p. 78) if he has a few minutes to set up a lab or *Instant Brewing* (p. 78) to

do so instantly by expending a Gizmo. For everything except off-camera brewing, the brewer’s Alchemy skill is modified for the type of lab (p. 78) used, from -10 for no proper equipment to 0 for a full workshop.

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

## Standard Brewing

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

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

At the end of this time, roll against Alchemy, modified for lab quality and at -1 for every \$100 (or fraction thereof) of the retail price (e.g., -7 for that agility potion). Then consult *Results* (p. 79).

## Eh, Close Enough

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

If, after pooling together his collection of ingredients, the delver *still* doesn't have enough, he may take an hour and attempt a Scrounging roll to "fill in the blanks" with useful components. (He may substitute a *Per*-based Naturalist roll, if better, when outside.) Success allows unpenalized creation of the concoction; critical success finds something amazing that gives +2 to the subsequent Alchemy roll. Failure ruins all existing ingredients and produces nothing; critical failure is as under *Results* (p. 79)!

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

### Simplified Ingredients

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

### Fast Brewing

A Quick Gadgeteer may brew an unstable chemical or potion in just 1d×5 minutes, regardless of value. At the end of this time, he rolls against Alchemy at -1 for every \$250 (or fraction thereof) of the retail price, modified for lab quality and dwindling ingredients (see below). Then consult *Results* (p. 79).

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

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

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

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

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

### Instant Brewing

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

This takes a single Ready maneuver – or a free action, with a successful Fast-Draw (Gadget *or* Potion) roll – and requires a roll against Alchemy, modified for lab quality and at -1 for every \$250 (or fraction thereof) of retail price. Then consult *Results* (p. 79).

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

## NEW EQUIPMENT

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

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

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

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

### Labs

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

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

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

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

## Results

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

**Success:** The chemical or potion is created as expected.

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

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

### Off-Camera Brewing

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

## Other Types of Brews

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

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

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

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

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

## ALCHEMIST

0 points

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

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

**Advantages:** Replace the first list of mandatory advantages with Dungeon Artificer 4 [20]; Equipment Bond (Backpack Alchemy Lab) [1]; Gizmos 3 (Accessibility, Concoctions, -20%) [12]; Quick Gadgeteer (Specialized, Concoctions, -50%) [25] *and* Signature Gear (Backpack Alchemy Lab) [2]. • Add an *extra* 15 points chosen from among Acute Smell/Taste [2/level], Alcohol Tolerance [1], Fearlessness [2/level], Formulary (any; see p. 80) [1/level], or more Gizmos (Accessibility, Concoctions, -20%) [4/gizmo]. • In the 40-point list of advantages, add Danger Sense [15] and replace Gizmos with Gizmos (Accessibility, Concoctions, -20%) [4/gizmo].

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

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

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

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

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

**Background Skills:** Remove Hazardous Materials (Magical).

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

\* Includes +4 for Dungeon Artificer.

† Requires Naturalist prerequisite.

## Customization Notes

Much like the bard, the alchemist is a good choice for the player who wants to act in a support role for the party. This character is strongest from the back, where he can lob (or shoot, sling, etc.) grenades into the melee ahead and administer healing potions to the wounded. Gizmos keep this character combat-capable, but don't neglect general brewmastery; pick one or two key concoctions to specialize in via Formulary (p. 80). Alchemists who forgo Wealth should trade in some of the points from their quirks for cash to buy decent armor as well as spare small bottles and crystal vials; any leftover points can go toward improving skills. Remember that Fast-Draw (Gadget) covers concoctions as well.

## Alchemist Lens

+50 points

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

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

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

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

## ALCHEMIST POWER-UPS

The alchemist has access to the following power-ups.

- Up to three Formulary perks (below). In addition, the alchemist may “trade in” points spent on these to help offset the cost of raising Alchemy. For example, an alchemist with three Formulary perks could lower each by one level, recouping three points, and then spend those plus one earned character point to raise Alchemy one level. (With Toxicity Training, p. 81, he may do the same for Poisons.)

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

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

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

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

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

### Brewer's Eye

12 points

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

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

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

## ALCHEMICAL TRAITS

Dedicated brewers (like the alchemist, pp. 79-80) rely on Quick Gadgeteer and Gizmos, often with the limitations below. And *anyone* using Alchemy should consider buying a Formulary for a few favored (or most difficult) concoctions.

### Quick Gadgeteer

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

### Gizmos

**Accessibility, Concoctions:** You can use your Gizmos only for instant brewing (p. 78) and *Other Types of Brews*, p. 79) or to specify that you're carrying an existing potion, poison, etc. -20%.

### Formulary

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

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

## Draught of Power

22 points/level

**Prerequisite:** Alchemy at IQ+1.

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

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



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

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

### Charms? Homunculi?

For balance reasons, PC delvers should not be able to make alchemical amulets or talismans (*GURPS Magic*, p. 220), as this crosses into the line of “making permanent enchanted items” and is thus restricted to NPCs only. And everything on p. 114 and under *Exotic Preparations (Magic*, pp. 220-221) is intended to be rare and special, which precludes any rules appearing here – knowledge of such things is a fitting reward for the end of a challenging story arc, at which point the GM can set its difficulty.

### Litmus Test

11 points

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

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

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

### Mixology

Variable

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Toxicity Training

1 point

This perk represents formal alchemical training in making poisons. You may learn *Formulary* perks (p. 80) for poisons. You may also use your alchemy lab to create them; this gives +1 to skill when using a backpack alchemy lab or +2 when using a full alchemy workshop (plus any bonus for high quality), but you must use the *lower* of Alchemy or Poisons. For more on crafting poisons, see *Other Types of Brews* (p. 79).

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

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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

GURPS Fourth Edition



# DUNGEON FANTASY 16 WILDERNESS ADVENTURES

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# MAGIC

In the nearly 100 issues of *Pyramid*, we've had over a dozen issues devoted exclusively or strongly to magic. (That number is "over a dozen" easily because it's a bit hard to codify them; lots of seemingly non-magical issues have magical articles that find their way in!) Curiously, most articles here were written by Antoni Ten Monrós, who turned his magical mind toward co-authorship of *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 19: Incantation Magic*.

The number of magical articles isn't surprising, since it's arguably the existence of magic that turns a bleak hack-and-slash mundane world into one of wonder and excitement. In fact, many RPG genres in general have found the most success by starting with an established genre and then adding magic. (I'm sure if I were to say "cyberpunk plus magic," "wild west plus magic," or "space opera plus magic," you could come up with a roleplaying game that's found fortune or fame with that formula.)

Magic is incredibly useful in a *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* campaign, because it lets you "break the rules" . . . either with character options that make your hero distinct, treasure options that add to the adventurers'

arsenal, or GM-only possibilities that form the basis for an encounter – or even a whole campaign.

And let's face it: Magic is fun! There's nothing quite as thrilling as zapping some unprepared goblin, or finding a piece of treasure that glitters a *little bit more* than the surrounding items.

A couple of the articles in this section make reference to *GURPS Thaumatology*. In addition, "A Familiar Path" (pp. 102-109) ties into the Ritual Path magic system found in *GURPS Thaumatology: Ritual Path Magic* (and, before that, *GURPS Monster Hunters 1: Champions*), but it should be adaptable to a *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* game with minimal effort.

*Piles of money, heaps of character points, and powerful artifacts are the "holy trinity" of dungeon delving.*

– *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 6: 40 Artifacts*



# AURAS OF POWER

BY ANTONI TEN MONRÓS

Literature, video games, and other RPGs are filled with examples of how holy men or great military leaders can boost the abilities of allies and friends well beyond what excellent morale could justify. These abilities are often called auras. *GURPS Fourth Edition* presents multiple ways of modeling such effects, but most of them are rather complex or have costs out of proportion for the effect. Despite its name, the Aura modifier (p. B102) is not suitable by itself for this purpose, but it is at the heart of Aura of Power (below), a “meta-enhancement” that forms the basis of the abilities presented here.

## *Aura of Power*

### Variable

This is a new special enhancement for Affliction (p. B36); it must be combined with one or more of Advantage, Attribute Penalty, Disadvantage, Incapacitation, Irritant, or Negated Advantage. Aura of Power turns the Affliction into a two-yard area effect, centered on the adventurer, that affects any targets he wishes. The first level is a +175% enhancement; each additional level adds +50% and cumulatively doubles the area-of-effect radius.

The user must take a Concentrate maneuver and make an appropriate Will-based skill roll to bring up the aura. (The skill is dictated by the ability; see *Aura Skills*, p. 84.) If he fails, he may try again on later turns, but each successive attempt costs 1 FP. If successful, then the aura is active for the next minute.

For a beneficial Affliction, the user may make roll of the aura's skill (as a free action) when someone he wants to bless enters his area of effect, at a penalty equal to the distance between them. Success means that person is blessed; note the margin of success. On a failure, he may continue to roll once per second (again, as a free action) with no penalty or cost, until successful in blessing that subject. Those blessed stays that way until they leave the area or the aura ends, in which case the effects of the aura linger for seconds equal to the user's original margin of success for that person.

For a hostile Affliction, the user may attempt to curse anyone entering the area of effect. This works the same as blessings, but is treated as a Quick Contest of the user's aura skill versus the target's HT. The victim suffers the effects for seconds equal to the user's margin of victory.

The user must make a new aura skill roll each minute to keep his aura up. If he fails, the aura drops; on any subsequent turn he may pay 1 FP, take a Concentrate maneuver, and make an aura skill roll to bring it back up. He may also turn it off voluntarily at the beginning of his turn (as a free action); if so, there is no FP cost to switch it back on. Also, if he wishes to use an *aura technique* (p. 84), he must switch the aura off and reactivate it; this takes a single Concentrate maneuver.

The adventurer must decide how the aura acts against targets of which he is not aware. He can choose (when buying the ability) whether to affect all unknown targets. Either option is balanced; the decision depends on whether the user would rather risk targeting someone who shouldn't have been or risk not noticing a potential (but unseen) target until it's too late.

*Statistics:* Area Effect, 2 yards, +50%; Aura, +80%; Malediction 1, +100%; Melee Attack, Reach C, -30%; Reduced Duration, 1/60, Only after the target leaves the area, -30%; Requires Will Roll, -5%; Selective Area, +20%; Takes Extra Time, -10%. Further levels add additional Area Effect.

*You need not ask if whether or no you are a Mystic. Every soul contains within itself the attributes of the divine. They may be repressed and crucified, to the eternal loss of the Ego, or they may be made to bloom, like the lotus, to a beauty and power able to set inferior limitations of existence at any length.*

– Willis F. Whitehead,  
*The Mystic Thesaurus*

*Having access to auras is great justification for other traits that a player might want to give his cleric.*

## Aura Skills and Techniques

The following aspects can be applied to any Affliction with Aura of Power. They go hand in hand; users of a power should not have access to aura techniques unless they also take an aura skill.

### Aura Skills

Divine auras need more than a simple instant of focused will; they require a silent prayer by the cleric. This means the Will rolls to activate and bless (or curse) the targets in the area are replaced by a roll against an aura skill – a Will/Hard skill that defaults to Will-6. Each aura ability requires its own, distinct skill. For further details, see *Skills for Everyone* (*GURPS Powers*, p. 162).

### Aura Techniques

Each aura ability has one or more *aura techniques*, representing additional tricky uses of the corresponding aura ability. An aura technique is a Hard technique that defaults to the aura skill at a certain penalty, and that can not exceed that skill. In essence, aura techniques combine the

concepts of power techniques and temporary enhancements (*GURPS Powers*, pp. 162 and 172), allowing users to add new modifiers to the Affliction advantage “on the fly.” The default penalty is normally -1 per +10% in enhancements being added. Since beneficial auras affect the user *and* his subjects, though, all techniques that modify granted advantages are twice as harsh (-2 per +10%).

Use of an aura technique costs 2 FP (waived with a critical success). Success means the effects of the aura technique are active for the next minute. On a critical failure, in addition to the normal effects, the user has angered the powers above (or below) – the ability is unusable for 1d seconds, and all current effects end.

If the penalty to use a technique is too steep, the cleric can improve his chances of success by spending FP. Every FP spent reduces the penalty for the technique by 1. This can never be used for a net bonus.

Often, multiple techniques can be combined. Add the relative levels of all the techniques you wish to use, and pay the 2 FP cost only once.

## DIVINE AURAS OF POWER

Deities and other powers above (or below) often grant special abilities to their most dedicated followers, and the capability to instill courage or greatness on their allies just by their presence is a common gift. These Auras of Power are specially suited for followers of a deity with a limited portfolio, though omnipotent deities could grant *any* of them if the GM deems it reasonable.

An aura ability is designed from Affliction with the Aura of Power modifier (see p. 83). If the aura grants an advantage to both the cleric *and* the targets in the area, the ability *also* includes the advantage with Accessibility, Only when the aura is active (-10%). Auras often come in levels, with additional levels providing a stronger effect to those in the area. In addition to buying a higher level, users can also increase the radius, at +5 points per doubling. The exact build of each aura ability is noted after the description, but players are free to put only aura names and their levels on character sheets, followed by the aura radius – e.g., “Aura of Courage 5 (8 yards) [55].”

Auras are affected by sanctity, as each includes the Divine or Holy power modifier (abbreviated “PM”) – to change this, see *Other Sources* (p. 89). Each aura ability requires a specific skill, and offers *optional* aura techniques (see above for an explanation of these). A critical failure when activating the aura is equivalent to a failure casting a divine spell, requiring a roll on the same table (*GURPS Thaumatology*, p. 257). If the result is that the cleric “forgets the spell,” he forgets the aura skill and any associated aura techniques, but does not lose the ability itself.

In *Dungeon Fantasy*, the Auras of Power are part of Holy or Unholy Might, and thus the aura skills gain a bonus for

Power Investiture, Holiness, or Unholiness, and can be taken by both clerics and holy and unholy warriors. The aura description includes the divine element(s) from *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 5: Allies* that suit each aura. Clerics and holy warriors can thus only take Auras of Power associated with the elements of their deity. (For those without access to *Allies*, Divine Elements represent facets of the deity’s power and essence. Clerics and holy warriors have access to Good plus two others, while evil clerics and unholy warriors have access to Evil plus two others.)

### Aura of Chaos

32 points

*Divine Elements:* Chaos.

*Skill:* Epitaph of Confusion (Will/Hard).

The gods of Chaos can confuse the minds of mortals with horrible visions. Those cursed by the aura see nightmarish visions overlaying their perceptions, as per *Hallucinating* (p. B429). Thus, before each skill roll, each must roll against Will. On a success, the victim suffers only a -2 penalty to the action, due to disorientation. On a failure, the penalty is increased to -5 and lasts for 1d seconds. On a critical failure, the hallucinations become so real that the victim loses touch with reality for 3d seconds: Roll 1d at the beginning of each of the victim’s turns. On 1-3, he treats foes as friends and friends as foes; on 4-6, the visions are too confusing and the victim just stands still, unable to act or perform active defenses.

*Statistics:* Affliction 1 (HT; Aura of Power 1, +175%; Hallucinating, +50%; PM, -10%) [32].

*A few aura suggestions based on other traits: Danger sense? “Aura of awareness!” Charisma? “Aura of respect!”*

*But this alone would not be sufficient to explain the persistence, through thousands of years, of such singular veneration. It must be attributed also to the effects of a long and successful practice of the Way, throughout twenty-five centuries, which has enhaloed the Sutta, as it were, with an aura of power that inspires deep reverence.*

– Nyanaponika Thera,  
***The Heart of Buddhist Meditation***

### Expand Area

Hard

*Default:* Epitaph of Confusion-5; cannot exceed Epitaph of Confusion skill.

The cleric can double the radius of his aura, at full effect. In addition, for every 5 points by which his (modified) aura skill roll succeeds by, he may *further* double this radius, cumulatively.

### ***Aura of Cloud-Walking***

47/59/91 points for levels 1-3

*Divine Elements:* Air.

*Skill:* Prayer of Weightlessness (Will/Hard).

Summoning the power of his divine patron, the cleric can render himself, his allies, and even their mounts nearly weightless. Level 1 allows those blessed by the aura to tread over smoke and water vapor (including steam, fog, and clouds) as if it were solid ground. Level 2 extends this to walking on air, while level 3 permits outright flight. However, being weightless makes those affected susceptible to strong winds. Wind moves targets one yard per second in the direction it is blowing, per 5 mph of wind speed. For those with level 1, this can be very dangerous, as it can move them off of what they consider solid ground!

*Statistics:* Affliction 1 (HT; Advantage, Walk on Air (Lighter Than Air, -10%; Specific, smoke and water vapor, -30%), +120%; Aura of Power 1, +175%; PM, -10%) [39] + Walk on Air (Accessibility, Only while the aura is active, -10%; Lighter Than Air, -10%; PM, -10%; Specific, smoke and water vapor, -30%) [8]. Level 2 removes the Specific limitation [45 + 14]. Level 3 is Affliction 1 (HT; Advantage, Flight (Lighter Than Air, -10%), +360%; Aura of Power 1, +175%; PM, -10%) [63] + Flight

(Accessibility, Only while the aura is active, -10%; Lighter Than Air, -10%; PM, -10%) [28].

### Expand Area

Hard

*Default:* Prayer of Weightlessness-5; cannot exceed Prayer of Weightlessness skill.

As for Expand Area for Aura of Chaos (see above).

### ***Aura of Courage***

31/35/38/42/45/49/54 points for levels 1-7

*Divine Elements:* Fire, War.

*Skill:* Prayer of Divine Courage (Will/Hard).

The cleric's presence and faith hammers his allies' determination into steel, allowing them to face the horrors of the abyss untouched by fear. Levels 1-6 give a bonus to Fright Checks equal to the level, while level 7 grants immunity to Fright Checks to those blessed by it.

*Statistics:* Affliction 1 (HT; Advantage, Fearlessness 1, +20%; Aura of Power 1, +175%; PM, -10%) [29] + Fearlessness 1 (Accessibility, Only while the aura is active, -10%; PM, -10%) [1.6]. Levels 2-6 increase the Fearlessness level in the aura [+2/level] and on the cleric [+1.6/level]. Level 7 replaces Fearlessness with Unfazeable [42 + 12].

### Expand Area

Hard

*Default:* Prayer of Divine Courage-5; cannot exceed Prayer of Divine Courage skill.

As for Expand Area for Aura of Chaos (see above).

*In addition to defining divine spheres of influence, **Dungeon Fantasy 5: Allies** provides details (including stats) for creating your own supernatural help.*

## Know No Fear

Hard

*Default:* Prayer of Divine Courage-26\*; cannot exceed Prayer of Divine Courage.

Sometimes it's not just courage that is needed; it's unyielding determination that the situation requires. This technique allows the cleric to temporarily boost the level of the Aura of Courage to 7 for a minute, and is thus useless for those with Aura of Courage 7.

\* The listed default is for those with Aura of Courage 1. This technique receives +4 to its default level per level of Aura of Courage above 1, but this cannot make the technique level exceed the Prayer of Divine Courage Skill. The GM should allow users to move points spent on this technique back into Prayer of Divine Courage skill as the level of the aura is raised.

*I must not fear. Fear is the  
mind-killer. Fear is the little-death  
that brings total obliteration. I  
will face my fear. I will permit it  
to pass over me and through me.  
And when it has gone past I will  
turn the inner eye to see its path.  
Where the fear has gone there will  
be nothing. Only I will remain.*

– Frank Herbert,  
“Bene Gesserit Litany  
Against Fear”

## Aura of Cowardice

29/31/34 points for levels 1-3

*Divine Elements:* Fear.

*Skill:* Epitaph of Despair (Will/Hard).

Maybe colors dim around the cleric, or he seems larger than he really is. Whatever the effect, this aura saps the courage of those it curses. Level 1 gives Fearfulness 5 and negates five levels of Fearlessness. (Until all the target's Fearlessness levels are negated, he is immune to the Fearfulness effect.) Level 2 increases this to 10 levels of Fearfulness and 10 negated levels of Fearlessness. Level 3 also negates Combat Reflexes and Unfazeable.

*Statistics:* Affliction 1 (HT; Aura of Power 1, +175%; Disadvantage, Fearfulness 5, +10%; Negated Advantage, Fearlessness 5, +10%; PM, -10%) [29]. Level 2 raises levels of Fearfulness and Fearlessness affected to 10 [+2]. Level 3 adds Negated Advantages, Combat Reflexes and Unfazeable [+3].

## Expand Area

Hard

*Default:* Epitaph of Despair-5; cannot exceed Epitaph of Despair skill.

As for Expand Area for Aura of Chaos (see p. 85).

## Aura of Darkness

37/47/56/66/75/85/95/104/114/123 for levels 1-10

*Divine Elements:* Darkness.

*Skill:* Prayer of Swirling Shadows (Will/Hard).

Those blessed by this aura seem to be impossible to directly look at. For levels 1-9, subtract the level of the aura from attempts to see or attack those blessed by it. At level 10, those affected are impossible to see. This only affects normal vision; foes using Infravision, a Scanning Sense, etc., are unaffected.

*Statistics:* Affliction 1 (HT; Advantage, Obscure 1 (Defensive, +50%; Stealthy, +100%), +50%; Aura of Power 1, +175%; PM, -10%) [32] + Obscure (Accessibility, Only while the aura is active, -10%; Defensive, +50%; Stealthy, +100%; PM, -10%) [4.6]. Additional levels increase the Obscure level in the aura [+5/level] and on the cleric [+4.6/level].

## Expand Area

Hard

*Default:* Prayer of Swirling Shadows-5; cannot exceed Prayer of Swirling Shadows skill.

As for Expand Area for Aura of Chaos (see p. 85).

## Aura of Fascination

32 points

*Divine Elements:* Beauty.

*Skill:* Epitaph of Fascination (Will/Hard).

The gods of Beauty often give their followers the ability to enthrall lesser beings. Those cursed by the aura are dazed (p. B429) and can do nothing, unable to perform active defenses until the effects end or they're stuck, slapped, or shaken. Once the victim recovers from the daze, he is mentally stunned.

*Statistics:* Affliction 1 (HT; Aura of Power 1, +175%; Daze, +50%; PM, -10%) [32].

## Expand Area

Hard

*Default:* Epitaph of Fascination-5; cannot exceed Epitaph of Fascination skill.

As for Expand Area for Aura of Chaos (see p. 85).

*These auras don't require line of sight; they might work for clerics above or below their allies or targets.*

## Aura of Focus

36 points for level 1, plus 9 points per additional level

*Divine Elements:* Order, Wisdom.

*Skill:* Prayer of Divine Focus (Will/Hard).

The cleric's presence strengthens the minds of his allies. This beneficial aura grants +1 to Will per level to all those blessed with it.

*Statistics:* Affliction 1 (HT; Advantage, Will+1, +50%; Aura of Power 1, +175%; PM, -10%) [32] + Will+1 (Accessibility, Only while the aura is active, -10%; PM, -10%) [4]. Additional levels increase the Will bonus in the aura [5] and on the cleric [4].

### Expand Area

Hard

*Default:* Prayer of Divine Focus-5; cannot exceed Prayer of Divine Focus skill.

As for Expand Area for Aura of Chaos (see p. 85).

### Iron Will

Hard

*Default:* Prayer of Divine Focus-10; cannot exceed Prayer of Divine Focus.

The cleric channels the perseverance of the divinity to steel the minds of those under his influence. The Aura of Focus grants an extra Will+1 – and for every 10 points by which the (modified) roll succeeds, add *another* +1 to Will.

*The mere presence of a person strongly charged with prana, is often enough to cause an overflow into the aura of other persons, with the resulting feeling of new strength and energy.*

– Swami Panchadasi,  
*The Human Aura*

## Aura of Frailty

26 points for level 1, plus 1 point per additional level

*Divine Elements:* Disease.

*Skill:* Epitaph of Frailty (Will/Hard).

The cleric's presence drains the life force of his enemies, leaving them more susceptible to diseases and supernatural effects. Level 1 gives HT-1, and further levels give another -2 to HT per level.

*Statistics:* Affliction 1 (HT; Attribute Penalty, HT-1, +5%; Aura of Power 1, +175%; PM, -10%) [26]. Additional levels increase the HT penalty by 2 [1].

### Expand Area

Hard

*Default:* Epitaph of Frailty-5; cannot exceed Epitaph of Frailty skill.

As for Expand Area for Aura of Chaos (see p. 85).

## Aura of Free Movement

66 points

*Divine Elements:* Nature, Travel.

*Skill:* Prayer of Divine Mobility (Will/Hard).

The power of the divinity opens all paths. Plants move away, snow hardens, sand gives good traction, ice becomes less slippery, and so on. Those blessed by this aura suffer no DX or Move penalties due to poor or unstable terrain.

*Statistics:* Affliction 1 (HT; Advantage, Terrain Adaptation (Active, +300%), +200%; Aura of Power 1, +175%; PM, -10%) [47] + Terrain Adaptation (Accessibility, Only while the aura is active, -10%; Active, +300%; PM, -10%) [19].

### Expand Area

Hard

*Default:* Prayer of Divine Mobility-5; cannot exceed Prayer of Divine Mobility skill.

As for Expand Area for Aura of Chaos (see p. 85).

## Aura of Illusion

57 points

*Divine Elements:* Deception.

*Skill:* Prayer of Divine Deception (Will/Hard).

It is a trivial thing for gods to cloud the minds of mortals, making victims see what the divine power wishes them to see. This aura grants the cleric the same capability. He can concentrate for 10 seconds to alter the appearance of himself, his allies, and his mounts as per the Elastic Skin advantage, for as long as they are within his aura. However, those that look closely can find small flaws in the illusion, thus enabling them to overcome it. Resolve this as a Quick Contest between the cleric's Prayer of Divine Deception and the person's Will – if the cleric ties or loses, the person sees through the disguise.

*Statistics:* Affliction 1 (HT; Advantage, Elastic Skin (Requires Will vs. Will Roll, -15%), +170%; Aura of Power 1, +175%; PM, -10%) [44] + Elastic Skin (Accessibility, Only while the aura is active, -10%; PM, -10%; Requires Will vs. Will Roll, -15%) [13].

*"The enemy cleric is in the level above! Send the rogue to sneak upstairs and kill him!"*

*A Blending entity with sufficient strength was able to generate an aura of protection about a large number of flesh forms. Once the auras were established, they were sustained by the power of the flesh forms themselves.*

*– Sharon Green, **Deceptions***

### Expand Area

Hard

*Default:* Prayer of Divine Deception-5; cannot exceed Prayer of Divine Deception skill.

As for Expand Area for Aura of Chaos (see p. 85).

### *Aura of Might*

36 points for level 1, plus 9 points per additional level

*Divine Elements:* War.

*Skill:* Prayer of Divine Might (Will/Hard).

The cleric's presence inspires those around him to fight harder against their foes. This beneficial aura grants +1 to Striking ST per level to all those blessed with it.

*Statistics:* Affliction 1 (HT; Advantage, Striking ST +1, +50%; Aura of Power 1, +175%; PM, -10%) [32] + Striking ST +1 (Accessibility, Only while the aura is active, -10%; PM, -10%) [4]. Additional levels increase the Striking ST level in the aura [+5/level] and on the cleric [+4/level].

### Expand Area

Hard

*Default:* Prayer of Divine Might-5; cannot exceed Prayer of Divine Might skill.

As for Expand Area for Aura of Chaos (see p. 85).

### Heroic Strikes

Hard

*Default:* Prayer of Divine Might-10; cannot exceed Prayer of Divine Might.

The cleric channels the might of the divinity to grant him and his allies a burst of additional strength. The Aura of Might grants an extra level of Striking ST – and for every 10 points by which the (modified) roll succeeds, add *another* level.

### *Aura of Mortality*

32/45/60 points for levels 1-3

*Divine Elements:* Death.

*Skill:* Epitaph of Oblivion (Will/Hard).

The gods of Death don't approve of those who cheat their grasp or hide in their domains. Level 1 will negate the Unkillable 1 advantage on those it curses. Level 2 adds Unkillable 2 and Insubstantial to the list of advantages negated, and level 3 expands the list to Unkillable 3 and Injury Tolerance (Diffuse).

*Statistics:* Affliction 1 (HT; Aura of Power 1, +175%; Negated Advantage, Unkillable 1, +50%; PM, -10%) [32]. Level 2 raises Negated Advantage to Insubstantiality and Unkillable 2 [45]. Level 3 raises it to Injury Tolerance (Diffuse), Insubstantiality, and Unkillable 3 [60].

### Expand Area

Hard

*Default:* Epitaph of Oblivion-5; cannot exceed Epitaph of Oblivion skill.

As for Expand Area for Aura of Chaos (see p. 85).

### *Aura of Protection*

38 points for level 1, plus 11 points per additional level

*Divine Elements:* Earth, Peace.

*Skill:* Prayer of Divine Protection (Will/Hard).

The cleric summons the power of his god to dampen the blows given to him and his allies. Those blessed *and* anything they're carrying gain DR equal to the level of the aura.

*Statistics:* Affliction 1 (HT; Advantage, DR 1 (Force Field, +20%), +60%; Aura of Power 1, +175%; PM, -10%) [33] + DR 1 (Accessibility, Only while the aura is active, -10%; Force Field, +20%; PM, -10%) [5]. Additional levels increase the DR level in the aura [+6/level] and on the cleric [+5/level].

*Perhaps a deity has told a cleric that he has one or more auras of power, but the god won't tell which one(s)! This can lead to a fair bit of experimentation ("Okay; maybe I can protect you all in battle. Let's attack!") and may lead the heroes to prevail through their own gumption.*



## Expand Area

Hard

*Default:* Prayer of Divine Protection-5; cannot exceed Prayer of Divine Protection skill.

As for Expand Area for Aura of Chaos (see p. 85).

## Other Options

Depending on the needs of the campaign, there are other possibilities for modifying the underlying premises here.

### Alternate Builds

There are other ways of obtaining an aura-like effect. For example, one simple method is to take the base trait, and add Area Effect, at +50% per level, and Affects Others, at +50% per additional individual affected. The problem with this is that the number of targets is limited by the level of the Affects Others enhancement. In addition, the cost quickly becomes prohibitive: An aura capable of affecting 10 targets in an eight-yard radius area would need a +650% enhancement. For a 15-point advantage, such as Unfazeable, this would cost 128 points, while Aura of Courage 7 (8 yards) costs 64 points and has no limit on the number of targets.

### Other Sources

In the statistics for each ability, the *PM* – short for *power modifier* – assumes that these auras come from a Divine (-10%) source. They can be easily adjusted to other power sources, however, by changing the source of the power modifier and (optionally) adjusting the skill and technique names. As most power modifiers are worth -10%, the cost may not even have to be recalculated.

In *Dungeon Fantasy*, the presented auras could suit those with magical or bardic powers. As Bard-Song (*Dungeon Fantasy 1: Adventurers*, p. 21) abilities, they affect everyone in the area that also hears the bard sing or play a musical instrument, thus representing another staple of video games and other roleplaying games.

## Aura of Resistance

37/47/56/66/75 points for levels 1-5\*

*Divine Elements:* Peace.

*Skill:* Prayer of Divine Resistance (Will/Hard).

The power of the cleric's faith wards those under his protection from magic. Those blessed by the aura gain improved Magic Resistance equal to the level of the aura. This Magic Resistance does not interfere with their own spellcasting.

\* This is an open-ended ability. Further levels cost +9.6 points per level; round up *after* totaling the cost.

*Statistics:* Affliction 1 (HT; Advantage, Magic Resistance (Improved, +150%), +50%; Aura of Power 1, +175%; PM, -10%) [32] + Magic Resistance (Accessibility, Only while the aura is active, -10%; Improved, +150%; PM, -10%) [4.6]. Additional levels increase the Magic Resistance level in the aura [+5/level] and on the cleric [+4.6/level].

## Expand Area

Hard

*Default:* Prayer of Divine Resistance-5; cannot exceed Prayer of Divine Resistance skill.

As for Expand Area for Aura of Chaos (see p. 85).

## Aura of True Sight

70 points

*Divine Elements:* Light.

*Skill:* Prayer of Unclouded Vision (Will/Hard).

The gods' vision is unclouded by the deceptions of mortal wizardry. This aura makes those blessed with it see through magical deceptions, negating the effects of all spells that alter visual perceptions, such as Invisibility, Illusions, and Blur, as well as those caused by magical abilities.

*Statistics:* Affliction 1 (HT; Advantage, See Invisible (Magical; True Sight, +50%) +230%; Aura of Power 1, +175%; PM, -10%) [50] + See Invisible (Magical; Accessibility, Only while the aura is active, -10%; PM, -10%; True Sight, +50%) [20].

## Expand Area

Hard

*Default:* Prayer of Unclouded Vision-5; cannot exceed Prayer of Unclouded Vision skill.

As for Expand Area for Aura of Chaos (see p. 85).

## Aura of Vigor

45 points for level 1, plus 18 points per additional level

*Divine Elements:* Earth, Life.

*Skill:* Prayer of Divine Vigor (Will/Hard).

The cleric summons the power of his god to anchor the life force and invigorate the bodies of him and his allies. Those blessed by the aura gain HT equal to the level of the aura.

*Statistics:* Affliction 1 (HT; Advantage, HT+1, +100%; Aura of Power 1, +175%; PM, -10%) [37] + HT+1 (Accessibility, Only while the aura is active, -10%; PM, -10%) [8]. Additional levels increase the HT bonus in the aura [10] and on the cleric [8].

## Expand Area

Hard

*Default:* Prayer of Divine Vigor-5; cannot exceed Prayer of Divine Vigor skill.

As for Expand Area for Aura of Chaos (see p. 85).

*What are some challenges or quests dieties might devise to select clerics worthy of receiving an Aura of Power?*

## Aura of Warding

36/40 points for levels 1-2

*Divine Elements:* Good or Evil.

*Skill:* Prayer of Divine Warding (Will/Hard).

There are two variations of this aura, depending on the inclinations of the bestowing god. Those worshipping with good deities can purchase Aura of Warding (Evil), while those associated with evil deities can purchase Aura of Warding (Good). Level 1 gives all those blessed by the aura +3 to resist supernatural effects of the opposite source, while level 2 increases this bonus to +8.

*Statistics:* Affliction 1 (HT; Advantage, Resistant to [Good or Evil] Supernatural Powers (+3), +50%; Aura of Power 1, +175%; PM, -10%) [32] + Resistant to [Good or Evil] Supernatural Powers (+3) (Accessibility, Only while the aura is active, -10%; PM, -10%) [4]. Level 2 increases the bonus to +8 both in the aura [34] and on the cleric [6].

### Expand Area

Hard

*Default:* Prayer of Divine Warding-5; cannot exceed Prayer of Divine Warding skill.

As for Expand Area for Aura of Chaos (see p. 85).

## Aura of Water-Walking

54 points

*Divine Elements:* Water, Travel.

*Skill:* Prayer of Water-Walking (Will/Hard).

The cleric, his allies, and their mounts can cross water and other liquids as if it were solid ground. This does not protect them from the noxious effects of the crossed liquid!

*Statistics:* Affliction 1 (HT; Advantage, Walk on Liquid, +150%; Aura of Power 1, +175%; PM, -10%) [42] + Walk on Liquid (Accessibility, Only while the aura is active, -10%; PM, -10%) [12].

### Expand Area

Hard

*Default:* Prayer of Water-Walking-5; cannot exceed Prayer of Water-Walking skill.

As for Expand Area for Aura of Chaos (see p. 85).

*We come to expand the circle of protection. We come to teach mankind to keep the fires of the heart with all diligence and to conserve the crystal-flowing waters of life that issue forth from the luminous fount of love, wisdom, and power.*

*– Kuthumi and Djwal Kul,  
The Human Aura*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Antoni Ten is a 28-year-old IT specialist and Java developer. He lives in Alboraya, Valencia, Spain, where he enjoys two *GURPS* games a week, one as a GM and one as a player. This is his second *Pyramid* article, the first being *The Mystic Knight*, from *Pyramid* #3/13: *Thaumatology*. Special thanks to Emily “Bruno” Smirle, who acted as his proofreader and source of inspiration when he got writer’s block.

**GURPS** Fourth Edition

# PSIONIC POWERS



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# ESSENTIAL MAGIC

BY ANTONI TEN MONRÓS

*The dark cultist was performing a blasphemous ritual when a fireball emerged from the shadows, hitting him squarely. Shrugging, he turned, only mildly inconvenienced.*

*"You call that a fireball? My master protects me from such puny magics! You dare interrupt my ritual? Your blood shall be added to its sacrifice!"*

*"I think not, foul creature," answered the hidden mage. "So you like to play with hellish creatures? Let's see how you like the taste of hellfire!"*

**GURPS Magic** features over 800 spells, useful for a broad number of circumstances. However, it lacks high-powered elemental spells often found in sword-and-sorcery literature and in other RPGs. Even though it features Essential (Element) spells – higher powered versions of the standard Create (Element) spells – they are dead ends in the prerequisite trees; no spell has them as a prerequisite, and no spell becomes more powerful if you know them.

These optional spells extend the prerequisite trees from the Essential element spells, and are mostly powered up versions

of the standard **GURPS Magic** offensive elemental spells. As such, the GM might want to restrict their access (see *Limiting Access to Essential Spells*, p. 92) beyond their already restrictive prerequisites. Furthermore, some genres – such as **Dungeon Fantasy** – may instead need their own powered-up versions (see *Under the Hood: Essential Spells*, p. 97).

*Magic is believing in yourself. If you can do that, you can make anything happen.*

– Goethe

## ESSENTIAL SPELLS

An Essential element spell is one whose name starts with "Essential" followed by the name of the "element," such as Essential Flame or Essential Water: An Essential spell is defined as a spell with an Essential element spell as a prerequisite. All Essential spells require Magery 4 and often the spell they're an upgraded version of.

Some of the following spells use new damage types, for clarity and to avoid repetition. These damage types are based on basic types but include some extra effects. See the college descriptions for further details.

### Spell Costs

The cost of Essential spells that deal damage is usually composed of two parts: a fixed part and a variable part. The fixed part is the energy required to render the spell Essential, and the variable part represents the cost per dice of damage. In the

case of missile spells, the fixed cost is only paid in the first round of the casting.

*Example:* Phlogiston Discharge has a fixed cost of 3 plus a variable cost of 1 per 1d-1 of phlogiston damage. A caster with Magery 4 who wanted to charge 12d-12 damage would pay  $3 + 4 = 7$  energy during the first second, then 4 energy per round for the next two seconds, for a *total* of 15 energy.

In the case of area spells, only the variable cost is multiplied by the radius. The fixed cost is factored in only once.

*Example:* Hellfire Rain has a fixed cost of 12, plus a variable cost of 1 per 1d-1 of hellfire damage per yard of radius. A caster with Magery 4 who wanted to cast a three-yard-wide Hellfire Rain that dealt 4d-4 damage per second would pay  $12 + (1 \times 4 \times 3) = 24$  energy.

*The spells in this article are ideal for powering up otherwise mundane-seeming magicians. Even jaded players are likely to go "What the heck?!" as seemingly new (and deadly) forms of magical damage rain down on their heroes.*

## Limiting Access to Essential Spells

The spells presented here are very powerful, and can overshadow the lesser versions they're based upon. The GM who finds them too powerful has multiple tools at their disposal to restrict access to them, if he feels that their prerequisites are not enough of a limit. Since they all require Magery 4, restricting starting Magery to 3 makes them off limits to new characters. Improving Magery might require a quest, a Wish spell, or an Unusual Background (Archmage, worth 10 points per level of Magery over 3).

Another option is to restrict the access to the Essential element spells, since they form the gateway to the more advanced Essential spells. Maybe learning any Essential element spell requires a 5-point Unusual Background (Master of the Elements), or maybe each Essential element

spell is a secret spell, and learning it requires a Secret Spell perk and a quest to obtain the grimoire that teaches it. For more information on Magic Perks, see *GURPS Thematology: Magical Styles*.

The last option to limit the access to Essential spells, is to make *each* Essential spell require its *own* Secret Spell perk.

Additionally, mastering Essential spells might be dependent on mastering the base spell they're based on, listed as the third prerequisite for each spell. If so, then the Essential spell skill level is capped at the base spell skill level. It might also be that the spell is limited by the skill level of the Essential element spell – possibly *in addition* to the base skill level cap. This makes high level skills in Essential spells very costly!

## AIR SPELLS

Essential Air spells based on lightning are called phlogiston spells. They deal phlogiston damage, defined as burning damage with the Surge modifier, and treat metallic armor as DR 1. Resist Lightning only reduces phlogiston damage to half, instead of granting immunity. Also, anyone injured by a phlogiston spell must make a HT roll, at -1 per 2 points of penetrating damage (-1 per 4 points of penetrating damage with Resist Lightning), or be stunned (roll HT each turn to recover). Those who critically fail this HT roll – or fail it by 5 or more – are instead paralyzed for a number of minutes equal to their margin of failure.

*Phlogiston is a very subtle matter  
capable of penetrating the densest  
substances . . .*

– G.E. Stahl

### Phlogiston Discharge

#### Missile

The caster's hand becomes charged with the essence of lightning! Treat as Lightning (*GURPS Magic*, p.196) but dealing increased phlogiston damage.

*Cost:* 3, plus 1 per 1d-1 of phlogiston damage. The caster can charge a number of dice equal to his Magery level, per second, for up to 3 seconds.

*Time to cast:* 1 to 3 seconds; effects as per Lightning.

*Prerequisites:* Magery 4, Essential Air, and Lightning.

#### Item

As per Lightning, but triple energy and material costs.

### Phlogiston Arc

#### Regular

A strand of the essence of lightning forms in the caster's hand. Treat it as Lightning Whip (*GURPS Magic*, p. 196), but dealing 1d phlogiston damage.

*Duration:* 10 seconds.

*Cost:* 3, plus 1 per two yards of reach (maximum of twice the caster's Magery, in yards) to cast. Half to maintain.

*Time to cast:* 2 seconds.

*Prerequisites:* Magery 4, Essential Air, and Lightning Whip.

#### Item

As per Lightning Whip, but costing three times the energy to create.

### Phlogiston Detonation

#### Missile

A sphere of phlogiston forms in the caster's hand, and explodes on impact. Treat it as Explosive Lighting (*GURPS Magic*, p. 196), but dealing increased phlogiston damage.

*Cost:* 3, plus 2 per 1d-1 of phlogiston explosive damage. The caster can charge a number of dice equal to his Magery level, per second, for up to 3 seconds.

*Time to cast:* 1 to 3 seconds.

*Prerequisites:* Magery 4, Essential Air, and Explosive Lightning.

#### Item

As per Explosive Lightning, but triple energy and material costs.

*If the heroes survive an encounter with an enemy's Essential arsenal, this can be the basis to begin a quest seeking these high-powered spells themselves. "That which does not kill us gives us ideas."*

## Phlogiston Sphere

### Regular

Conjures a phlogiston sphere that moves under the will of the caster. Treat it as Ball of Lightning (*GURPS Magic*, p. 197) but dealing increased phlogiston damage.

*Duration:* 1 minute.

*Cost:* 3, plus 2 per 1d-1 of phlogiston explosive damage. The caster can charge a number of dice equal to his Magery level, per second, for up to 3 seconds.

*Time to cast:* 1 to 3 seconds; effects as per Ball of Lightning.

*Prerequisites:* Magery 4, Essential Air, and Ball of Lightning.

### Item

As per Ball of Lightning, but triple energy and material costs.

### Essential Spells in *Dungeon Fantasy*

In *Dungeon Fantasy*, the spells presented here might only be available to elementalists (see *Dungeon Fantasy 9: Summoners*), as part of their power-up, or might be available to everyone that meets the prerequisites. In the case of void elementalists, add Elemental Influence (Void) 6 as an alternate prerequisite for Void Bolt.

## Phlogiston Stare

### Regular

The caster shoots phlogiston arcs from his eyes! Treat it as Lightning Stare (*GURPS Magic*, p. 198), but dealing increased phlogiston damage.

*Duration:* 1 second.

*Cost:* 3, plus 1 per 1d phlogiston damage. The number of dice of damage is limited by the caster's Magery level. Range is 2 yards per dice of damage.

*Time to cast:* 2 seconds.

*Prerequisites:* Magery 4, Essential Air, and Lightning Stare.

### Item

As per Lightning Stare, but triple energy and material costs.

## Phlogiston Touch

### Melee

The caster's hand becomes charged with phlogiston, ready to be discharged by touch. Treat it as Shocking Touch (*GURPS Magic*, p. 196), but dealing increased phlogiston damage.

*Cost:* 3, plus 1 per 1d+1 phlogiston damage. The caster can charge up to his Magery in dice of damage.

*Prerequisites:* Magery 4, Essential Air, and Shocking Touch.

### Item

As per Shocking Touch, but triple the energy cost to create.

## EARTH SPELLS

Essential Earth spells create effects that rely on adamant or orichalcum. Adamant results in a deadlier magically created rock, while orichalcum increases the effectiveness of existing metallic weapons.

### Adamant Missile

#### Missile

As per Stone Missile (*GURPS Magic*, p. 52), but the projectile is made of adamant instead of stone, increasing the damage and adding armor divisor 2. The projectile turns to sand after hitting.

*Cost:* 5, plus 1 per 1d+1 of crushing damage. The caster can charge a number of dice equal to his Magery level per second, for up to 3 seconds.

*Time to cast:* 1 to 3 seconds.

*Prerequisites:* Magery 4, Essential Earth, and Stone Missile.

### Item

As per Stone Missile, but triple the energy cost to create.

### Adamant Hail

#### Area

As per Rain of Stones (*GURPS Magic*, p. 53), but the projectiles are made of adamant, gaining armor divisor 2. They turn to sand after hitting.

*Duration:* 1 minute.

*Cost:* 5, plus 1 per 1d-1 of crushing damage per yard of radius, to cast (see *Spell Costs*, p. 91). The maximum number of dice is the caster's Magery level. Same cost to maintain.

*Prerequisites:* Magery 4, Essential Earth, and Rain of Stones.

### Item

As per Rain of Stones, but triple the energy cost to create.

*When the spell ends, magical adamant turns to simple sand.*

### Flesh to Adamant

#### Regular; Resisted by HT

As Flesh to Stone (*GURPS Magic*, p. 51), but turns the target into an adamant-like statue, tripling its weight and hardness when compared to normal stone. Remove Curse, Flesh to Stone, and similar spells that reverse this effect have their energy costs doubled, and are at -5 unless the caster knows Essential Earth.

*"Sire, we've discovered this statue of a monstrous beast. It's made of pure adamant! We've stuck it in the royal chambers. Oh, and there's an odd glowing amulet on it; we thought we'd let you take it off . . ."*

*Duration:* Permanent, unless reversed. Any parts that break off turn to sand.

*Cost:* 20 to cast. For double cost, the subject can be changed into an orichalcum-like statue instead.

*Time to cast:* 2 seconds.

*Prerequisites:* Magery 4, Essential Earth, and Flesh to Stone.

#### Item

As per Flesh to Stone, but triple the energy cost to create.

### Orichalcum Edge

#### Regular

Turns the surface of a metallic weapon into orichalcum, giving it a brassy tinge, and increasing its base damage by 1. Despite the name, this works even with crushing and impaling weapons. Also, the weapon gains +1 to rolls to avoid breaking when parrying heavy weapons, and has its DR doubled.

*Duration:* 1 minute.

*Cost:* 5 to cast. 2 to maintain.

*Time to cast:* 3 seconds.

*Prerequisites:* Magery 4, Essential Earth, and Earth to Stone.

#### Item

A weapon can be enchanted to coat itself with orichalcum when used, at no energy cost for the user. *Energy cost to create:* 2,000.

### Orichalcum Missiles

#### Regular

Like Orichalcum Edge (above), but cast on a missile weapon that fires projectiles that are at least partially metallic. Its projectiles' metallic parts become coated in orichalcum when fired, for +1 base damage.

*Duration:* 1 minute

*Cost:* 5 to cast. 2 to maintain.

*Time to cast:* 3 seconds

*Prerequisites:* Orichalcum Edge.

#### Item

Any missile weapon that fires projectiles that are at least partially metallic can be enchanted to fire orichalcum covered projectiles. *Energy cost to create:* 3,000.

## FIRE SPELLS

Elemental Fire spells deal hellfire damage. Hellfire damage is burning damage that treats any targets as if they were two steps more flammable (see *Making Things Burn*, p. B433). If a target catches fire (p. B434), the Essential Fire does an extra +1 damage; e.g., 1d-3 per second instead of 1d-4 if only partially on fire. Essential Fire can only be extinguished with magic, or with Essential Water. Resist Fire does

not protect against hellfire damage unless it has been cast at the second level of protection.

### Hellfire Orb

#### Missile

As Fireball (*GURPS Magic*, p. 74), but dealing increased hellfire damage.

*Cost:* 12, plus 1 per 1d hellfire damage to cast. The caster can charge a number of dice equal to his Magery per second, for up to 3 seconds.

*Time to cast:* 1 to 3 seconds.

*Prerequisites:* Magery 4, Essential Flame, and Fireball.

#### Item

As per Fireball, but triple energy and material costs.

*It was Dark Magick at its most powerful. If only his mother could see him now, he thought. She would be so proud of him. Only a few wizards in all the world had mastered hellfire, and now he was one of them.*

*– Amanda Ashley,  
Night's Touch*

### Explosive Hellfire Orb

#### Missile

As Explosive Fireball (*GURPS Magic*, p. 75), but dealing increased hellfire damage.

*Cost:* 12, plus 2 per 1d hellfire explosive damage to cast. The caster can charge a number of dice equal to his Magery level per second, for up to 3 seconds.

*Time to cast:* 1 to 3 seconds.

*Prerequisites:* Magery 4, Essential Flame, and Explosive Fireball.

#### Item

As per Explosive Fireball, but triple energy and material costs.

*If the heroes use hellfire-powered effects, someone might attempt to convince them that tapping into that energy endangers their souls. (This is an especially credible threat in settings with defined heaven and hell.) Is the threat real, or is it an effort to psychologically deprive the heroes of one of their potent powers?*

The “universal solvent” of medieval alchemy really can eat through anything: laboratory glassware, pure gold, or magical materials such as adamant.

## – GURPS Magic

### Hellfire Rain

#### Area

As per Rain of Fire (*GURPS Magic*, p. 74) but dealing increased hellfire damage.

*Duration:* 1 minute.

*Cost:* 12, plus 1 per 1d-1 of hellfire damage per yard of radius, to cast (see *Spell Costs*, p. 91). The maximum number of dice is the caster's Magery level. Same cost to maintain.

*Time to cast:* 1 minute.

*Prerequisites:* Magery 4, Essential Flame, and Rain of Fire.

#### Item

As per Rain of Fire, but triple the energy cost.

### Hellfire Jet

#### Regular

A blaze of hellish fire extends from the caster's palm. Treat it as Flame Jet (*GURPS Magic*, p. 73), but it deals increased hellfire damage.

*Duration:* 1 second.

*Cost:* 12, plus 1 per 1d hellfire damage. The number of dice of damage is limited by the caster's Magery level. Range in yards is equal to the number of dice. Same cost to maintain.

*Prerequisites:* Magery 4, Essential Flame, and Flame jet.

#### Item

As per Flame Jet, but triple energy and material costs.

### Hellfire Breath

#### Regular

As Breathe Fire (*GURPS Magic*, p. 76), but dealing increased hellfire damage.

*Duration:* 1 second.

*Cost:* 12, plus 1 per 1d+1 hellfire damage. The number of dice of damage is limited by the caster's Magery level. Range is 2 yards per dice of damage. Cannot be maintained.

*Time to cast:* 2 seconds.

*Prerequisites:* Magery 4, Essential Flame, and Breathe Fire.

#### Item

As per Breathe Fire, but triple the energy cost and the price of the ruby.

## WATER SPELLS

Essential Water frozen with the Freeze spell becomes Essential Ice. Essential ice is as strong as normal stone, and does not melt naturally. Only Essential Fire can melt Essential Ice.

Essential Acid is called alkahest (see *GURPS Magic*, pp. 220-221). Alkahest spells that inflict damage leave a lingering effect that deals 1 point of corrosion damage per second, for a number of seconds equal to the number of dice. This effect can only be removed by rinsing the targeted zone with Essential Water. Resist Acid only halves the damage of alkahest spells, instead of rendering the target immune.

### Stygian Touch

#### Melee

Covers the target in crystalline Essential Ice. Treat as Icy Touch (*GURPS Magic*, p. 188), but double the DR of – and ST penalty imposed by – every 1/4” of ice. Also, the ice won't melt unless exposed to Essential Fire.

*Duration:* Permanent.

*Cost:* 2, plus 3 per 1/4” of ice; must affect the entire subject, not just a part of it! Every 1/4” will inflict 1d of damage to flame creatures.

*Time to cast:* 1 second per 1/4” of ice.

*Prerequisites:* Magery 4, Essential Water, and Icy Touch.

#### Item

As per Icy Touch, but triple the energy cost to create.

### Stygian Ice Sphere

#### Missile

Creates a ball of pure Essential Ice. Treat this as Ice Sphere (*GURPS Magic*, p. 186), except that on hitting, it explodes into razor-sharp shards that inflict 2d cutting damage and can hit anyone within 10 yards of the impact point, as per *Fragmentation* (p. B104).

*The Essential spells can prove invaluable to seafaring sorcerers who are looking to strengthen ships or speed up wind-powered craft. For more information and insight, check out Magic and Naval Warfare from Pyramid #3/4: Magic on the Battlefield.*

*Cost:* 3, plus 1 per 1d crushing damage to cast (minimum 2d). The caster can charge a number of dice equal to his Magery level per second, for up to 3 seconds.

*Time to cast:* 1 to 3 seconds.

*Prerequisites:* Magery 4, Essential Water, and Ice Sphere.

#### Item

As per Ice Sphere, but triple energy and material costs.

*A Stygian cold  
Creeps thro' my limbs,  
and loosens every joint.  
The hot blood freezes in  
its arteries,  
And stagnates round the  
region of the heart.  
A cloud comes up from  
sooty Acheron,  
And clothes mine eyelids  
With infernal night.*

– Edward  
Bulwer-Lytton,  
Clytemnestra

### Stygian Ice Dagger

#### Missile

Creates a barbed, razor-sharp icicle of Essential Ice. Treat it as an Icy Dagger (*GURPS Magic*, p. 188), but it doesn't melt until extracted; extracting it requires a ready maneuver and inflicts half as much damage as it inflicted going in. Until it is removed it causes 1 point of injury per second.

*Duration:* Permanent, or until extracted.

*Cost:* 4, plus 2 per 1d-1 of impaling damage to cast. The caster can charge a number of dice equal to his Magery level per second, for up to 3 seconds.

*Plot idea: The heroes find a grimoire with the secret spell they've longed for. Unfortunately, there's a complication: There are dozens of versions of the same spell! After trying one or two (with disastrous results), the PCs realize that they'll need a better system to find the truth. This may involve a quest to determine which one is correct!*

*Time to cast:* 1 to 3 seconds.

*Prerequisites:* Magery 4, Essential Water, and Ice Dagger.

#### Item

As per Ice Dagger, but triple the energy cost.

### Stygian Cold

#### Regular; Resisted by HT

Makes the victim suffer the icy temperatures of the Styx. Treat this as Frostbite (*GURPS Magic*, p. 189), except that the damage is increased and the victim also suffers -3 DX due to stiff joints and muscles for a minute after taking damage. Resist Cold does not protect against this spell, unless it's been cast at the second level of protection.

*Duration:* The damage is permanent, the DX penalty lasts for a minute.

*Cost:* 3, plus 1 per 1d toxic damage. The number of dice of damage is limited by the caster's Magery level.

*Time to cast:* 3 seconds.

*Prerequisites:* Magery 4, Essential Water, and Frostbite.

#### Item

As per Frostbite, but triple energy and material costs.

### Alkahest Sphere

#### Missile

Creates a projectile of alkahest, the universal solvent. Treat this as Acid Ball (*GURPS Magic*, p. 191), except it deals alkahest damage.

*Cost:* 3, plus 1 per 1d alkahest damage. The caster can charge a number of dice equal to his Magery level per second, for up to 3 seconds.

*Time to cast:* 1 to 3 seconds.

*Prerequisites:* Magery 4, Essential Acid, and Acid Ball.

#### Item

As per Acid Ball, but triple the energy cost to create.

### Alkahest Jet

#### Regular

A jet of alkahest is projected from the caster's hand. Treat this as per Acid Jet (*GURPS Magic*, p. 192), except that it is made of alkahest.

*Duration:* 1 second.

*Cost:* 3, plus 1 per 1d-1 of alkahest damage. The caster can charge a number of dice equal to his Magery. Range is equal to the number of dice

*Prerequisites:* Magery 4, Essential Acid, and Acid Jet.

#### Item

As per Acid Jet, but triple the energy cost to create.



## Under the Hood: Essential Spells

The GM who wishes to add more essential spells may notice that the presented spells have been created, for the most part, by adding a base energy cost that then adds some special effects to the attack. This energy cost has been loosely derived from the rules for adjustable spells (*GURPS Thaumatology*, p. 39), but without the skill penalty, and at +1 energy per +10% worth of enhancements (rather than per +5%). This change is somewhat offset by the need for an additional spell prerequisite and the loss of flexibility compared to adjustable spells . . . but it's also to ensure that these spells remain viable options when compared to standard spells!

For example, Hellfire adds Incendiary 2, +20%; and Cosmic, Lingering Side Effect, +100%, for a total of +120%, or 12 energy. Phlogiston adds Secondary Effect, Paralysis, +30%, to the built in Side Effect, Stunning, of the lightning spells.

*Time to cast:* 2 seconds.  
*Prerequisites:* Magery 4, Essential Flame, and Spit Acid.

### Item

As per Spit Acid, but triple the energy cost to create.

## META-SPILLS

### Void Bolt

#### Missile

Channels pure magical energy into the target. While charging the spell, the caster's hands are surrounded by a black aura that seems to leech ambient light. The bolt has 1/2D 50, Max 100, Acc 4, and deals cosmic crushing damage that affects incorporeal spirits as if they were corporeal, ignoring all DR and protective spells.

*Cost:* 2, plus 4 per 1d of cosmic crushing damage. The caster can charge a number of dice equal to his Magery level, per second, for up to 3 seconds.

*Time to cast:* 1 to 3 seconds

*Prerequisites:* Magery 4, four Essential element spells of different colleges, and 4 missile spells, one per college of the Essential element spells taken as prerequisites.

### Item

Staff or wand – the bolt is fired from the end of the item. Usable only by a mage. *Energy cost to create:* 5,000.

### Rain of Alkahest

#### Area

As Rain of Acid (*GURPS Magic*, p. 191), but the acid is actually alkahest.

*Duration:* 1 minute.

*Cost:* 3, plus 3 per 1d-1 of alkahest damage per yard of radius, to cast. The maximum number of dice is the caster's Magery level (see *Spell Costs*, p. 91). Same cost to maintain.

*Prerequisites:* Magery 4, Essential Acid, and Rain of Acid.

### Item

As per Rain of Acid, but triple the energy cost to create.

### Spit Alkahest

#### Regular

As Spit Acid (*GURPS Magic*, p. 192), but you spit alkahest.

*Duration:* 1 second.

*Cost:* 3, plus 1 per 1d of alkahest damage. The number of dice of damage is limited by the caster's Magery level. Range is 2 yards per dice of damage. Cannot be maintained.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Antoni Ten is an IT specialist, database administrator, and Java developer from Alboraya, Valencia, Spain. He's seriously thinking about jumping into Android development, and dreams of writing a full-length book for Steve Jackson Games in the future. He has gamed for over 15 years, and now has two regular gaming groups. He wishes to thank Ze'Manel Cunha and Emily "Bruno" Smirle for proofreading this article.

*This blueprint of personal growth may be adapted to any tradition or magical style, according to the intelligence of the individual. Any number of other exercises may be substituted, which accomplish the same goals as the following. The ambitious magician must always work according to the laws of his or her own being.*

– W.I.T. Frater, *Advanced Enochian Magick*

# SEVEN MYTHICAL ARTIFACTS FOR *DUNGEON* *FANTASY*

BY ANTONI TEN MONRÓS

Mythology has always been one of the most important sources of inspiration in fantasy roleplaying. In *Dungeon Fantasy*, it is a time-honored tradition to steal the *cool* aspects of mythology without regard to whether they're appropriate or anachronistic for the game world! This article presents seven artifacts from myth, viewed under a *Dungeon Fantasy* lens. This is not a treatise on mythology, though; corners were cut, and myths changed, in order to provide more interesting items for your games. The items' descriptions reference the original myths, however, and curious readers can research the actual stories behind them.

For more information on how to read the item entries (including details on suggested origins), see *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 6: 40 Artifacts* (pp. 3-4).

*A collection of wondrous items  
inspired by mythology.*

## AEGIS

Power Item: 34 FP

*Suggested Origins:* Cosmic, Divine, or Magical.

Forged by Hephaestus and polished by the Cyclopes, this round shield is property of Zeus, king of the Olympian gods, though he sometimes lends it to his daughter Athena. It looks

like a large Homeric buckler, made of layered ox hide, with a burnished orichalcum facing. Instead of the usual boss, it has the petrified head of the Gorgon Medusa. The rim is decorated with 100 tassels of gold thread, but no matter how roughly the shield is used, the tassels never fall off. The shield provides great powers of defense not only to the wearer, but also to anyone who fights by his side.

### *Properties*

- *Head of the Gorgon Medusa:* Instead of the customary boss in the shape of a mythological monster, this shield has the real thing! The petrified head of the Gorgon Medusa is affixed to it. Once per day, it can be awakened by the shield's owner, by taking a Concentrate maneuver. Anyone seeing the revived head must make a HT-5 roll or be turned to stone. This costs the wielder 10 FP.

- *Shield Others:* Once per turn, the wielder of Aegis can block an attack against an ally behind or beside him. Use the holder's normal Block score, including the shield's DB 3, as the shield leaps to protect others. This doesn't count as the person's normal block for the turn.

- *Shield Quality:* Aegis is a large balanced orichalcum buckler. As such, it provides DB 3. Its relative lightness and agility, however, mean that it doesn't negatively impact the wearer, negating the usual -2 penalty to attack for using a large shield.

- *Sword-Breaker:* Any weapon that strikes the Aegis, either intentionally, or by being blocked, breaks on a roll of 3 or less (on 1d), modified by the weapon's quality, as if it had parried a weapon weighting four times its own weight.

*Weight:* 18 lbs.

## Variations

• Aegis is a major divine artifact, but Olympian gods are noted for their willingness to lend their possessions to heroes. They sometimes don't even bother to recover them. This might explain how the shield ended in the hands of the delvers. However, it's much more common if it's given as part of a divine quest. In this case, it will probably only work for the hero the gods entrust it to, and will only jump to protect delvers that are weaker or less armored than the wearer. If not using Greco-Roman mythology in your setting, then it's surely a relic of a peace or war god.

• Aegis might instead be a magical artifact, created by both great magics and supreme craftsmanship, probably made by a dwarven master smith who is also an enchanter. In that case, the petrifying ability might not be suitable. Reduce the weight of the shield to 13 lbs. if the head of Medusa is not present.

## COIR CETHAR CHUIN

**Power Item: 20 FP**

*Suggested Origins:* Cosmic, Bardic, Divine, Druidic, or Magical.

Also known as Uaithne and Dur da Blá, this is the harp of the Dagda, the All-Father, one of the Tuatha Dé Danann. In the hands of a god, it can be used to change the ordering of the seasons. In the hands of a mere mortal, it is simply a beautifully ornate harp made of oak. In the hands of someone possessing the Bard-Song abilities, it greatly enhances them, and its beautiful music can produce magical effects.

## Properties

• *Bard-Song Enhancer:* Coir Cethar Chuin grants two levels of Bardic Talent to its owner.

• *Magical Songs:* The owner can perform special melodies that cause all those who hear them to suffer magical afflictions. The harp grants knowledge of these songs to its owner, but should he lose it, he will not be able to remember them. The tunes cannot be transcribed, and they only work when performed with Coir Cethar Chuin. They are performed with Musical Instrument (Harp) at 15 (regardless of the owner's actual skill), plus the user's Bard-Song Talent, Bardic Talent, or Bardic Magery. The songs affect all other sentient beings (those with IQ greater than 6) within eight yards, who resist with Will. Effects last for as long as the bard performs, and the Rule of 16 *does not apply!* Available songs are: *Ballad*, which causes victims to fall down, crying (treat as Agony, p. B428); *Lullaby*, which causes victims to fall asleep; and *Madrigal*, which causes them to fall down, laughing uncontrollably (treat as Ecstasy, p. B428).

• *Masterwork Harp:* The exquisite workmanship that went into this harp makes it a magnificent musical instrument. A user get +2 to his Musical Instrument (Harp) skill to play any melodies other than the *Magical Songs* (above).

*Weight:* 7 lbs.

## Variations

• Maybe the Coir Cethar Chuin is not just an harp, but a bow-harp! Raise weight to 8.5 lbs.; it can thus be used as either a composite bow or an harp.

• If the Tuatha Dé Danann don't exist in your world, this harp can either be the creation of faerie craftsmen, or a druidic artifact of some sort. In the later case, it might grant a bonus to either weather or nature spells, in addition to the ones given to bardic abilities.

## GOLDEN FLEECE

**Power Item: 15 FP**

*Suggested Origins:* Divine or Materials.

The Golden Fleece is the skin of the gold-haired winged ram. It was first hung on an oak tree as a tribute to Ares by Phryxus. It was then stolen by Jason in order to prove his worthiness for the throne of Iolcus in Thessaly.

## Properties

• *Aura of Majesty:* The owner of the Golden Fleece is destined for greatness, and most of its owners have gained kingship. Those who meet the carrier of the Golden Fleece will unconsciously react to this destiny, and treat him as if he was a foreign noble of great importance. This grants the wearer a +5 reaction bonus, not cumulative with bonuses from ornate gear.

• *Poison Resistance:* The Fleece has another property very useful to rulers – it makes the wearer immune to poisons of all kinds, forcing would-be assassins to try a different approach.

• *Toughness:* The Golden Fleece is worn as a makeshift cloak. Although rather heavy, it provides DR 3 against attacks hitting the torso from the back.

*Weight:* 10 lbs.

## Variations

• On top of being a symbol of royalty, the Golden Fleece might also have other powers. Like the skin of the Nemean Lion, worn by Heracles, it might be impenetrable, giving even greater DR and converting all penetrating damage to crushing. The gold-haired ram it was taken from had functional wings, so it is also possible that it grants the ability to fly.

*Hades' helmet, a gift to me  
when I became a psychopomp.*

– N.F. Houck, *Herald*

## HELM OF HADES

**Power Item: 61 FP**

*Suggested Origins:* Cosmic, Divine, or Magical.

The Helm of Hades is a Corinthian-style full helm, offering full skull and face protection. It is made of orichalcum. Only the eyes are accessible, and only through the eye-slits, at the usual -10 penalty. It was given to Hades by the Cyclopes to help the Olympians in their war against the Titans. It not only offers excellent protection, it also hides the wearer from magic and magical creatures, and allows the wearer to appear as he wishes.

## Properties

- *Illusory Disguise:* The wearer can superimpose any appearance he wishes over his. This also negates the *Invisible to Magic* property (below), but it otherwise fools all senses. The projection must be the same SM as the wearer. It is disrupted automatically by damage, and is somewhat tiring for the user. While it is active, the user recovers no FP points, and must pay 1 FP every 10 minutes to maintain the effect.

- *Invisible to Magic:* The wearer is invisible to magical creatures and spells. He cannot be targeted by regular spells, information spells won't detect him or obtain information on him, and magically granted senses won't perceive him. Area, Melee, and Missile spells affect him normally. He is also completely invisible to constructs, demons, elementals, faeries, servitors and undead, as long as he doesn't interact with them. This also means that the Helm in no way registers as having any special properties, regardless of its origin.

- *Toughness:* This helm provides DR 15 to the skull and face areas. It includes padding, already factored into the DR.

- *Unimpeded Perception:* Despite being a fully enclosing helm, this item doesn't reduce the wearer's sensory acuity, meaning that he doesn't get No Depth Perception and Hard of Hearing that these helms usually give.

*Weight:* 4 lbs.

## Variations

- The powers of the Helm of Hades and the Norse Tarnhelm are very similar, though the Tarnhelm generally has the shape of a skullcap, protecting only the skull. It is possible that they are one and the same.

- The Tarnhelm is reputed to actually transform the wearer, instead of merely projecting an illusion over him. Take inspiration from the Shapeshifting and Great Shapeshift spells!

## NECKLACE OF SKULLS

**Power Item: 5 FP**

*Suggested Origins:* Cosmic, Divine, or Magical.

This is the necklace of Kali, Hindu goddess of eternal energy, time, and death. It is made out of the skulls of her foes.

Kali is an extremely fierce fighter, who unleashes her incredibly destructive wrath on the demons who plague the world. She is thus not an evil deity, despite her domains. She is more of a force of nature. However, her blood rage often blinds her, and she goes into uncontrolled rampages of violent destruction. When that happens, only her consort, Shiva, can make her come back to her senses.

## Properties

- *Kali's Fury:* The wearer of the Necklace of Skulls can, as a free action, channel a fragment of Kali's fury. He then gets the following traits: +10 ST, Altered Time Rate 1, Extra Attack 2 (Multi-Strike, +20%), and Berserk (6) (Battle Rage, +50%). He also can attempt active defenses while making All-Out Attacks. All effects end the moment the user snaps out of Berserk.

- *Kali's Temper:* Together with the fury, the wearer also gets a taste of Kali's fiery temper. The person gains the Bad Temper disadvantage, with a self-control number of Will-5, or, if he already possesses the Bad Temper disadvantage, lower the self-control

number by 9. This afflicts the bearer for as long as he wears the necklace, and for an equal amount of time after removing it.

*Weight:* 3 lbs.

## Variations

- Viking berserkers were reputed to be formidable opponents. Lesser versions of the Necklace of Skulls might exist, called Runic Necklaces of the Berserker, made of runestones instead of skulls. Their effects are lesser too, and only grant +5 ST, Berserk (6) (Battle Rage, +50%), the Bad Temper disadvantage (as described above), and the ability to dodge while making All-Out Attacks.

*Certain fierce female spirits demonstrate their wild power by wearing necklaces of skulls around their neck, such as Anat, Baba Taga, and Kali.*

*– Judika Illes,  
Encyclopedia  
of 5,000 Spells*

## NOTHUNG

**Power Item: 0 FP**

*Suggested Origins:* Materials.

One of the creations of the famed Wayland the Smith, this massive blade might not look like much, but is one of the finest examples of sword-smithing ever created. Made from a strange alloy, said to come from two different fallen stars, its three-yard-long blade shows watery patterns, and its edge remains keen no matter how much abuse is given to it. Despite its humongous size, those strong enough to wield it claim it's an exquisitely balanced and agile weapon. Its properties are entirely due to its strange composition and Master Wayland's supreme craftsmanship, as the star iron seems to be completely impervious to magic. It was used to kill the dragon Fafnir.

## Properties

- *Anti-Magic:* The strange meteoric metal used in the construction of Nothung is completely impervious to magic. It cuts through enchantments as a hot knife cuts through butter. No magic can affect it in any way, either to strengthen or weaken it. No magical defenses ever impede it. This renders blocking spells completely useless against it. Magic-given DR, whether in the form of temporary spells like Armor or enchantments like Fortify, is ignored against its blows.

Magical bonuses to active defenses, such as the ones from the Shield or Deflect spells don't apply either. Finally, magically given insubstantiality such as the one provided by Ethereal Body or Steelwraith is also useless. Unfortunately, this also makes it unsuitable as a power item.

- *Blade Quality*: Nothung is a very fine balanced weapon, made of a strange dark steel. This gives it +3 to avoid breakage, and is wielded at +1 to skill. Its damage bonus is already included in the stats (see below).

- *Fencing Parry*: This weapon gets the same benefits on a parry that a fencing weapon would get; that is, the penalty for successive parries is halved. This does not affect the weapon's ability to defend against flails, though. It also does not cause encumbrance to impose penalties on attacks.

- *Supreme Parry*: This weapon can be used to parry projectiles of all kinds, including area effects such as explosions and monster's breath attacks. Coupled with *Anti-Magic* (above), it allows the wielder to parry non-Missile spells, as long as he is aware of the spell's casting, and can see its caster.

- *Titanic*: Sigfried was a very large man, and this sword was large even for him. It uses Two-Handed Sword skill, and wielders smaller than SM +1 use it at a penalty equal to (their SM - 1). Also, it needs a lot of space to swing, requiring a three-yard clearance either on one side or overhead, in order to be able to use its swing entry.

Weapon	Damage	Reach	Parry	Weight	ST
Nothung	sw+9 cut	1-3	0F	15	17†
or	thr+6 imp	3	0F	-	17†

## Variations

- Since this blade is the product of just mythic craftsmanship and superior materials, it might be possible to commission one. Finding a skilled enough master sword-smith should never be easy, as individuals capable of creating such wonders almost always live in seclusion, either in the mountains where superior ores can be found, or hidden in plain sight, disguised as peaceful old men. Also, such a blade won't be cheap, costing at least \$120,000, though perhaps a part of the price, maybe up to a third, might be paid in the form of the special ores or metal ingots to be used in its forging. Finally, the forging itself won't be fast, so the adventurers ought to wait at least one game-year after commissioning it before being able to pick it up.

- This blade is based on the zweihander found in *GURPS Fantasy-Tech* (p. 11), with the azzalum, balanced, meteoric and very fine modifiers, totaling +47 CF. It is then given a price increase to represent its other special properties, along with a required ST and weight increases. The GM might prefer to base it on a greatsword instead.

# TEZCATLIPOCA'S SMOKING MIRROR

Power Item: 30 FP

*Suggested Origins*: Cosmic or Divine.

Tezcatlipoca was one of the four main gods of Aztec mythology, who created the world. His portfolio is large, encompassing, among others, sorcery, storms, and strife, but his main attribute is that he is a god of the night. This 1' mirror of polished obsidian – which emits a faint smoke, and is slightly warm to the touch – is his most holy relic.

## Properties

- *Invested Power*: Clerics and druids of the night or storms who possess this artifact gain +3 to their Power Investiture.

- *Limitless Power*: As a power item, the Mirror has a capacity of 30 FP. However, it can be overcharged. Each point over 30 has double the normal cost to recharge, cumulatively; thus, the 31st point costs \$10 to charge, the 32nd point costs \$20, the 33rd point costs \$40, and so on.

- *Sacrificial Blood*: The penalty for using HP to power a spell is negated, if the spell benefited from the increased Power Investiture given by the Mirror. However, these HP will only heal naturally. Magic cannot restore them or accelerate their recovery.

*Weight*: 5 lbs.

## Variations

- While it is commonly accepted that Tezcatlipoca was not an evil god, that doesn't have to be the norm in *Dungeon Fantasy* games. Maybe he prefers sacrificing others instead of himself! In that case, the only way to recharge it is by killing sentient beings and letting their heart-blood soak the Mirror. The victim must be sacrificed to the mirror, not killed in combat. This provides energy equal to the subject's IQ times the lower of HT or HP for IQ 0-5 victims – or IQ times the higher of HT or HP for IQ 6+ victims. Use the "limitless power" progression: The energy from the sacrifice recharges the mirror on a 1-for-1 basis up until 30 FP; then it takes 2 energy for the 31st point, 4 for the 32nd, and so on, with leftover energy lost. The ritual requires esoteric supplies that have the same cost as recharging the mirror, but the advantage is that it can be done in the field instead of back in town.

*His very cave is yet shown in  
Berkshire, and curious magic  
qualities have from ancient  
times been attributed to that  
"Invisible Smith."*

– Karl Blind,  
"Wayland the Smith,"  
*The Scottish Review*, Vol. 35

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Antoni Ten is a IT specialist, database administrator, and Java and web developer from Alboraya, Valencia, Spain. He's seriously thinking about jumping into Android development, and dreams of writing a full-length book for Steve Jackson Games in the future. He has gamed for over 15 years, and now has two regular gaming groups. He wishes to thank Christopher R. "Ghostdancer" Rice and Emily "Bruno" Smirle for acting as his sounding boards, and proofreading this article, and José Antonio "demonsbane" Estarellas for sharing his knowledge of Buddhist, Hindu, and Vedic mythology with him.

# A FAMILIAR PATH

BY CHRISTOPHER R. RICE

What better reward can there be for a mage than to get a familiar to help enhance his magic? It might lead to a quest, or require gaining prerequisites. *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* treats having a familiar as a power-up, something that is usually reserved for advanced characters, and other magic systems can take inspiration from that, including *GURPS Thaumatology: Ritual Path Magic*. *Ritual Path Magic* touched only briefly on how familiars might be treated in the Ritual Path magic

*The Goldi clearly distinguish between the tutelary spirit (ayami), which chooses the shaman, and the helping spirits (syven), which are subordinate to it and are granted to the shaman by the ayami itself.*

– Mircea Eliade,  
*Shamanism: Archaic  
Techniques of Ecstasy*

system; the ideas presented here seek to expand that further. *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 5: Allies* is recommended highly for its prebuilt familiars.

## WHAT IS A FAMILIAR?

Traditionally, familiars were spirits a witch summoned to help her with her witchcraft. They also served as conduits to extraplanar powers with which they were said to communicate. More recently (mostly thanks to the influence of video and roleplaying games), a familiar has come to mean a companion that fights alongside or otherwise helps its master.

## WHAT KIND OF FAMILIAR?

Though the suggestions here are aimed at those who use Ritual Path magic in their games, the ideas can be adapted to other magical systems with little effort. The tips might even be one of the ways to make a magical system unique or different. If Symbol Magic users can't have familiars, but Ritual Path magic users can, it's going to create some clear campaign distinctions immediately.

The ideas might even be adapted to simulate other close, near-supernatural bonds such as those twins are thought to share, or the close psychic bonds some psis seem to have with different animals or people. For the latter, Kenneth Peter's *The Edge of Psience* from *Pyramid* #3/29: *Psionics* is worth a read.

# THE FAMILIAR ITSELF

A caster with a familiar should buy an Ally (p. B36) with Special Abilities and a frequency of appearance of Constantly. This allows access to exotic or supernatural traits otherwise off-limits to him, as long as it could be justifiably associated with his familiar's physicality (e.g., on its racial template), its mythology (e.g., ravens have a complex "language"), or its magic-enhancing trait (e.g., Ritual Adept). The bond might also enable both familiar and master to perceive the moods of the other, detect someone pretending to be the other, and so on. Such traits typically are purchased with the Granted by Familiar limitation (see p. 103 for an expanded version of this modifier) or similar modifier.

The GM should determine what abilities are appropriate in his campaign. For example, the master of a raven familiar

might not be allowed to purchase the Flight advantage, but could purchase Language Talent instead.

Most familiars are animals, which thanks to their bond with their master, have IQs far in excess of their native species. However, the GM might permit far stranger familiars (see *Weird Familiars*, p. 106, for more ideas). Spirits, "living" objects, or even *people* all feature in familiar-lore. A particularly new notion is that of a powerful or godlike creature using a human (or other sapient species) as *its* familiar. The GM should determine why this is; one possibility includes sapient creatures can "hold" more magical energy (see *Mana Collector*, p. 104). For example, a dragon who is also a caster might have a *human* for its familiar, not an animal.

The GM must also decide if acquiring more than one familiar is possible, how many and what kinds of traits can be gained from each one, and whether the caster may have multiple versions of the same trait. Optionally, if all familiars in the bond use the same traits, replace “Accessibility, Familiar/Master, -80%” with “Accessibility, Familiars/Master, -60%.”

All of this assumes the player gets to pick his familiar or at least offer input into it. If the GM decides this is not the case, the player should not pay full price for his random ally! The GM might charge up to half the cost of the Ally advantage and the Familiar Master meta-trait, depending on how useful the familiar is, or the GM might provide the familiar as a bonus reward for a particularly challenging quest.

The GM may allow the following ritual to be used to gain a familiar.

## Summon Familiar

*Spell Effects:* Lesser Create Magic + Lesser Sense Mind + Greater Transform Mind.

*Inherent Modifiers:* None.

*Greater Effects:* 0 (x1).

This spell summons a familiar of the caster’s choosing. The actual casting of the spell takes normal time, but the caster must either have a number of unspent character points to cover the cost of the familiar or use the *Slow and Sure Enchanting* rules (*Ritual Path Magic*, pp. 34-45) to acquire them for this purpose.

The spell finds the nearest candidate of the caster’s choice (or any candidate if he didn’t specify) within 100 miles, imbues them with sapience, and forges a mystical bond. Unsuitable candidates include animals who are already familiars, those who are too far away, or those who weigh more than 10 pounds (though the caster may add more energy in the form of Subject Weight if he chooses to acquire a larger familiar). Already-sapient candidates can choose to resist the spell normally – failure means they become the caster’s familiar, but he must apply the Unwilling modifier to his familiar’s Ally trait (p. B36) if they don’t want to be a familiar.

*Typical Casting:* Lesser Create Magic (5) + Lesser Sense Mind (2) + Greater Transform Mind (8) + Range, 100 miles (30). 45 energy (45x1).

## NEW META-TRAITS: FAMILIAR AND FAMILIAR MASTER

The “basic” Familiar and Familiar Master meta-traits appear below:

### Familiar

3 points

Your essence is tied to your master (often a spellcaster, though this isn’t always required). This mental bond takes the form of a special empathic tie. This trait includes Sense of Duty (Master) [-2] and Special Rapport (Master) [5].

### Lenses

*Animal (-25 points):* You are a traditional animal familiar. Remove racial IQ penalties and the Domesticated or Wild Animal meta-traits. To determine the new bonus to Will or Per, use the following method: If Will or Per is 10 or less, then the familiar has no Will or Per modifier, and Will or Per equals IQ. If racial average Will or Per is 11+, subtract 10 from this and give the difference to the familiar as a bonus. In some settings, this lens also includes Social Stigma (Valuable Property) [-10], reducing the cost to -35 points. This lens gives the following: Bestial [-10]; Speak with Animals (Specialized, familiar’s species, -60%) [10]; Wealth (Dead Broke) [-25].

*Long-Lived (Varies):* You will live as long as your master. Remove any traits related to a short lifespan and add Longevity [2]. Add extra levels of Extended Lifespan [2/level] or Unaging [15] as appropriate for a familiar’s particular master.

### Familiar Master

Varies

You have a being (often an animal, but not always) at your beck and call. Not only does your familiar have all the traits and abilities associated with a member of its race, but it also has a special reserve of energy you can tap to fuel your own spells! Treat the mana reserve gained in this way as a part of your own mana reserve in *all* ways. This trait includes Energy Reserve N\* (Mana Reserve; Drains Familiar, -50%) [1.5/level] and Special Rapport (Familiar) [5]; it is *always* accompanied by Ally (Familiar).

\* To determine how much *N* equals, multiply your familiar’s FP by x0.5 (round down). For example, if your familiar had FP 12, then you’d gain an Energy Reserve of 6, which would cost 9 points.

## BONDED ABILITIES

The following abilities do *not* have the Magical limitation because the master/familiar bond is so deep that it draws on the “internal mana” of the pair and is thus not subject to external influence. This isn’t the case for some settings; in such

campaigns, add the Magical limitation and reduce the cost accordingly. This means they do not work in desecrated areas (*Ritual Path Magic*, p. 20) and can be temporarily suppressed or nullified.

## BONDED ABILITIES FOR FAMILIARS

The following abilities are only available to those with the Familiar meta-trait (above).

*Oh, right; you haven't actually met my familiar. Pardon my rudeness. His name is Loioosh, and he's a jhereg. If you don't what a jhereg is, you're probably better off, but I can at least explain that it is a poisonous reptile with two wings, two eyes, two legs, and one form of wit: irritating.*

– Steven Brust, *Tiassa*

### Arcane Boost

78/93 points for levels 1-2

*Prerequisite:* IQ 10+ and a master with Draw Energy (below).

Once per hour you can give your master +3 to *any* Path skill for the sole purposes of gathering ambient energy, as long as he is within two yards of you. This requires you take a Concentrate maneuver and make an IQ+4 roll. Level 2 works the same way, except that you may choose to reduce the Greater effects multiplier of a ritual by one (e.g., ×5 becomes ×4) *instead of* giving him a bonus to gather energy.

*Statistics:* Control 2 (Magic; Accessibility, Master Only, -80%; Cosmic, No die roll required, +100%; Paths Only, -20%; Reliable 4, +20%) [60] + Control 1 (Magic; Accessibility, Master Only, -80%; Cosmic, No die roll required, +100%; Does Not Increase Area, -50%; Paths Only, -20%; Reliable 4, +20%) [18]. Level 2 removes the Paths Only limitation from both [70 + 23]. This trait first appeared on *Pyramid* #3/66: *The Laws of Magic*.

### Mana Collector

10 points/level

*Prerequisite:* IQ 10+.

You can help your master gather energy. To do this, you must be within two yards of him and conscious. You then roll your IQ, just as if you were another caster helping him cast a spell (*Ritual Path Magic*, p. 25), except neither you *nor* he takes -1 to rolls. Each additional level after the first (up to five) gives +1 to the IQ roll.

*Statistics:* Level 1 is Quick and Focused (Master)\* [1] and nine One Task Wonder (One chosen Path defaults to IQ when gathering energy for master) perks [9]. Further levels are IQ (Accessibility, Only for gathering energy rolls, -50%) [10/level].

\* This perk either allows a caster to ignore the penalties associated with helping to cast a spell for any other caster or removes the penalties entirely for both casters if you specialize in a specific pairing.

## BONDED ABILITIES FOR MASTERS

The following abilities are only available for those with the Familiar Master meta-trait (p. 103). Additionally, some traits have the Granted by Familiar limitation. If the cost of this trait changes (see p. 109), you'll need to adjust the costs of some bonded abilities.

### Conduit

Varies

*Prerequisite:* Deep Bond (p. 105) or Psychic Link (pp. 105-106).

Whenever you benefit from *any* positive supernatural effect (healing spell, temporary attribute bonus, and so on), your familiar is *also* affected. At level 2, you may treat your familiar as a part of your person for *any* spell, power, or ability if that would be beneficial to you.

*Statistics:* Level 1 adds Cosmic, Shared Effects, +50% to Ally (Familiar) [Varies], while level 2 adds Cosmic, Shared Body, +50%.

### Draw Energy

30/60/90 points for levels 1-3

*Prerequisite:* A familiar with Mana Collector (above).

Your familiar allows your mana reserve to replenish faster than normal; you regain 1 point of your reserve automatically every minute. At level 2, you regain 1 point per *second*, and at level 3, you regain *10 points* per second.

*Statistics:* Regeneration (Fast; Energy Reserve Only, +0%; Granted by Familiar, -40%) [30]. Level 2 makes Regeneration Very Fast [60]. Level 3 increases Regeneration to Extreme [90].

### Efficient Energy Reserve

Varies

The mana reserve your familiar gives you is far more effective than normal, providing an amount equal to its full FP. What's more, your familiar loses only 1 FP per 2 ER you use, instead of a 1:1 ratio.

*Statistics:* Replace Drains Familiar (p. 108) with Drains Familiar, Efficient, 1 FP per 2 ER and double the caster's available ER. For example, if a caster previously had Energy Reserve 6 (Drains Familiar, -50%) [9] and bought this ability, he would now have Energy Reserve 12 (Drains Familiar, 1 FP per 2 ER, -40%) [22], which would make the cost of this trait 13 points.



## Inner Reserves

Varies

*Prerequisite:* Deep Bond (below).

In times of desperation, you can draw deeply on your familiar's innermost reserves. Doing so can be *dangerous* for the familiar! Level 1 allows you to draw on up to half of the familiar's FP as though it were your own, for mundane use (such as running). This means the familiar's FP is reduced when you tap it as a mana reserve *or* as a fatigue reserve. At level 2, you can also draw on up to half its HP as if it were your own; this reduces its HP directly, not its FP, and it must heal normally to become available for your use again.

*Statistics:* Energy Reserve N\* (Mundane; Drains Familiar, -50%) [1.5/level]. Level 2 adds Vitality Reserve N\* (Drains Familiar, -50%) [1/level]. See p. 106 for details on both.

\* N equals half the familiar's FP (or half its HP for the Vitality Reserve), rounded down.

## Shielded Thoughts

10 points

*Prerequisite:* Mind Shield 1+ with the Granted by Familiar limitation.

Your familiar can help you throw off mental intrusion. When you fail a roll against such an ability, make another roll against the better of your own resistance roll or your familiar's roll.

*Statistics:* Compartmentalized Mind 1 (Based on Familiar's or Master's Resistance Roll, +40%; Granted by Familiar, -40%; Mental Separation Only, -80%) [10].

## Steady Magic

5/9/18 points for levels 1-3

Your familiar can help you stabilize your magic when nearby. At level 1, you can reroll any failed Path skill roll twice and take the best of the three rolls. You can do this once per hour. Level 2 allows you to do this once every 30 minutes. Level 3 allows you to do this once every 10 minutes of real time.

*Statistics:* Luck (Accessibility, Failed rolls, -10%; Aspected, Magic, -20%; Granted by Familiar, -40%) [5]. Level 2 replaces Luck with Extraordinary Luck [9]. Level 3 replaces Extraordinary Luck with Ridiculous Luck [18].

## GENERAL BONDED ABILITIES

The following abilities are available to both masters and their familiars (those with either the Familiar Master or the Familiar meta-trait, p. 103).

### Deep Bond

Varies

You and your familiar share an incredibly close bond. While not telepathic in nature (but see *Psychic Link*, below), it nevertheless is profound. If you or your familiar dies, the other must make an immediate HT roll. Success means the

survivor is mortally wounded (p. B423) but conscious. Critical success means he suffers no ill effects. Failure means the one who did not die is reduced to 0 HP.

Additionally, you and your familiar both have problems with thoughts, memories, mental images, and so on "bleeding" over. Whenever an IQ, Will, or Per roll is critically failed, roll 3d; on a 6 or less, the character who failed his roll suffers from a sudden infusion of thoughts, memories, etc. from his partner. Because of the distraction of having such thoughts suddenly pouring into his head, he gains -2 on all skill rolls for the next 2d seconds.

Despite this, sharing memories *does* have some positive benefits. Both master and familiar can "draw" on each other's memories. To do this, concentrate for one minute and roll against your IQ (Eidetic Memory does not help, unless both master and familiar have it). Success means you can access the memories of your familiar/master. Failure means you didn't get anything coherent, but can try again at -2 per roll after the first.

Both master and familiar must purchase this ability. Familiars only pay 8 points for this ability.

*Statistics:* Racial Memory (Active; Accessibility, Familiar/master only, -80%) [8]. In addition, for masters, add Mind Bleed, Mild (-5%) and Sympathy, Resistible (-15%) to Ally (Familiar) [Varies]; see p. 107 for both limitations.

*It is the familiar spirit  
of the place;*

*It judges, presides,  
inspires*

*Everything in its  
empire . . .*

*– Charles Baudelaire*

### Psychic Link

14/29/44/59 points for levels 1-4

You and your familiar share a psychic bond that allows you to hear one another's thoughts. This sending is 10 times faster than what you could normally convey. At level 1, you send simple concepts or emotions, but not speech or images. Level 2 allows you to send actual thoughts. Level 3 enables you to see what he's seeing, smell what he's smelling, hear what he's hearing, etc. You can only concentrate on either your senses or your familiar's. With level 4, you can do both, but all tasks depending on the senses of the viewpoint you are not concentrating on (including attack or defense rolls, Sense rolls, and so on) are at -4.

## WEIRD FAMILIARS

The familiar of folklore was thought not to need food, drink, or even sleep because they were not animals, but spirits. Instead, they only needed the blood of their master to survive, which they drew from one particular spot on the body. This “witches’ mark” or “witches’ teat” was often depicted as a discolored or non-feeling patch of skin. To represent this particular bond, give the caster both Draining (p. B132) and Distinctive Feature (Witches’ Mark) (p. B165). In some stories, the longer a familiar is with its master, the more similar the two become. Represent this with Unnatural or Distinctive Features (pp. B22, B165). Long-term familiars also tend to be more intelligent and possess many of the same skills their master has. Represent this as increased IQ and points in its master’s skills. They also tend to make use of *Complementary Skills* (*GURPS Social Engineering*, p. 21) to help their masters.

This article assumes a caster’s familiar is always around and not summoned. If this *isn’t* the case, add the Summonable enhancement (p. B37) to the caster’s Ally advantage or buy enough levels of Payload (Cosmic, Doesn’t Count against Encumbrance, +50%; Cosmic, Provides Life Support, +150%) [3/level] to create an extradimensional “pocket” for it to be held in.

Although most familiars are animals, stranger versions are possible. For example, a caster who focuses on Path of Undead might have a horde of zombies as his “familiar,” while a “druidic” caster might have a swarm of bees as

his. Treat such familiars normally, but allow the caster to “replenish the ranks” to keep his familiar at full capacity. For familiars without FP scores (such as a sentient AI or a magical sword), buy a number of levels of ER (Mana Reserve, Cannot Use Reserve, -100%) [0.6/level] equal to the caster’s ER (Drain’s Familiar, -50%) and *ignore* the rule of *N* (p. 103) – such familiars often have large reserves their masters can tap.

Depending on the setting, it may be appropriate to allow a human (or other naturally sapient being) to serve as a familiar. If permitted, the caster should replace “Drains Familiar, -50%” on his Energy Reserve with “Drains Familiar, Efficient, 1 FP per 3 ER, -30%.”

The GM may let a *player* design someone who is the familiar of another character (who can also be a PC). First, determine the point total of the character and use it to figure out the Ally’s base cost (refer to the table under *Ally’s Power* on p. B37). Second, apply all modifiers, but ignore the Frequency of Appearance unless the character is the familiar of a NPC. Then subtract the modified cost from the base cost, and add 5; this becomes the value of Unusual Background (Familiar of [Master]). For example, if one player wants to play the familiar of another, and he is equal in point value, then the initial cost is 5 points (an Ally built on 100% of points is worth 5 points). The value is 8 points after applying modifiers, so 8 (modified cost) - 5 (base cost) = 3. Then add 5 to this value, for a final total of 8 points.

No skill roll is involved, provided the other party chooses not to resist. If the partner chooses to resist, make an IQ-1 roll using the *Long-Distance Modifiers* (p. B241).

The ability does not permit interstellar contact (anything more than a light year) or contact across time or parallel worlds. It also cannot reach otherworldly realms, such as Heaven, Hell, the Faerie lands, and so on.

Both master and familiar must purchase this ability.

*Statistics:* Mindlink (Familiar/Master) [5] + Telesend (Accessibility, Familiar/master only, -80%; Burst 10x, +30%; Can tell if sending is successful, +10%; Secure, +20%; Vague, -50%) [9]. Level 2 removes Vague from Telesend [24]. Level 3 adds Mind Reading (Accessibility, Familiar/master only, -80%; Long-Range 1, +50%; Sensory Only, -20%) [15]. Level 4 adds Aware (+50%), borrowed from Clairsentience, to Mind Reading [30].

### Scry Familiar

29/69 points for levels 1-2

*Prerequisite:* Sense Familiar and either Deep Bond (p. 105) or Psychic Link (above).

You can sense your familiar’s location by concentrating for one minute, spending 1 FP, and making an IQ roll (alternatively, roll Path of Magic or Path of Mind, if higher). Success means you’ve displaced your sense of hearing and sight to within 10 yards of your familiar’s current location (which

can be anywhere on the planet). If your familiar moves, so does your viewpoint (no additional roll is needed for this). Failure by 1 means your senses go to somewhere of the GM’s choosing, failure by 2 or more means nothing happens. Critical failure results in the loss of your ability for 1d hours.

You may only use the ability for 1d×5 seconds, after which it ends, and you cannot use it until at least one hour goes by. If using this ability in combat, you can do nothing else. This means you have no active defense while relying on it, though you may immediately end your use of this ability by taking a Concentrate maneuver and another IQ roll.

Level 2 removes the FP cost and allows you to shift focus back and forth between the two locations as a free action at the start of your turn. You function normally at the prioritized location, but are -4 to all rolls related to the other place (e.g., if you are focused on your familiar’s location, you could still defend against a personal attack, but at -4).

This ability may optionally be taken by the familiar allowing it to find its master; use the same rules as above.

*Statistics:* Clairsentience (Accessibility, Familiar/master only, -80%; All-Out, -25%; Costs Fatigue, 1 FP, -5%; Fixed Range, -5%; Increased Range, ×2 million, +190%; Maximum Duration, 1d×5 seconds, -75%; No Clairrosmia, -3%; No penalty for blind use, +10%; Normal Sight, -20%; Takes Recharge, 1 hour, -30%) [29]. Level 2 removes All-Out and Costs Fatigue, and adds Aware (+50%) [69].

## Sense Familiar

5/9/12/17/19 points for levels 1-5

You can find the location of your familiar with ease. Make a Per roll (you may substitute your Per-based Path of Mind skill, if better) taking into account normal range penalties (p. B550). This takes one second. On a success, the GM tells you the direction, though not the distance, your familiar is. If you can move around, you can attempt to triangulate your familiar's position. As a rule, once you've moved more than half the distance to the target, and made 1d successful rolls, the GM should give you the approximate distance. At level 2,

*Newt spun, making her robe unfurl. "He's my familiar, bought and paid for. I can claim anything of his. Even his life."*

*Al cleared his throat nervously. "That's good to know," he said lightly.*

*"Important safety tip. Rachel, write that down somewhere as lesson number one."*

*– Kim Harrison, **The Outlaw Demon Wails***

this no longer becomes necessary – you automatically know your familiar's exact location. At level 3, you use the *Long-Distance Modifiers* (p. B241) instead of normal range penalties. At level 4, you no longer have to make a Per roll, as long as your roll is 3 or higher with penalties. At level 5, you *always* know where your familiar is (though your rolls to detect it are at a -4); this becomes a passive ability.

*Statistics: Detect (Familiar; Cannot Analyze, -10%) [5]. Further levels add Precise, Nontargeting (+90%) [9], then Long-Range 1 (+50%) [12], then Cosmic, No die roll required (+100%) [17], then Reflexive (+40%) [21].*

# EXISTING TRAITS

Those following traits pertain to familiars or are appropriate for them.

## Ally

see p. B36

Fiction is filled with wizards and mages who've familiars more powerful than they are. To represent this, the GM may allow Allies to be up to 200% of their point total, for 20 points.

## New Special Enhancements

*Special Abilities:* The **Basic Set** suggests this enhancement at the +50% level might allow your familiar to grant you abilities. *The Edge of Psience* (see *Pyramid* #3/29: *Psionics*, p. 21) proposes that Allies with this enhancement be allowed to deliver melee or touch attacks or act as the origination point of ranged abilities. Additionally, fiction is full of examples where "buffing" supernatural abilities affecting the master *also* affect the familiar or the master treats the familiar as "part" of his body; either instance is a version of Cosmic worth +50%.

## New Special Limitations

*Mind Bleed:* Whenever you or your ally critically fail an IQ, Will, Per, or other purely based "mental" attempt, roll 3d. On a 6 or less, the character who failed his rolls suffers from a sudden infusion of thoughts, memories, mental images, etc. pouring into his head. If the effects are mild, last for 2d seconds, and causes -2 on all skills for the duration, this is -5%. If the effects are severe, last for 1d *minutes*, and cause -5 on all skills for the duration, it's -10%. If the effects are crippling,

last for 3d minutes, and you cannot use any skills for the duration, it's -15%. This limitation becomes an *enhancement* for the Dependent disadvantage.

*Sympathy, Resistible:* Being able to *resist* the effects of this limitation with an HT roll drops the value to -15% if the death of one party reduces the other to 0 HP, while the death of one party automatically killing the other becomes -25%. Success at the HT roll means they're still conscious, but they suffer the effects of a Mortal Wound (p. B423). Critical success means you suffer no ill effects. At the GM's option, this limitation can become an *enhancement* for the Dependent disadvantage.

## Damage Resistance

see p. B46

At the GM's discretion, familiars who've been with the same master for a long time might be tougher thanks to their bond. If this is the case, the GM should allow familiars to have up to *twice* the normal DR of their racial template (minimum of DR 2). They should also be permitted to buy off the Flexible or Tough Skin limitations and add the No Signature (+20%) enhancement so their hide looks "normal." Additionally, the GM may allow them to purchase additional levels of Damage Resistance with Magical (-10%) up to whatever level he is comfortable with (one point per five levels of Path of Magic is suggested). Keep in mind that if using the optional rules for the Granted by Familiar limitation (p. 109), this decreases the limitation's value the higher the native DR of the familiar is. The GM may also allow a similar increase in HP, ignoring the usual cap of ±30%.

## EXAMPLE: SQUIRRELZILLA AND HERB

Herb the Green Sorcerer is particularly fond of nature, and likes squirrels in particular. Deciding to cast *Summon Familiar* (p. 103), he sets his sights on a squirrel. Once cast, a rather large squirrel comes out of the nearby woods and sits at Herb's feet. The bonding is complete. The GM uses the squirrel template (below), but increases IQ to 10; removes *Short Lifespan 4* and *Wild Animal*, and adds the *Familiar (Animal; Long-Lived)* meta-trait, for a total of 170 points (bringing *Squirrelzilla's* total cost to 29 points. Herb's player buys *Ally (Squirrelzilla; 25% of points; Constantly; Special Abilities, +50%)* [6] and *Familiar Master (Squirrelzilla)* [13], for 19 points total. This gives Herb a constant companion that he can project his spells through (p. 103), and access to an ER (*Mana Reserve*) of 5 (half his familiar's FP). Later on, Herb's player decides to purchase *Vibration Sense (Air)*, since he adds the *Granted by Familiar (-40%)* and *Magical (-10%)* limitations to this trait, it reduces the cost to 5 points – but his familiar must be nearby, and it doesn't work in no-mana zones.

### Squirrel

-141 points

Squirrels are small bushy-tailed rodents that tend to live in trees. Thanks to their ubiquitous appearance in rural, urban, and wilderness areas they make excellent spies and can scramble up trees and other rough surfaces quickly. Most squirrels are between 12" and 18" long (including the tail) and weigh between 1 to 2 lbs.

**Attribute Modifiers:** ST -8 [-80]; DX +2 [24\*]; IQ -6 [-120]; HT +1 [10].

**Secondary Characteristic Modifiers:** HP +2 [4]; Per +2 [10]; Basic Speed +0.50 [10]; SM -4.

**Advantages:** *Brachiator* [5†]; *Catfall* [10]; *Claws (Blunt)* [3]; *Combat Reflexes* [15]; *Clinging (Accessibility, Requires Claw-Holds, -30%)* [14]; *Double-Jointed* [15]; *Fur* [1]; *Night Vision 5* [5]; *Parabolic Hearing 1* [4]; *Sharp Teeth* [1]; *Super Climbing 1* [3]; *Terrain Adaptation (Uneven)* [5]; *Vibration Sense (Air; Based on Hearing)* [10].

**Disadvantages:** *Distractible* [-1]; *No Fine Manipulators* [-30]; *Semi-Upright* [-5]; *Short Lifespan 4* [-40]; *Wild Animal* [-30].

**Racial Skills:** *Acrobatics (H) DX* [2]-12‡; *Climbing (A) DX+6* [1]-18¶§; *Jumping (E) DX+2* [4]-14; *Stealth (A) DX+2* [8]-14; *Urban Survival or Survival (Woodlands) (A) Per+1* [4]-13.

**Features:** *Bushy Tail*; *Early Maturation 3* (matures at about 3 months).

\* Includes "No Fine Manipulators, -40%" limitation.

† This is less swinging from vine to vine and more jumping from branch to branch.

‡ Includes +1 from *Perfect Balance*.

¶ Includes +5 from *Double-Jointed*.

§ Includes +2 from *Brachiator*.

### Energy Reserve

see *Powers*, p. 119

The GM who doesn't want to use the *Drains Familiar* limitation (below), might consider having the familiar purchase *Energy Reserve (Affects Others (Master only, -80%), +10%; Area of Effect, 2 yards +50%)* [4.8/level] instead.

Optionally, *Energy Reserve (Mundane)* may be available. This trait can be used like FP to fuel athletics, martial feats, extra effort, and so on. Moreover, it can even be spent instead of reducing your FP for things like starvation, poison, etc., but you must decide to use it *before* you accept the FP loss. ER lost to special sources (e.g., FP lost from not eating) cannot be regained until the circumstances to restore them are met.

Even more optionally, the following variation of *Energy Reserve* might be available for certain games.

**Vitality Reserve:** As *Energy Reserve* is to FP, so *Vitality Reserve* is to HP. *Vitality Reserve* can be spent in place of any HP loss, including, but not limited to those lost from injury, disease, poison, radiation, extreme dehydration and starvation; from attacks ignoring DR or that drain HP (such as *Leech*, *GURPS Powers*, p. 96); to power spells, powers, or abilities; and so on. Lost VR never results in shock, knockdown, unconsciousness, or death. Lost VR regenerate 1 point per day on a successful HT roll regardless of conditions. 2/level.

### New Special Enhancement

**Drains Familiar:** Your ER draws upon the energy of your familiar. In addition to the effects of the *Granted by Familiar* limitation, every point of ER used drains 1 FP from your familiar (1 HP for a *Vitality Reserve*). This ER recharges at the same rate your familiar recovers FP; this means your ER does not recover while your familiar is unable to rest! -50%. If this draining is particularly "efficient," with the familiar losing 1 FP per 2 points of ER, this costs -40% instead. If your familiar loses 1 FP per 3 points of ER, this costs -30%. If this draining is more severe, and your familiar loses 2 FP per 1 point of ER, then this costs -60%. If it loses 3 FP per point, then this costs -70%. "Partial" FP count as full FP lost.

### Magic Resistance

see p. B67

In many stories, familiars are resistant to the magic of those who are *not* their master. Furthermore, their resistance seems to stem from their master's mastery of magic. To simulate this, familiars may purchase a number of levels of *Magic Resistance (Accessibility, Not against master, -20%; Improved, +150%)* [4.6/level] equal to *half* their master's highest Path skill.

Finally, some familiars might be able to do more than just resist magic – they might *eat* it.

## New Special Enhancements

**Spell Absorption:** Whenever a spell is cast on you, you can waive your bonus to resist from Magic Resistance and instead roll your unmodified resistance roll. The caster still gets a penalty equal to your MR. If the spell fails for whatever reason, you gain a number of character points equal to the spell's modified Fatigue Point cost to cast (e.g., reduced by high skill). You can these points to improve traits (anything but skills) temporarily or heal yourself. This functions exactly like Absorption for Damage Resistance (p. B46). +50%.

**Potent Resistance:** Your Magic Resistance is especially powerful. In addition to providing its normal benefits, it also provides a "passive-aggressive" defense that resists up to three effects that normal Magic Resistance doesn't: Missile spells are affected by your Magic Resistance if they are aimed in the hex you're in; magical weapons are affected (e.g., if a sword enchanted with +1 Puissance hits you, you would subtract your MR from the item's Endurance; if it reduced it to below 15, then that item wouldn't gain bonus damage); or information-gathering spells targeting something in your possession. +50% for one, +100% for two, +150% for all three.

## VARIANT MODIFIERS

The following ideas expand the Granted by Familiar limitation.

### Granted by Familiar

see p. B38

The GM who wants more detail on this limitation may use the following guidelines. Astute readers will notice they are similar to the limitations for gadgets.

### Vulnerable

Variable

Your foes can incapacitate your familiar. Once incapacitated, it will cease to grant you its benefits. Add the following elements together to find the final limitation value.

**Durability:** The easier the familiar is to harm, the greater the limitation. Decide on its DR: 2 or less is -20%, 3-5 is -15%, 6-15 is -10%, 16-25 is -5%, and 26 or higher is 0%. An insubstantial familiar gets 0% automatically. If the familiar's abilities cease merely because it's incapacitated (knocked out, mind-controlled, paralyzed, etc., but not killed), add another -5%.

**Curability:** You can normally heal a familiar like any other character. If you cannot, and it requires inconvenient time, effort, or expense to repair (like a golem) or resummon (like a demon who requires a sacrifice), it is worth an additional -15%.

**Visibility:** The familiar's Size Modifier and racial Stealth skill can allow it to hide, thereby avoiding harm while still aiding you. Subtract its Stealth skill from 10 (treating positive numbers as 0), add the difference to Size Modifier, and rate the sum as follows: -9 or less is 0%; -7 or -8 is -5%; -5 or -6 is -10%; -3 or -4 is -15%; -1 or -2 is -20%; and 0 or more -25%. An invisible familiar gets 0% automatically. For instance, a SM -3 house cat with racial Stealth 14 (10 - 14 = -4) would have a sum of -7, and give -5%.

### Can Be Abducted

Variable

Your foes can kidnap your familiar, depriving you of the contact you need to gain benefits from it. The value of the limitation depends on how much contact is required, as the more contact you need, the easier your familiar is to isolate from you:

- *Familiar must be touching you or in earshot or in line of sight or in telepathic contact with you:* -5%.
- *Two of the above conditions apply:* -10%.
- *Three of the above conditions apply:* -15%.
- *All of these conditions apply:* -20%.

### Unique

-25%

You may only take this limitation in conjunction with Vulnerable or Can Be Abducted. Normally, you can replace a dead or kidnapped familiar, although the GM may dock you earned points for abandoning an Ally. If the familiar is Unique, you *cannot* replace it! Character points spent for both Ally and any abilities it grants are lost for good if it's killed or otherwise permanently taken away.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christopher R. Rice's familiar is a raven, it's been coming around for about 15 years, but it's very lazy in its duties to its master – he feeds it anyway. From Portsmouth, Virginia, he dreams of being able to write full-time, or at least eke out a living doing it. He wishes to thank L.A., his own personal muse, as well as the rest of his gaming group, Antoni Ten Monrós, and Beth "Archangel" McCoy, the "Sith Editrix," for being most excellent sounding boards, and to Luke Camp for his help with the squirrel template. The familiars as "gadgets" and Vitality Reserve were created by Sean Punch on the Steve Jackson Games forums and has been used here with his permission. Additionally, he'd like to thank the Pyramid Write Club, but the first rule of Pyramid Write Club is "You do not talk about Pyramid Write Club."

*Harry now carried a large cage that held a beautiful snowy owl, fast asleep with her head under her wing.*

*– J.K. Rowling, Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*

# EIDETIC MEMORY

## EIGHT ARTIFACTS

BY DAVID L. PULVER

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

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

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

### GRYPHON'S SHAFT

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

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

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

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

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

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

It recovers 1 HP per hour when in arrow form.

### REAPER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## LOVELY ORB OF TYMOA

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

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

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

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

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

## THE SOUL DRUM OF NIKLOS THUNDERHAND

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## A BOTTLE OF WHITE DEATH

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

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

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

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

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

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

## White Death

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

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

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

**Skills:** Brawling-17.

## THE DRYAD'S SPEAR

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

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

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

## JARED'S POTION OF IMMORTALITY

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Duration:* Permanent

*Form:* Potion.

*Cost:* \$15,000.

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

*They got one of these  
artifacts for everything!*

*– Hayes, R.I.P.D.*

## FIRE WITCH'S UMBRELLA

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

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

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

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

## ABOUT THE COLUMNIST

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

# APPENDIX Z

# MORE CHARMS

BY ANTONI TEN MONRÓS

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

## ALCHEMICAL AMULETS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*New talismans to find or buy.*

## ALCHEMICAL TALISMANS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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

# MONSTERS

If I had to make a bet in 2008 over which kind of *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* article we'd have the most of after 100 issues of *Pyramid*, I probably would have said, "Monsters or monster-related pieces."

This is why I don't make my life as a professional gambler . . . because I would have been horribly wrong.

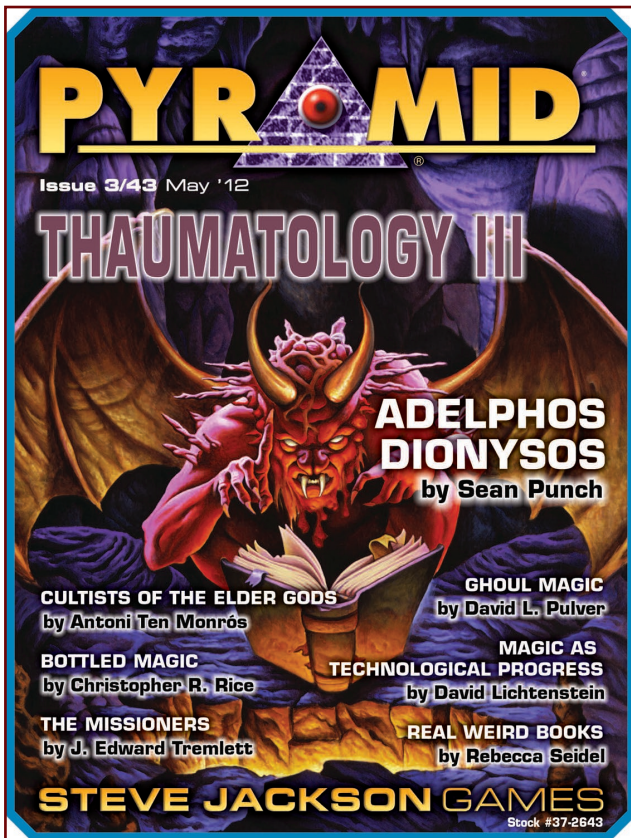
I'm not sure why. I love monsters, and – based on the popularity of critters in other games – there seems to be some demand for them . . . but our writers just haven't gravitated that way too often. (And, yes, this is a hint for any would-be writers looking for future ideas!)

Still, we have more than enough articles to fill out a meaty section devoted to sapient threats, including unearthly cultists (pp. 116-120), ninja (pp. 120-121), and psionic monsters

(pp. 129-132). And – in *Pyramid* tradition – these articles are thematically strong and rich enough to build a memorable encounter or adventure around.

There's also Christopher R. Rice's "It's a Threat!" – a robust article devoted to helping you calculate the strength and difficulty of an encounter. So there should be quite a bit in this section to keep the heroes on their toes.

None of the articles in this section draw upon any books that are outside the *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* canon, but you'll definitely want *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 14: Psi* nearby before tackling a couple of them. In fact, those encounters may be a great way to introduce psionic powers into a campaign that has previously been devoid of any such mental might . . .



*The more monsters the GM has to draw on, the more variety adventures can have.*

*– GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 3: Born of Myth and Magic*

# CULTISTS OF THE ELDER GODS

BY ANTONI TEN MONRÓS

*Dungeon Fantasy 14: Psi* proposes that psionics are what happens when Elder Things grant Power Investiture (see *The Horrible Truth*, *Dungeon Fantasy 14*, p. 38). However, it's traditional that cultists of the Elder Things come with the trappings of spellcasters – grimoires, rituals, etc. This article aims to create a variant cleric, following the pattern set by *Dungeon Fantasy 7: Clerics*. It employs, however, a lot of information from *Dungeon Fantasy 14* on the actual workings of psi, as that's the form elder gifts take.

Worshippers of the Elder Gods are always shunned by all civilized societies. It doesn't help that their exposure to Things Man Was Not Meant To Know gives them mental scars that make them unfit for even the most menial job. Witch hunts are often organized to flush out idolaters, destroy their places of worship, and try to erase even the memory of their existence. Still, new cults always rise in the fringes of society, often when an individual with psionic potential has it spontaneously manifest, giving him a look at Beyond. This severely scars his mind, and, in an effort to rationalize it, he will often think of it as a divine revelation. Thus, a new cult is born. The cults that last the longest are the ones that learn to keep their activities secret.

If temples to the Elder Gods exist, they are carefully hidden. Often in dark underground chambers, they are accessible only through a complicated route through sewers or ruins beneath a city. That is, your typical dungeon.

It is interesting to note that Elder Gods don't need, want, or value worship. The powers they grant are often incidental to their nature, or simply a way to weaken the barriers between this world and Outside Time and Space, and gain a foothold in this reality. This means that they don't impose any kind of behavior on their followers. Anyone who elects to leave the cult can do so, with no further consequences than being hunted by Things that make your worst nightmares look tame (but having psionic powers already meant that), and by crazed cultists that seek the end of the world (but being an adventurer, you should already be used to that).

## ELDER GODS AND MORALITY

While technically evil, in the sense that they want the destruction of this world, Elder Things powerful enough to be considered gods are mainly *alien*, other, insane, and amoral. Their designs are inscrutable, and those who try to understand them have their minds shattered by the experience. In fact,

they aren't part of the good/evil dichotomy. Instead, they are opposed to life, making them opposite to Nature. They are also often opposed to one another.

*There was a darkness  
outside reality, they say –  
a darkness full of things.  
Hungry, nasty things with  
no shape or form, not as  
long as they were out there.*

– Kurt Busiek,  
“Storms of the  
Heart,” *Astro City*

## ELEMENTS

Elder Gods should always have the new element Elder as their main element. Chaos, Deception, Darkness, Death, Disease, and Fear are suitable secondary options.

## SPECIAL POWERS

The powers of the Elder Gods are psionic in nature, and so take the Psi power modifier. They are not affected by sanctity or mana. They don't require a specific disadvantage to act as a Pact. Spells granted by them cost an extra FP to cast (and this increase in cost should be factored into maintenance costs, where applicable). The spells also have a chance to attract psionic dangers.

The gods don't grant Holy or Unholy abilities. Instead, they offer Psionic abilities and psi perks, as per *Dungeon Fantasy 14*. When a Psionic Ability has Psionic Talent as a prerequisite, add Power Investiture (Elder) at the same level as an alternate prerequisite.

## Servitors of Elder Things?

If Elder Things have creatures similar to the Divine Servitors presented in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 5: Allies*, they either “serve” due to being offered suitable sacrifices, or are simply bound by the summoner’s psionic abilities.

Add Ally (Elder Servitor; Built on 100%; 12 or less; Conjured\*, +100%; Immediate Preparation Required, 10 minutes, -45%; Minion, Requires Quick Contest of the summoner’s Will vs. the Will of the summoned creature, +45%; Psionic, -10%) [19] or (15 or less) [29] to the available advantages for both clerics of the Elder Gods and unholy warriors of the Elder Gods. Summoning the creature requires a 10-minute ritual, which creates a starfish-shaped construct body out of ectoplasm for a greater power from Beyond to inhabit.

Once – and if – it appears, it must be either bound to serve, via a Quick Contest of the summoner’s Will plus Psionic Talent or Power Investiture (Elder), or negotiated with. Make a reaction roll for the creature, ignoring all normal bonuses and penalties. Influence skills cannot be used. The only ways to obtain bonuses is to forgo the chance to bind the creature with a Quick Contest, for +3, and to offer sacrifices: a healthy animal grants +1, while a living, sentient being grants +4. On a “Good” or better reaction, the creature will serve the summoner; otherwise, it will attack instantly!

Each summoning brings a new creature. Should it die, the summoner can try again after one day. If the creature does not rebel, the construct body is maintained by the summoner’s psi and requires that it spend 1 FP per minute to maintain it. This can draw the attention from other Things From Beyond, in the same manner as a maintained elder cultist spells (pp. 118-119).

There are rumors of blasphemous tomes whose mind-shattering incantations provide bonuses to either the Will contest, or to the reaction roll, but no sane person believes them . . .

\* A variant Summonable, found in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 9: Summoners* (p. 4).

*Servitors provide assistance because of suitable sacrifices or the summoner’s psionic abilities.*

### *Thing From Beyond (+0 points)*

Remove Blessed [-10], the Holy Might moral code [10], Dependency [25] and the five quirks [5]. Add +2 HT [20], +2 Will [10], Double Jointed [15], Extra Arm (Foot Manipulator, -30%) [7], Extra Legs (Three Legs) [5], Psionic Talent 6 [30], Unusual Background (Psionic) [10], Fragile (Unnatural) [-50], Invertebrate [-20], No Fine Manipulators [-30], Semi-Upright [-5], and Climbing (A) DX+5 [2]-17\*.

Modify the ST and DX bonus with No Fine Manipulators, -40% [-24]. Change Hidden Lore to (Elder Things). Change class to Elder Thing. You must also add Horrific, but inflicting Confusion†, instead of Terror. Telepathic is very common. Thing From Beyond cannot be combined with Unholy or Natural.

\* Includes +5 from Double Jointed.

† A variant on Terror from *GURPS Powers* (p. 84). Those without *Powers* can treat this as Terror, with the reactions coming from seeing Things Man Was Not Meant To Know instead of fear.

Divine servitors are also balanced under the assumption that they would take either the Good, Evil, or Nature divine elements. Divine Servitors of the Elder Gods should take the Elder divine element.

### *Elder Servitor*

The servitor draws power from Beyond Space and Time. Such connection is inimical to life; plants and small animals wither and die with its touch. This power can be used to levitate, manipulate small objects at a range, deliver powerful bolts of concussive force, and detect other users of psi. (See the write-ups in *Dungeon Fantasy 14*, pp. 5-14, for more ideas.)

A doubly elder servitor can take one “free” maneuver to use any of its psi abilities. This allows it to perform any maneuver and still fire Psychokinetic Lashes, levitate, or hold items with Telekinesis. It can even fire Psychokinetic Lashes while holding items with Telekinesis or levitating! However, its presence creates a significant ripple in the barriers between this world and Elsewhere. This attracts Things, and increases the chances that psionic dangers manifest to 9 or less, as if such dangers were already present in the environment.

Elder requires that the servitor is a Thing From Beyond.

### *Elder*

**Advantages:** Gazer [1]; Psychic Sensitivity 2 [18]; Psychic Terror [1]; and Psychokinetic Lash 6 [29], with Telekinesis 8 [6] and Levitation 3 [6] as Alternate Abilities.

**Disadvantages:** Callous [-5]; Lifebane [-10]

**Skills:** Hidden Lore (Psionics) (A) IQ [2]-12; Innate Attack (Gaze) (E) Per+7 [2]-19\*.

\* Includes +6 from Psionic Talent.

### *Elder (Doubled)*

As above, plus:

**Secondary Characteristics:** HP+5 (No Fine Manipulators, -40%) [6].

**Advantages:** Energy Reserve (Psionic) 3 [9]; Second Nature [45].

**Disadvantages:** Weirdness Magnet (Increased chances of psychic phenomena) [-15].

We shall see that at which  
dogs howl in the dark, and  
that at which cats prick up  
their ears after midnight.

– H.P. Lovecraft

## PRIESTS OF THE ELDER GODS

For priests of these deities, use the standard cleric template (*Dungeon Fantasy 1*, p. 6) with the following lens applied.

### Elder Cleric

+0 points

**Advantages:** All Power Investiture, basic or added, becomes Power Investiture (Elder). ● Replace Clerical Investment with Unusual Background (Psionic). ● Instead of 25 points in Holy abilities, take 20 points in Psionic Talent, Psionic abilities, and psi perks [-5]. ● In the advantage options, replace Fearlessness [2/level] or Unfazeable [15] and Resistant to Disease (+3) or (+8) [3 or 5], with Animal Empathy [5], Danger Sense [15], Eidetic Memory [5] or Photographic Memory [10], Magic Resistance [2/level], Resistant to Psionics [2/level], and Spirit Empathy [10].

**Disadvantages:** Replace this entire section with: Social Stigma (Excommunicated) [-10]. ● Replace the disadvantages options with the disadvantages list of the mentalist (see *Dungeon Fantasy 14*, p. 16).

**Skills:** Replace Esoteric Medicine (Holy) (H) Per [4]-14 with Hidden Lore (Elder Things) (A) IQ+1 [4]-15. ● Replace Hidden Lore (Demons, Spirits or Undead) (A) IQ-1 [1]-13 and Theology (H) IQ-2 [1]-12 with Hidden Lore (Psi) (A) IQ [2]-14. ● Replace Public Speaking and Teaching, both (A) IQ-1 [1]-13, and Religious Ritual (H) IQ-2 [1]-12 with three of Detect Lies (H) Per-2 [1]-12; Hypnotism or Psychology, both (H) IQ-2 [1]-12; Mental Strength (E) Will [1]-14, and Mind Block (A) Will-1 [1]-13. ● Replace First Aid (E) IQ [1]-14, Diagnosis (H) IQ-2 [1]-12, and Surgery (VH) IQ-2 [2]-12 with Interrogation (A) IQ [2]-14 and Intimidation (A) Will [2]-14.

**Spells:** All spells must come from *Elder Cultist Spells* (below).

## ELDER CULTIST SPELLS

Followers of the Elder Gods have the following spells available. The spells use the same disciplines as the Psi abilities, and as with the Psi abilities, the divisions are only for convenience. Some new spells

work like existing spells, only affecting psi instead of magic. (See the note in *Opposing Forces*, *Dungeon Fantasy 14*, p. 29.)

Being psionic in nature, elder cultist spells work by siphoning power from beyond time and space, in a manner similar to how clerics of more normal gods manifest the power of their deities as their spells. Like normal clerics, they are unaffected by mana levels.

Some very important differences exist. Foremost, sanctity has no meaning for Elder Things. Worse, opening a channel to Elsewhere by psionic means requires more energy. (Increase the cost of all spells by 1, and factor that into maintenance cost. This is a flat increase, and so is not multiplied for area, and similar, spells.) Finally, normal countermeasures that protect against spells have no effect against elder magics, as only elder magic can counter elder magic. (If the GM decides to allow the “College of Psionics,” found in *Opposing Forces*, *Dungeon Fantasy 14*, p. 29, then those spells can counter these spells.) Magic Resistance is of no use; only Resistance to Psionics will protect someone against them.

Unfortunately, this also means that psionic dangers are drawn to elder spells as they are drawn to other psionic abilities. (See the *Psionic Power Modifier* in *Dungeon Fantasy 14*, p. 5.) In fact, each time an elder cultist spell is maintained, a psionic danger might manifest. Since the channel has been open for some time already, the odds rise to 9 or less, instead of 6 or less. In a locale where psionic dangers are already present, this becomes a 12 or less!

**PI 1: Anti-Psi:** Conceal Psi (works as Conceal Magic), Counterpsi (works as Counterspell), Scryguard, and Ward. **ESP:** Aura, Detect Psi (works as Detect Magic), Psi Sense (works as Mage Sense), Seek Psi (works as Seek Magic), and Sense Danger. **Psychokinesis:** Apportation, Armor, Deflect Missile, Extinguish Fire, Ignite Fire, Poltergeist, Shield, and Warmth. **Telepathy:** Daze, Fear, Panic, Sense Foes, and Sense Life.

**PI 2: Anti-Psi:** Great Ward and Scrywall. **ESP:** Analyze Psi (works as Analyze Magic), Identify Psi Ability (works as Identify Spell), Pathfinder, Seeker, Sense Observation, and Watchdog. **Psychokinesis:** Catch Missile, Create Fire, Deflect Energy, Fireproof, Flight, Gloom, Hold Fast, Levitation, Locksmith, Manipulate, Restore, Shade, Shape Fire, Slow Fall, and Winged Knife. **Telepathy:** Command, Fascinate, Hide Emotion, Hide Thoughts, Lend Language, Madness, Mass Daze, Mental Stun, Mindlessness, Persuasion, Sense Emotion, Sleep, Soul Rider, Truthsayer, and Vexation.

### Elder Saints?

Evil clerics have the evil saint lens available (*Dungeon Saints*, Pyramid #3/36: *Dungeon Fantasy*, p. 9), which represents a closer relationship with their deities. Clerics of the Elder Gods can also “benefit” from a more direct contact with their deities. Apply the same lens to turn a cleric of the Elder Gods into an Elder Saint, with the following changes: Divine Favor becomes a Psionic ability instead of a Divine Ability, and you must come up with appropriate Learned Prayers for it. Psionic abilities are a given, but you will need many more. On the *Psionic Abilities* table (*Dungeon Fantasy 14*, p. 12), read Cost (Alt.) as Learned Prayer Cost.

**PI 3:** *Anti-Psi:* Catch Psi Abilities (works as Catch Spell) and False Aura. *ESP:* Ancient History, History, Prehistory, Projection, and Trace. *Psychokinesis:* Fast Fire, Fireball, Flame Jet, Hawk Flight, Invisibility, Lightning, and Resist Lightning. *Telepathy:* Borrow Language, Borrow Skill, Compel Lie, Compel Truth, Control Person, Dispel Possession, Ecstasy, Emotion Control, Hallucination, Lend Skill, Mind-Search, Nightmare, Possession, Suggestion, and Telepathy.

**PI 4:** *Anti-Psi:* Psi Resistance (works as Magic Resistance), Psi Shield (works as Spell Shield), Psi Wall (works as Spell Wall), Reflect, and Suspend Psi (works as Suspend Magic). *Psychokinesis:* Ball of Lightning, Explosive Fireball, and Shocking Touch. *Telepathy:* Charm, Communication, False Memory, Great Hallucination, Insignificance, Lesser Geas, Mass Sleep, Mass Suggestion, Mind-Reading, Mind-Sending, and Presence.

**PI 5:** *Anti-Psi:* Dispel Psi (works as Dispel Magic), Psiguard (works as Spellguard), Remove Aura, Remove Curse, and Steal Psi (works as Steal Spell). *Psychokinesis:* Evisceration. *Telepathy:* Enslave and Greater Geas.

**PI 6:** *Anti-Psi:* Drain Psi Talent (works as Drain Magery), Suspend Psi Ability (works as Suspend Magery), and Suspend Psi Talent (works as Suspend Magery). *Telepathy:* Exchange Bodies.

*Men have called me mad;  
but the question is not yet  
settled, whether madness is or  
is not the loftiest intelligence –  
whether much that is glorious  
– whether all that is profound –  
does not spring from disease of  
thought – from moods of mind  
exalted at the expense of  
the general intellect.*

– Edgar Allen Poe,  
“Eleonora”

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Antoni Ten is a IT specialist, database administrator and Java and web developer from Alboraya, Valencia, Spain. He’s seriously thinking about jumping into Android development, and dreams of writing a full-length book for Steve Jackson Games in the future. He has gamed for over 15 years, and now has two regular gaming groups.

He wishes to thank Christopher R. “Ghostdancer” Rice, José Antonio “demonsbane” Estarellas, and Emily “Bruno” Smirle for acting as his sounding boards, and proofreading this and many other articles.

The spell list under *Elder Cultist Spells* took heavy inspiration from *Eidetic Memory: Magic as Psi*, by David L. Pulver, found in *Pyramid* #3/29: *Psionics*.

## Unholy Warriors of the Elder Gods

Elder cults always need enforcers. Where clerics of the Elder Gods serve as the spiritual arm of the cult, warriors of the Elder Gods serve as its armed fist. However, the prolonged exposure to Things Man Was Not Meant To Know often twists them, making them resemble the things they draw power from. Some are sent away from the congregations, often for inscrutable purposes, and sometimes they join adventuring parties, while they wait for further orders. Some even leave the cult (or so they believe), and try to fight the Things they once served.

To create a warrior of the Elder Gods, start with the standard holy warrior template, and apply the following lens.

### Elder Warrior

+0 points

**Advantages:** Replace Higher Purpose (Slay Demons or Slay Undead) and Born War Leader with Unusual Background (Psionics). • Replace Holiness, basic or added, with Psionic Talent. • Replace the Shtick (Foes slain personally can’t rise as undead) perk with any psi perk from *Psionic Perks*, *Dungeon Fantasy 14* (p. 14). • Replace all points in Holy abilities with an equal

amount of points in Psionic Abilities and psi perks. • In advantage options, replace Born War Leader [5/level], Resistant to Disease (+3) or (+8) [3 or 5], and Resistant to Poison (+3) [5] with Animal Empathy [5], Charisma 1-5 [5/level], Danger Sense [15], Empathy, Intuition [5], Resistant to Psionics [2/level], Serendipity [15] and Spirit Empathy [10]. • Optional Higher Purpose has to be “Slay Elder Things.”

**Disadvantages:** Add Appearance (Unattractive, Ugly, or Hideous†) [-4, -8, or -16], Delusion (“Elder Things are my friends”) [-10], Frightens Animals [-10], No Sense of Humor [-10], Paranoia [-10], Unnatural Features 1-5 [1/level], Weirdness Magnet [-15], and Xenophilia [-10\*] to the second list of disadvantage options.

**Skills:** Replace Exorcism with Hidden Lore (Psionics) (A) IQ [2]-12. • Replace Hidden Lore (Demons or Undead) with Hidden Lore (Elder Things). • Replace Religious Ritual and Theology with two more points in background skills. • Add Detect Lies (H) Per-2 [1]-10; Hypnotism (H) IQ-2 [1]-10; Mental Strength (E) Will [1]-14; and Mind Block (A) Will-1 [1]-13 to the list of background skills.

† Take one less quirk if you take this disadvantage.

# HORDE NINJA

BY PETER V. DELL'ORTO

I've written about ninja, monsters, and henchmen for the *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* line, but I never really had a chance to sit down and mash them all together until all of those supplements were out.

Historical ninja were complex masters of the martial arts. They would have had access to a broad and well-developed fighting style (such as *Taijutsu*, *GURPS Martial Arts*, p. 202), probably never wore the famous "ninja suit" (which seems to have developed from stage costumes, not history), and were more special agents and spies than assassins-for-hire. *Fantasy* ninja invert all of those facts! They have a simple style mostly centered on cool weapons, *always* wear a ninja suit, and are assassins who may dabble in spying when they aren't flipping out and killing monsters. The ninja in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 12: Ninja* embrace this portrayal whole-heartedly.

But even that supplement misses a trick developed in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy: Monsters 1* – the ninja-as-monster. Combining that format with the lower-powered ninja wannabes of *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 15: Henchmen* allows for the ninja of some fantasy treatments: black-clad assassins who come in hordes and who are slain by PCs in epic battles. These are the Horde Ninja.

## Peeking Under the Hood

Horde Ninja are based on the killer template (*Henchmen*, p. 14), but with access to the capabilities of the full-fledged ninja template (*Ninja*, p. 8). They lack the training in secret skills needed for *true* mastery of *ninjitsu*, but they do have some special abilities – notably those for dropping in from above and launching dangerous surprise attacks!

## HORDE NINJA

Ninja are either singular bosses, worthy of respect and fear, or they're like these guys. These are the *genin*-level ninja: the first tier of their clan. They come in large numbers – usually in the range of a dozen or more, up to scores if faced with sufficiently powerful targets. Horde Ninja wear black ninja suits, carry a variety of ninja weapons, and will stoically face death before accepting dishonor.

They aren't stupid, foolish, or suicidal (well, not exactly). They work well together, and use clever ninja tactics such as stalking, ambush, and surprise. Not only that, but they get more dangerous as you cut them down . . . see *The Last Ninja* (p. 121).

**ST:** 11      **HP:** 11      **Speed:** 6.50  
**DX:** 14      **Will:** 10      **Move:** 6  
**IQ:** 10      **Per:** 10  
**HT:** 12      **FP:** 12      **SM:** 0  
**Dodge:** 9      **Parry:** 10 (Karate or weapon)      **DR** 0

**Fukumi-bari (14):** 1d-5 small piercing. Acc 0, Range 5, RoF 1, Shots 1 (1). Usually poisoned!

**Punch (15):** 1d crushing. Reach C.

**Kick (13):** 1d+1 crushing. Reach 1. If the kick misses or is parried, the ninja must roll DX or fall down.

**Shuriken (16):** 1d-3 impaling. Acc 1, Range 5/11, RoF 1, Shots T(1).

**Weapon (15):** One of *kusurigama* (1d+3 cutting, Reach 1, 2\* or 1d+3 crushing, Reach 1, 2\*; Parry -2U; parried at -4, blocked at -2; may entangle or disarm if parried, see p. B406); *ninjato* (1d+1 cutting or 1d impaling, Reach 1); *sai* (1d+1 crushing or 1d-1 impaling, Reach 1); or *tonfa* (1d+1 crushing, Reach 1 or 1d-1 crushing, Reach C, 1).

**Traits:** Catfall; Higher Purpose 5 (Avenge my fellows!); Killing Strike 1; Night Vision 3; Ninja Talent 1; No Sense of Humor; Odious Personal Habit (Inscrutable); Striking ST 2 (Only on surprise attack); Vow (Always complete the mission); Vow (Ninja Secrecy); Vow (Own no more than what can be carried).

**Skills:** Blowpipe-14; Karate-15; Poisons-10; Stealth-15; Thrown Weapon (Shuriken)-16; and one of Axe/Mace-15 and Kusari-15, Jitte/Sai-15, Shortsword-15, or Tonfa-15.

**Class:** Mundane.

*Failure to do so after one full adventure means that his clan will send ninja equal in number and power to the miscreant and his allies, plus a master with 50% more points, to kill him, his would-be student, and anybody else they deem an accessory.*

– *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 12: Ninja*



**Notes:** See *Ninja* for ninja-specific traits and *The Last Ninja* (see below) to understand the Higher Purpose. Killing Strike 1 means the first attack with a specific weapon does +1 damage if swung (thrust is unchanged), while the Striking ST improves damage for surprise attacks: +1 for thrusts, +(1d-2) for swings. These bonuses stack – so a surprise first attack with a kusarigama would do 2d+2 cutting instead of 1d+3! Weapons are sometimes poisoned, generally with monster drool (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 1: Adventurers*, p. 29). Won't negotiate, but may utter cryptic remarks or sinister threats, or pronounce clever *haiku*. Notable equipment includes fukumi-bari (\$5, 0.1 lb.), ninja suit (\$150, 2 lbs.), 10 shuriken (\$30, 1 lb.), and *one* of kusarigama (\$80, 4.5 lbs.), ninja-to (\$400, 2 lbs.), sai (\$60, 1.5 lbs.), or tonfa (\$40, 1.5 lbs.).

## Horde Ninja Tactics

Horde ninja are basically fodder, but they aren't your standard, stupid fodder. They won't simply charge delvers and engage in a straight-up fight. They will attack from ambush whenever possible, using Stealth and all available cover and shadow to Backstab (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons*, p. 11). In a shadowy forest or dungeon corridor, their Stealth-15 gives them a 15 or less to get into position to backstab (base -5, +5 for ambushing). Doing so will let them take advantage of their Striking ST.

Remember that the first strike with a given weapon gains the bonus from Killing Strike; ninja who switch weapons (or attack with pairs of weapons) can take advantage of it once for each weapon. Their Night Vision allows them to see all the way out to the dim edges of torchlight with no penalty, and they'll use that by attacking from the darkness against light-bearing adventurers.

Horde ninja will work together in concert. They'll sacrifice non-ninja allies (and occasionally, some of their own number) to draw the attention of delvers and then attempt to Backstab and fade away. They'll use hit-and-run tactics to try to pick off stragglers or beat down opponents over time. If pursued or tightly pressed, some of them will sacrifice themselves to distract, slow down, or otherwise impede pursuit. They are fodder only in their individual weakness, and they'll use poisons, stealth, and tactics to defeat delvers. They know their power only grows as you take them out, and they'll leverage *that* in every encounter. Their Vow to complete the mission means they may make a tactical retreat . . . but until they succeed or they're slain, they'll be back.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Peter V. Dell'Orto of New Jersey was started gaming with *Dungeons & Dragons* in 1981, and has played *GURPS* since *Man to Man*. He has been writing, editing, and playtesting *GURPS* books since 1996. Peter is the author of numerous *GURPS* articles for *Pyramid* magazine; author or co-author of several Warehouse 23 items (including *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 12: Ninja*; *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1* and *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 15: Henchmen*, both with Sean Punch; and *GURPS Martial Arts: Gladiators*, with Volker Bach); and a co-author of *GURPS Martial Arts* and *GURPS Low-Tech*. He is also an enthusiastic martial artist, and has competed both in Japan in amateur MMA and in the United States in submission grappling. He currently trains Kachin Bando and holds a shodan rank in Kendo. His other interests include fitness, reading, painting miniatures, and studying Japanese.

## The Last Ninja

It's well known that the more ninja there are, the less of an individual threat they pose. Fifty ninja aren't individually tough, but a lone ninja? Beware! It's the most dangerous one! As you whittle down their numbers, they get better and better. Whether through hidden talents, learning from the mistakes of the slain, or the whims of fate, the weakest die and the survivors get stronger.

Ninja may have up to five levels of Higher Purpose (Avenge my fellows!) [5/level]. In a "horde" of 10 or more ninja, this gives a bonus to all rolls made when battling foes who've incapacitated the ninja's allies. This bonus accrues gradually.

Divide the level by the number of ninja in the group. For each ninja taken out, assess this as a bonus to the remaining ninja, dropping all fractions. But the last ninja *always* gets the full bonus! For instance, if 10 ninja have five levels apiece, each ninja eliminated gives the others +0.5, so defeating one ninja (+0.5) does nothing; dropping two or three (+1 or +1.5) gives +1; taking out four or five (+2 or +2.5), +2; thrashing six or seven (+3 or +3.5), +3; wiping out eight, +4; and if nine go down, the last ninja has +5, not

+4. If the group had less than 10 ninja originally, this trait has no effect!

Downed ninja needn't be dead. They may be hopelessly entangled, forced to flee in fear, unconscious, petrified, or otherwise removed from the fight. What matters is that a given ninja's allies at the start of the fight aren't able to assist him. Later reinforcements during the battle don't change this! If combat ends, though, base the bonus on the new group size at the start of the next skirmish.

Ninja PCs can have this trait, too, specifically as "Avenge my fellow delvers!" In this case, apply the bonus to the ninja as his allies fall. This still requires nine or more allies before it has any effect. The GM may wish to limit the bonus further, allowing it only for fallen *ninja* (in which case NPC ninja allies and henchmen should count) or requiring those with this trait to have a Sense of Duty that includes fellow delvers. Only a munchkin would take a big horde of allies and sacrifice them to get a bonus . . . but for some games, that fits!

In all cases, record the thresholds where bonuses change ahead of time for hordes (or parties of PCs).

# IT'S A THREAT!

BY CHRISTOPHER R. RICE

Calculating effective combat encounters with a points-based system can be difficult. It takes time and practice for any GM to accurately match a group of opponents with the player characters. *GURPS Monster Hunters 3: The Enemy* has notes for each monster entry on what sort of challenge it provides. This article offers a similar framework for *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*, including guidelines for gauging newly

created obstacles and ones in previous publications. Matt Riggsby originally created the N system in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Adventure 1: Mirror of the Fire Demon*. This article's system borrows from that concept.

This system provides guidelines, not hard-and-fast rules. Balancing encounters is an art, not a science.

## DANGER IS A GO, DELVER!

Since *Dungeon Fantasy* uses a specific starting point total, determining how much of a hazard a particular monster poses is easy – with the right guidelines.

### COMBAT MONSTERS

Use the following methodology to determine the *Combat Effectiveness Rating* (CER) of player characters and their combat-useful allies. CER is derived from two subunits: *Offensive Rating* (OR), which represents how much damage a character can dish out; and *Protective Rating* (PR), which measures how much damage he can take.

Combine OR and PR scores to generate the adventurer's CER. Minimum score is always 1. Thus, the party's knight, Lady Ion the Shy (used in the examples below), has a Protective Rating of 21 and an Offensive Rating of 24, so her CER is 45. Once you've calculated the CER for all player characters and any allies who are useful in combat (animal companions, servitors, etc.), add together all their CER scores. This is a given party's total CER and is used to determine how much of a threat a given group of monsters is to them (see pp. 32-33).

This same system is also used to determine a monster's CER. See p. 31 for more details on this.

### Determining Offensive Rating

The Offensive Rating (OR) is based on five traits.

#### Attack Skill

Take the skill level for the hero's best attack and subtract 10. For ranged attacks, add a bonus equal to the Accuracy+2 of the attack; for *innate* ranged attacks, assume Acc 3 if none is listed. Add 5 *per attack* after the first if he can perform multiple attacks – other than a Rapid Strike (p. B370) – due to an advantage or power-up (e.g., Extra Attack or Two-Weapon Fighting). If he's capable of *multiple* Rapid Strikes, use the following formula instead: (adjusted skill for number of rapid strikes for attack - 10; minimum of 12) × number of

attacks. Add a cumulative +3 for Heroic Archer, Trained by a Master, and Weapon Master. Add any bonuses from *Rapid Fire* (p. B373). If an attack hits automatically, add 15; do not add this for attacks that require another attack to hit first!

*Example:* Lady Ion has a Broadsword skill of 17, so 17 - 10 = 7. Since she has no extra attacks, she uses her base score.

#### Affliction

Delvers with an attack mimicking an irritating or incapacitating condition (pp. B428-429) add a value equal to 1/5 of its worth as an enhancement to Affliction (pp. B35-36). Do this once for the *costliest* such Affliction. If an attack inflicts damage *and* an Affliction, use the higher of the damage value *or* the value of the Affliction, plus 1/5 of the lower value. For Terror, True Faith with Turning, and similar traits, add 1 per 5 character points the attack has in such traits (rounding up). For Binding, add its ST as a bonus amount. In both cases, these values are in addition to any other Affliction attacks. If the best attack is from a spell or similar FP-using ability, divide the final score by two.

*Example:* Lady Ion has the Kiai skill; Stunning is worth +10% as an Affliction, but it costs FP to use, we halve this amount. This gives her an additional 1 to her OR.

#### Damage

Take the number of dice of damage for the character's best damage type of his best attack (including follow-up or linked damage) and multiply it by 3.5, rounding up. If the attack has a modifier, like "2d+1" or "3d-2," add or subtract the modifier (e.g., +1 or -2) to the score. Damage can be from a weapon, spell, special ability, and so on. Multiply this amount by any bonus to skill from *Rapid Fire* (p. B373) *plus* one, rounding up if necessary. Include bonuses for equipment, traits, etc. Further modify this by the damage's type: multiply by 0.5 for small piercing attacks, by 1.5 for cutting or large piercing attacks, and by 2 for corrosion, fatigue, huge piercing, or impaling attacks; round up.

## SOCIAL THREATS?

"Who goes first?"

"Wait! The bard wants to talk to it."

"Wha-?"

So what happens when the players don't want to kill the monster you've so carefully written up, but talk to it instead? Well, you can let them do that and reuse the encounter via a not-so-carefully orchestrated Quantum Ogre, or you could simply adjust the meaning of an "encounter." For the GM who doesn't mind the occasional "talky-peacenik-hippy" approach, use the following guidelines to determine a "social" version CER for monsters and delvers.

- *Influence*: Take the best of Diplomacy, Fast-Talk, Intimidation, Savoir-Faire, Sex Appeal, or Streetwise, and subtract 10. If a character lacks any of these skills, use the *worst* default. Alternatively, use your base reaction bonus if better (which may be the case for nymph bards!). This is the character's Offensive Rating (Social).

- *Influence Resistance*: Take the character's effective Will score and subtract 10. Include +8 for each of Indomitable and Unfazeable. Add *half* the levels of Fearlessness. Apply +5 if a monster's entry lists the creature as "Unwilling to negotiate." Alternatively, see the box *Ridiculous Reactions* (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 11: Power-Ups*, p. 21) and treat the penalties listed there as bonuses. Those with the Detect Lies or Body Language skills may substitute their Will-based skill instead of their base Will, if higher. This is the character's Protective Rating (Social).

Tally this as you would CER, but record it separately; e.g., "CER 40 (Social)." As with hazards, the actions of a single PC could be enough to neutralize the encounter, so compare the party's best CER (Social) vs. the opposition's.

Add 0.5 to this modifier if the attack is also explosive, or 1 if it's a "vampiric" attack. Attacks with Armor Divisors add 5 per "step" (i.e., Armor Divisor 3 would add 10). Attacks with cycles get a bonus equal to the damage total after adjustments multiplied by the number of cycles affecting the target within 15 one-second turns of combat, rounded up (e.g., an acid spider, *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons*, p. 21, would score 20 for damage). If the best attack is from a spell or similar FP-using ability, divide the final score by two.

*Example*: Lady Ion's best attack is 2d+2 cutting, thanks to her fine broadsword. This is calculated as 9 (the dice of damage plus modifier)  $\times$  1.5 (for cutting damage) = 13.5, rounded up to 14.

### Fatigue Points

Take the maximum number of FP the character has and subtract 10. Add any bonus FP gained from special abilities (e.g., Energy Reserve) or equipment *after* subtracting 10. Add 1 per 5 character points (rounded up) for traits that enhance FP recovery, but only if they can recover FP within a span of 15 one-second combat rounds, rounded up. Ignore this for beings with an FP of "N/A."

*Example*: Lady Ion has 13 FP, so  $13 - 10 = 3$ .

### Move

Take the delver's best Move score and subtract six. For delvers with Enhanced Move or similar mobility-enhancing traits, use their *highest* Move score for this purpose. If the delver is encumbered, use his *modified* Move.

*Example*: Lady Ion has a Move of 7, but she's just under Medium encumbrance so her modified Move is 5, so  $5 - 6 = -1$ .

### Total

Add together the numbers derived from the previous characteristics to determine OR. Thus, Lady Ion has an Offensive Rating of  $7 + 1 + 14 + 3 - 1$ , or 24.

## Determining Protective Rating

The Protective Rating (PR) is based on five traits.

### Active Defense

Take the character's Dodge *minus* eight, and multiply by two. You may substitute your *best* Parry *minus* eight, but only if it's higher than your Dodge. If you can parry multiple times without penalty (usually because you have two weapons or are parrying unarmed), add 2 for each additional parry. Add 1 if Trained by a Master or Weapon Master applies to this Parry. You may also substitute your Block *minus* eight, but only if it's higher than your Dodge. For Block, add 1 for Weapon Master (Shield). Treat Blocking spells as a Block for the purposes of this calculation. Factor into the total any DB (from shields, magic rings, etc.). In all cases, add 20 per level for Altered Time Rate.

*Example*: Lady Ion has Dodge 9 and Broadsword Parry 12, so  $2 \times (9 - 8) = 2$  and  $12 - 8 = 4$ . Since her Parry is higher, we use that.

### Damage Resistance

Add the DR values for each major location the character has and divide by 4; use a value of 0 for each location without armor. Major body locations are: head, arms (or anything used for manipulation), legs (or any limb used for locomotion or balance), and torso. Include bonuses for equipment, traits, and so on. Damage Resistance with split values (e.g., mail armor) uses the *average* of the two values. DR that only protects against a specific threat (e.g., DR vs Heat/Fire or DR with Tough Skin) adds +1 per 5 character points (rounded up) of such protection. DR with Hardened add 5 per "step" (e.g., Hardened 2 would add 10).

Add 1 per 5 character points a delver has in combat-useful traits like Injury Tolerance, Resistant, Supernatural Durability, Unkillable, and so on. Apply -1 per -5 character points he has in traits like Dependency, Fragile, Vulnerability, Weakness, etc. Add levels of Magic Resistance as a bonus to this amount.

*Example*: Lady Ion wears scale armor on her torso, mail sleeves and leggings, and a pot-helm. Therefore, she has DR  $4/2$  (arms) + DR  $4/2$  (legs) + DR 4 (torso) + DR 4 (head) = 14; when divided by four, this gives a score of 3.5, rounded up to 4.

## Health

Take the character's HT score and subtract 10. Add in bonuses to HT for Fit or Very Fit. Add *half* the level of Hard to Kill or Hard to Subdue. Apply +2 for each of High Pain Threshold and Recovery.

*Example:* Lady Ion has High Pain Threshold, Recovery, and a HT of 13, so  $13 - 10 = 3$ . We add 4 because she has both High Pain Threshold and Recovery, for a total of 7.

## Hit Points

Take the maximum number of HP the character has and subtract 10. Include any bonus HP gained from special abilities like Great Rage (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 11: Power-Ups*, p. 19). Add 1 per 5 character points (rounded up) for traits like Rapid Healing, Regrowth, Regeneration, etc. Those with the ability to heal others add *half* the amount of HP they can restore in one use of their ability to this amount (cumulative with all other bonuses); if *all* lost HP are restored, add 10. Those who can cure debilitating conditions add a bonus equal to one-fifth its worth as an enhancement to Affliction (pp. B35-36). Use only the better of their ability to heal damage or remove afflictions.

*Example:* Lady Ion has 15 HP, so  $15 - 10 = 5$ . We add 1 because she also has Rapid Healing, for a total of 6.

## Will

Take the delver's effective Will score and subtract 10. Add *half* the levels (round up) of Fearlessness. Add 1 for Combat Reflexes; and add 8 for Unfazeable.

*Example:* Lady Ion has a Will of 10, so  $10 - 10 = 0$ .

## Total

Combine the numbers derived from the above characteristics to figure out PR. For Lady Ion, her Protective Rating becomes  $4 + 4 + 7 + 6 + 0$ , or 21.

## CER-Affecting Gear

Some gear provides bonuses similar to advantages and should be calculated as such. In all cases, the GM should use common sense to determine what the gear does. For example, meteoric armor might effectively give 10 levels of Magic Resistance, for a +10 to PR.

## Healthy Delvers

Some may notice that HT, which represents, the ability to keep fighting (among other things) is not valued more. This is intentional, because delvers usually have the option to run when they get low on HP, or have others heal them, while only boss monsters fight at negative HP. A GM whose playstyle differs may wish to double or triple the final value HT gives to the PR.

## MONSTROUS THREATS

Monsters also have CERs, and they are calculated using the same method as for adventurers. Groups of monsters use their combined CER to determine their effectiveness against a party of delvers. The GM may wish to turn low-CER monsters into "monster swarms" for ease of use. See *Made Monsters* (below) for a quick method.

## MADE MONSTERS

For some monsters, it might be easier to treat a small collection of creatures as one entity (e.g., a "swarm") rather than several discrete beings. To do this, use the following rules to adjust their statistics.

- **Attacks:** Swarms use the same attacks they have as individuals and can go after anything in their hex or anything within their reach. Don't forget to add the bonus for Rapid Fire (see below) to their skill! If the base creature has grappling attacks, the swarm does as well. Treat this as a single attack using the base creature's ST and DX, both multiplied by 1.2 for a grapple or takedown, or 1.4 for a pin. For multi-hex swarms, count only the number of creatures in that particular hex for the purposes of the swarm's RoF.

- **Damage:** The swarm's damage for its attacks remains the same, but attacks now use the rules for *Rapid Fire* (p. B373) to resolve how many hit. RoF equals the total amount of beings in the swarm, while Rcl is 1.

- **Defense:** Swarm defenses remain the same as the base creature, but they usually Dodge.

- **Fatigue/Hit Points:** To figure out a swarm's HP and FP, use the following formula: (total number of creatures in swarm)  $\times$  (base FP or HP)  $\times$  0.6. Once a swarm takes that much damage, it disperses (no HT roll required).

- **Reach:** The swarm's reach remains the same (typically Reach C), but those with a longer reach can strike at anything near their hex, or hexes if a multi-hex creature.

- **Size Modifier:** To determine the size modifier of the swarm, first decide how many hexes it occupies. This is typically a single hex, but use the rules for *Multi-Hex Figures* (p. B391) if needed. Creatures of size modifier -8 or less also add Injury Tolerance (Diffuse) to their list of traits. The following table assumes an "average" swarm; "sparse" swarms may have up to 1/30 the listed amount listed in the table below, while "dense" swarms may have the maximum amount or even one step higher!

SM	Typical Creatures per Hex
0	2 or 3
-1	4 to 6
-2	10 to 15
-3	20 to 30
-4	40 to 65
-5	90 to 140
-6	200 to 300
-7	400 to 650
-8	900 to 1,400
-9	2,000 to 3,000

## HAZARDOUS THREATS

Dungeons are full of pits of stinking water with spikes, fiendish traps, and rooms with moving walls to crush pesky delvers. They can be as dangerous as any monster (sometimes more so!), so why not assign them a CER as well? The usual hazard type is "Traps," but natural hazards (such as dangerous areas of caves) may require other skills and be calculated separately but in a similar fashion.

### Terminology of Specialized CER, OR, or PR

*Technically*, a specialized aspect of CER – e.g., PR (Traps) – refers only to the part calculated for that specific hazard or situation. In practice, this gets unwieldy outside of formulas, so players, the GM, and the author will tend to refer to the *total* of the general *and* specialized CER, OR, or PR. Therefore, while Flicker the Black's nominal PR for Traps is 9 – added to her general PR of 19 in the formula to compute N for this hazard – it's easier to compress that to PR (Traps) 28.

## Characters

Delvers use only their Protective Rating against traps and similar hazards, with bonuses (or penalties) based on their ability to detect and disarm or circumvent the danger. Calculate these as follows, recording the values for each type of hazard separately.

- *Trap-Detecting*: Take the character's Per (and any levels of Acute Sense he might have) and subtract 10. Some advantages give bonuses to Vision rolls; in such cases, add their bonus to Per before modifying it. A delver may substitute his level of Alchemy, Poisons, Thaumatology, or Per-based Traps instead of the base Per, if higher. Add 8 for Danger Sense.

- *Trap-Disarming*: Take the *best* of Alchemy, Hazardous Materials, Poisons, or DX-based Traps and subtract 10. If an adventurer lacks any of these skills, use the *worst* of DX-5 or the default.

*Example*: Lady Ion's roguish companion, Flicker the Black, has DX 13, Per 12, 8 points in Traps, and a Protective Rating of 19. Her Per-based Traps level is 14, from which she her player subtracts 10 to get 4. Her DX-based Traps skill of 15, minus 10, is 5. Therefore, her PR (Traps) is 4 + 5, or 9. Add this to her overall PR of 19 to get 28, and divide *that* by a given trap's OR to determine if it will be a challenge, or if she'll waltz right through it.

If the actions of a single PC are enough to circumvent the obstacle, compare the trap's OR with the party's best PR (Traps). If every PC must defeat the obstacle individually, use the party's *average* PR (Traps).

## Traps

To calculate a trap or other hazard's OR, use the following four aspects of the challenge.

- *Detection*: Add the modifier to detect the trap, but reverse it (e.g., -10 to detect *adds* 10). Add 10 if it cannot be detected

by any means, or *double* the modifier if it requires a special trait (e.g., Magery 0) to notice, minimum 1.

- *Disarmament*: Add the modifier to disarm the trap, but reverse it (e.g., -10 to disarm *adds* 10). Traps that cannot be disarmed add 15 instead.

- *Effects*: Traps causing damage use the rules for *Damage* (pp. 122-123). Those with multiple shots add a bonus equal to 1/5 the value for damage per shot; infinite shots add 10. Hazards that don't damage targets might have noxious effects such

as those caused by *Affliction* (p. 122). Hazards mimicking spells use the base skill (calculate as for *Attack Skill*, p. 122), but add damage or Afflictions normally. If a trap has a roll to hit, also use *Attack Skill* to determine the value.

- *Evasion*: Add the inverse of the modifier to evade the trap (e.g., DX-4 to avoid *adds* +4). Traps that cannot be evaded add 10.

Combine all scores together to determine the hazard's OR. Multiply this total by 1.5 for hazards without a method of circumvention. Whether a trap is stealable or not has no effect on its OR. For instance, *Frozen Runes* (**GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons**, p. 20) would have an OR of 101.

## USING THE RATINGS

You've got all these alphabet-soup ratings and scores, so what now? Now you can decide how challenging an encounter will be! *Balancing Encounters* (**Dungeon Fantasy 2**, p. 27) will be of great use to the GM.

Remember that everything is relative. Encounters that qualify as "boss-level" for a party of Funny New Delvers might be a mere nuisance to experienced adventurers! The environment or awareness of the threat can further modify this (see *Situational Modifiers to CER*, p. 126), as can the number of PCs and/or foes. For example, two delvers vs. two orcs is *not* the same as six delvers versus six orcs, because those six orcs could team up against one adventurer and leave the other five alone.

## Threat Class

Once the OR, PR, and CER for the party and its challenge has been tallied, use the following formulas to determine N.

*For monsters*:  $N = (\text{Party's Total CER}) / (\text{Monsters' Total CER})$ .

*For hazards*:  $N = (\text{Party's Total PR} + \text{PR (hazard type)}) / (\text{Hazard's OR})$ .

An N of less than 1 means that the delvers are outmatched. While N of 0.10 doesn't mean 10% chance of victory or odds of survival in the strictest sense, low N values are likely to result in sudden and lethal spirals once the PCs engage the enemy.

For example, if the CER of a party of four adventurers is 120 and a monster's CER is 120, then N is 1. In theory, this monster should be an even match for the party. In practice, the party is likely to use flanking or other group tactics to gain an advantage, unless the encounter will somehow prevent this (see *Situational Modifiers to CER*, p. 126, for some ideas). The GM probably will want to use a couple of these opponents, or add some assistants, to keep the party on their toes.

However, if a battle has left Lady Ion the last adventurer standing, a *single* CER 45 monster should keep her quite occupied until the other players get back from their pizza run.

The GM also can use the formulas to decide how many monsters are needed for an encounter of a specific threat class. To get the total CER of all monsters in the encounter, divide the party's total CER by an N related to the threat class. Then, divide the monsters' total CER by the CER of a single monster to find the number of enemies needed. For an easier encounter, drop fractions. For a tougher challenge, round up the number, or add different creatures with a smaller CER to create a mixed group. See *Dungeon Fantasy Threats* (pp. 127-128) for a list of pregenerated CERs.

Using N, consult the following chart to determine the monsters' "threat class," which is based on the "fodder," "worthy," and "boss" titles described in *Dungeon Fantasy 2* (p. 27).

N	Threat Class	Description
11+	Nuisance	The monsters are pests or a diversion of some kind.
10 to 3	Fodder	The enemy may wear down the PCs, but will rarely beat them.
2 to 0.49	Worthy	This fight is roughly even.
0.50 to 0.10	Boss	The enemy outmatches the party, who will need luck and quick wits to win.
Less than 0.10	Epic	Only luck, emergency one-use magic, or unexpected reinforcements will save the heroes!

- *Nuisance* monsters usually appear in droves outnumbering the delvers at least 10 to one. Their attacks are so weak and ineffective that only critical hits can do minor damage, even to those with the weakest DR. The enemies never attempt an active defense, aren't nearly as mobile as adventurers, and have low HP. This usually means they go "splat" after one hit. Such creatures are dangerous only to the ill-prepared or unlucky. *Typical N-Rating*: 11 or more.

- *Fodder* monsters are only a little "beefier" than nuisance monsters. Their attacks are better, but not by much. As *Dungeon Fantasy 2* notes, they're basically "a distributed monster that has lots of attacks." Combats consisting of lots of little creatures can go by fast, but are a pain for the GM to track; see *Made Monsters* (p. 124) for an alternative. *Typical N-Rating*: Between 10 to 3.

- *Worthy* monsters can typically challenge delvers on a one-to-one or two-to-one odds. Such creatures use *Balancing Encounters* (*Dungeon Fantasy 2*, p. 27) "as is." Should the GM wish to vary this, he can make trade-offs between defense, mobility, or offense. For example, a giant might do increased damage but move slowly. *Typical N-Rating*: Between 2 to 0.75.

- *Boss* monsters are meant to be a difficult task for an entire party of delvers. Their defensive capabilities are hard to bypass. They can kill with two to three hits, and are capable of being nearly anywhere on the battlefield. Multiple attacks are likely, in the form of Extra Attacks or high skill to perform Rapid Strikes. Their active defenses are high, or they have a lot of DR, and they'll fight on even when below -HP. Such encounters don't need to be a single monster – they could be multiple powerful *worthies* using teamwork, tactics, and/or local terrain. *Typical N-Rating*: Between 0.50 to 0.10.

- *Epic* monsters pose a nearly – or outright! – impossible challenge. Their defenses defy reason, and their attacks slay any being they hit. Their means of locomotion grants them a nigh-ubiquitous battlefield presence. In video-game terminology, they are the final boss of the game. *Typical N-Rating*: Less than 0.10.

### Example

The Headhunters are a group of bounty-hunting delvers "shooting trouble" for gold. They've been tasked to find a group of orc raiders. Locating the encampment, they manage to set up an ambush. The total CER of the Headhunters is 250, while the orcs have a CER of 49 each. Since the GM wants this to be a low-level "boss" encounter, he'll need at least 10 orcs. The GM had intended to have 11 orcs in the camp, but more are needed to maintain the challenge in the face of an ambush.

## SITUATIONAL MODIFIERS TO CER

Monsters or hazards by themselves are dandy, but what if the PCs have the upper hand thanks to terrain or other environmental conditions? What if the monsters do? This affects how difficult the encounter is. To represent this, modify the opposition's total CER. The GM then can raise or lower the number of monsters involved, or adjust the circumstances, to maintain the threat level. The GM may need to create his own modifiers, but here are a few suggestions.

Advantageous terrain, environments, modes of movement (e.g., flight, insubstantiality, etc.), or weather alters the opposition's total CER by +20% if circumstances hinder the PCs, or by -20% if conditions help the adventurers.

Modify the total CER if the majority of one or the other are capable of advantageous movement (air vs. land, insubstantial opponents, etc.) but can still attack. When more than one condition applies, they are additive! For example,

if the party's druid casts Walk Through Plants on all adventurers before an orc encounter in an old-growth forest, the orcs will be at a disadvantage due to terrain; this adjusts the monster's total CER by -20%. If the druid had forgotten to cast Walk Through Plants (+20% to the opposition's CER due to terrain hindering the party) and the enemy had their own caster use such a spell (+20% to CER due to extra orc maneuverability), that would be +40% to their CER. This indicates the orcs in such an encounter will be more potent than their basic CER suggests, and the GM may need to take care to avoid an unintended slaughter of the heroes.

If a PC has a trait that negates or outright bypasses a dangerous situation, and it affects the entire party (or most of it), then ignore the situation's modifier. For example, if the party's thief has Danger Sense and will likely succeed at her roll to notice an ambush, do not include a modifier for the ambush to the monsters' total CER.

With the ideas from *Situational Modifiers to CER* (below) in mind, the GM settles on 16 orcs and sets up the map . . .

## HAZARDS OF THE DELVE

Wandering through dank halls searching for books of forgotten lore is a rough business. More than that, the adventurers will be wounded at least some of the time or otherwise incapacitated to some degree. Back-to-back encounters while the party's resources dwindle will become increasingly difficult. The GM should keep a close eye on the party's current HP and FP, as well as consumable gear like potions, projectiles,

scrolls, and so on. The lower such "spendable" resources become, the harder future fights are going to be.

CER depends on the delvers being at full strength – and repeated combats can wear down their ability to get back to it. GMs may wish to gauge encounters ahead of time by estimating the CER of a depleted party, based on what has come before. Alternatively, a GM may wish to adjust monsters "on the fly." An easy way to do this is to rate the CER of delvers who have run out of consumable resources as only 75% (or even 50%) of their base CER. This is a highly optional rule, because it can require pausing the game while the GM does hasty math to weaken (or strengthen) the opposition based on the condition of the group.

# DUNGEON FANTASY THREATS

The following tables do all the work in calculating OR, PR, and CER of the published monsters from the various *Dungeon Fantasy* supplements and *Pyramid* magazine through February 2015. Gear is ignored here, except where it is noted that a specific piece of equipment is used by the monster.

Spellcasting monsters use the *best* damage- or Affliction-inducing spell they can cast.

OR is the Offensive Rating (see pp. 122-123).

PR is the Protective Rating (see pp. 123-124).

CER is the Combat Effectiveness Rating (see p. 122).

Monster Name	OR	PR	CER	Notes
<b>GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons</b>				
Acid Spider	32	62	94	
as-Sharak, Agni	27	59	86	
as-Sharak, Akaska	29	59	88	[1]
as-Sharak, Jala	40	59	99	
as-Sharak, Prithvi	22	59	81	
as-Sharak, Vayu	27	59	86	
Crushroom	14	55	69	
Dire Wolf	14	13	27	
Dire Wolf, Alpha	15	15	30	
Doomchild	34	16	50	
Erupting Slime	11	20	31	
Flaming Skull	37	48	85	
Flesh-Eating Ape	16	14	30	
Foul Bat	31	5	36	
Frost Snake	28	22	50	
Giant Rat	13	5	18	
Golem-Armor Swordsman	19	33	52	
Horde Zombie	4	19	23	
Mindwarper	61	75	136	
Peshkali	56	84	140	
Siege Beast	37	42	79	
Stone Golem	29	41	70	
Toxifier	12	35	47	
Trigger	32	16	48	

### GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1

Bronze Spider	19	31	50
Bugbear	16	10	26
Cicualá	57	50	107
Corpse Golem	20	15	35
Demon from Between the Stars	44	30	74

Monster Name	OR	PR	CER	Notes
Demon from Between the Stars, Priest	56	30	86	
Demon of Old	29	57	86	
Dinoman	9	3	12	
Draug	31	25	56	
Electric Jelly	58	89	147	
Eye of Death	25	34	59	
Flame Lord	23	44	67	
Giant Ape	33	45	78	
Giant Ape, King of the Apes	62	67	129	
Gladiator Ape	21	16	37	
Horde Pygmy	14	-4	10	
Horrid Skull	49	-22	27	
Ice Wurm	55	77	132	
Karkadann	49	20	69	
Leaping Leech	8	-7	1	
Lich	100	59	159	
Obsidian Jaguar	29	45	74	
Rock Mite	13	53	66	
Slorn	23	40	63	
Slugbeast	35	28	63	
Sphere of Madness	30	40	70	
Sword Spirit	41	27	68	
Throttler	18	24	42	
Troll	29	86	115	
Undead Slime	18	63	81	
Void Brute	19	35	54	
Watcher at the Edge of Time	44	48	92	[2]

### GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 14: Psi

as-Sharak, Aloakasa	20	58	78	
Astral Hound	17	29	46	
Astral Thing	33	-8	25	
Chaos Monk	29	19	48	
Flying Squid Monster	23	37	60	
Fuzzy, Biter	16	-7	9	[3]
Fuzzy, Bright	25	-7	18	[3]
Fuzzy, Gloomy	-3	-7	1	[3]
Fuzzy, Jiggly	20	-7	13	[3]
Fuzzy, Lumpy	5	-7	1	[3]
Fuzzy, Spewer	11	-7	4	[3]
Neuroid	37	52	89	
No-Brainer	4	20	24	
Odifier	17	38	55	

Monster Name	OR	PR	CER	Notes
<b>Pyramid #3/50: <i>Dungeon Fantasy II</i></b>				
Abominable Snowman	19	22	41	
Animated Snowman	9	4	13	

### Pyramid #3/70: *4th Edition Festival*

Horde Ninja	28	7	35	[4]
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### Pyramid #3/76: *Dungeon Fantasy IV*

Dire Frog	23	11	34	
Dire Hart	23	17	40	
Fetusoid	14	23	37	
Hungry Room	21	112	133	
Intruder	42	57	99	
Pscorpion	26	27	53	[5]
Pyro-Tiger	55	15	70	
Terrible Dire Bunny	52	13	65	
Terrible Dire Wolverine	69	65	134	
Terrible Hedge	315	8	323	
Terrible Terrier	18	3	21	
Terrible Whipping Willow	315	76	391	

### Notes

[1] Assumes that ignoring DR against opponents except those with Doesn't Breathe is worth as much as Armor Divisor (2), for +5 to its base OR.

[2] Gives full bonus for "Warp" Move.

[3] Was calculated using effects as if they were Afflictions.

[4] Includes damage from Bladeblack poison.

[5] Pscorpions with two tails add 5 to their CER; other varieties use the CER listed.

## NEW MONSTER

This new creature for *Dungeon Fantasy* campaigns demonstrates how to use the formulas with other opponents not listed here.

### Boneflower

Boneflowers are top-heavy plants that look like grotesque sunflowers around 10' tall. Their roots resemble moss-covered bones. They attack by "spitting" a hail of small poisoned spines from its all-too-human-looking mouth. Despite its appearance, it can move around, albeit slowly and with effort (for 1 FP, it gains a Move of 2 for 1 minute).

Boneflowers are a favorite of necromancers, thanks to the negative energies they naturally emit. These energies raise the mana level within one yard of them by one step for Necromancy spells and necromantic abilities.

Boneflowers reproduce when one of their spines is implanted in flesh. The spine will sprout in 1d days into a small (but rapidly growing) baby boneflower. Accounts of delvers living long enough to have it sprout out of them (the host dies soon after!) are quietly whispered of in taverns.

<b>ST:</b> 15	<b>HP:</b> 15	<b>Speed:</b> 4.50
<b>DX:</b> 10	<b>Will:</b> 10	<b>Move:</b> See above.
<b>IQ:</b> 4	<b>Per:</b> 12	<b>Weight:</b> 100 lbs.
<b>HT:</b> 12	<b>FP:</b> 10	<b>SM:</b> +1
<b>Dodge:</b> 7	<b>Parry:</b> N/A	<b>DR:</b> 3

**Spines (15):** 1d+2(2) impaling + roll vs. HT at -1 per 2 points of penetrating damage or suffer from Terrible Pain for (20 - HT) minutes, minimum of 1 minute. Furthermore, if the spines aren't removed, they work their way into the flesh of the target. This inflicts 1d+2 impaling damage every 10 seconds until the target is dead or the spines are removed (see *Horrible Grubs*, *Dungeon Fantasy 2*, p. 13). Range 10/50, RoF 7, Rcl 1.

**Traits:** Blindness; Deafness; Dependency (Soil and water; Constantly); Detect (Living Beings; Reflexive; Targeting); High Pain Threshold; Injury Tolerance (Homogenous, No Blood, No Eyes, No Head); Invertebrate; Mana Enhancer (Accessibility, Necromancy only); No Manipulators; Numb; Unfazeable; Vibration Sense (Air; Reflexive; Targeting); Wild Animal.

**Skills:** Camouflage-15; Innate Attack (Projectile)-15.

**Class:** Plant.

**Combat Effectiveness Rating:** 106 (OR 81 and PR 25).

**Notes:** Not affected by Plant spells or Plant Empathy, but *are* affected by Necromancy spells and Spirit Empathy with the Necromantic power modifier. Their Detect and Vibration abilities borrow the Targeting modifier from Scanning Sense. This raises their skill by *six* against a target they aim at that has been located with both Detect *and* Vibration Sense. They typically attack the neck (skill 16) or the vitals (skill 18) in such cases. Aquatic versions of boneflowers, resembling bull kelp or other underwater plants, may exist if the GM wants to confront the party with under-the-sea threats – such as necromantic mermaids.

**Combat Effectiveness Rating Calculation:** Boneflowers have an attack skill factor of 15: 15 (Skill) - 10 + 5 (Acc) + 1 (RoF). Its Affliction factor is 3: (Terrible Pain) 12 × 1/5. Its damage starts at: 6 (1 die of damage × 3.5, plus the modifier of +2) × 2 (RoF) × 2 (impaling), making the damage factor worth 24. Its Armor Divisor adds 5, for 29. It also has Cyclic, which can affect a delver twice in 15 one-second rounds, which is worth 44, for a total of 71. It gets 0 for Fatigue (FP 10 - 10 = 0) and -4 for Mobility (2 - 6 = -4). Its total OR is 81. It has an active defense factor of -1: 7 (Dodge) - 8 = -1 × 2, is -2. Its DR factor is 9: 3 (base DR) + -5 (Dependency) + 11 (Injury Tolerance). Its HT factor is 4: 2 (HT 12 - 10) + 2 (High Pain Threshold). Its HP factor is 5: 15 (HP) - 10. Its Will factor is 8: 10 (Will score) - 10 + 8 (Unfazeable). Its total PR is 24. Therefore, its total CER is 105.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christopher R. Rice knows it's a trap and now he knows it's a threat. What will he know next? From Portsmouth, Virginia, he dreams of being able to write full time, or at least eke out a living doing it. Of course, if he's not writing about *GURPS*, he's blogging about it. Visit his site "Ravens N' Pennies" ([www.ravensnpennies.com](http://www.ravensnpennies.com)) for more *GURPS* goodies. He wishes to thank L.A., his own personal muse, as well as the rest of his gaming group; Antoni Ten Monrós; Beth "Archangel" McCoy, the "Sith Editrix"; Douglas Cole; Peter Dell'Orto; Scott "Rocketman" Rochat; Tim "Humabout" Ponce; and Walter "Nyndok" Wilson, for when I called upon them, they answered.



# MORE PSIONIC THREATS

BY COLE M.B. JENKINS

**GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 14: Psi**, **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1**, and **Psychic Swords Against Elder Evil** (from *Pyramid* #3/76: **Dungeon Fantasy IV**) offer dozens of things that can pop up when a mentalist causes a psionic threat to appear. But the cosmos provides a seemingly infinite supply of weirdness, and if a mentalist is in the party, there's always room for more bizarre threats and eldritch monsters.

Like the adversaries in **Dungeon Fantasy 14**, these foes may be unfair if used against a party without a mentalist.

## WORMS IN MY BRAIN GET THEM OUT

– Jack McLaren and Paul Spacek,  
*The Parking Lot Is Full*

## ASTRAL GHOST

Unlike most people, psis are already accustomed to weird changes in lifestyle and separation of mind and body. They can make the transition to a ghostly existence with their memories and personalities intact, becoming functional denizens of the Astral Plane.

The ghosts are still motivated by the same things they were in life, and as they were psis, this can be problematic. They remain fascinated by psionics and elder weirdness, and they are especially drawn to living psis. Astral ghosts feel they can aid psis in the material world. Using psionic powers still risks psionic threats, but the ghost has forgotten how inconvenient those used to be.

<b>ST:</b> 9	<b>HP:</b> 9	<b>Speed:</b> 6.25
<b>DX:</b> 12	<b>Will:</b> 16	<b>Move:</b> 6
<b>IQ:</b> 14	<b>Per:</b> 14	
<b>HT:</b> 13	<b>FP:</b> 15	<b>SM:</b> 0
<b>Dodge:</b> 9	<b>Parry:</b> 11 (Psychokinetic Lash)	<b>DR:</b> 0 (6 vs. psionics only)

**Mind Stab (16\*):** See **Dungeon Fantasy 14**, p. 9. Malediction; resist with Will or lose margin of failure points of either FP or HP (up to 10). Costs 1 FP.

**Psychokinetic Lash (14\*):** 3d crushing; Acc 3, Range 10/100. Costs 1 FP to attack or parry. See **Dungeon Fantasy 14**, p. 10.

**Traits:** Astral Entity (Insubstantiality has Affects Substantial); Curious (12); Delusion (My powers are perfectly safe!); Frightens Animals; High Pain Threshold; Injury Tolerance (Homogenous; No Blood); Mind Control 2; Mind Reading; Mind Shield 10; Mind Stab 1; Psi Talent 3; Psychic Armor 6; Psychic Sensitivity 2; Psychokinetic Lash 3; Telekinesis 12; Telesend; Unusual Background (Psionic); Weirdness Magnet.

**Skills:** Hidden Lore (Psi)-16; Hidden Lore (Elder Things)-15; Innate Attack (Gaze)-17; Wrestling-12.

**Class:** Spirit (Extradimensional).

**Notes:** Affected by anything that influences spirits (as for *Astral Thing*, **Dungeon Fantasy 14**, p. 42) but *not* by things that specifically affect undead (it's a being of thought, not a true ghost). All psionic abilities are at -3 against material targets. Mind Stab, Mind Reading, and Psychic Sensitivity are alternative abilities of each other, as are Telekinesis and Psychokinetic Lash.

\* Includes -3 to affect the material world.

## ASTRAL SPIDER

Resembling large (6' long) spiders made of translucent crystal, astral spiders are servants of some cosmic force that maintains the structure of reality. They're drawn to rips and portals in space and time which they bind up with their webs. As psionics damage reality, active powers aggravate the spiders. Fortunately for them, creatures that have been marinating in psionic energy (like a psi's entire party) taste delicious!

Like the astral ghost (above) and the astral thing (**Dungeon Fantasy 14**, p. 42), they are difficult for substantial creatures to combat. However, to feed on substantial creatures, they must first drag their prey into the Astral Plane, which allows potential food to fight back.

Where astral spiders nest – perhaps in the yawning mouth of a portal they are industriously sewing shut – they cover the area (in the astral plane) in webbing. Anyone without Terrain Adaptation (Webs) that steps on the webbing must win a Quick Contest of ST vs. 16 or be stuck.

<b>ST:</b> 16	<b>HP:</b> 16	<b>Speed:</b> 6.00
<b>DX:</b> 12	<b>Will:</b> 14	<b>Move:</b> 6
<b>IQ:</b> 12	<b>Per:</b> 14	
<b>HT:</b> 12	<b>FP:</b> 12	<b>SM:</b> +0
<b>Dodge:</b> 10	<b>Parry:</b> 12	<b>DR:</b> 6

**Dispel Psi (17 vs. Will):** Targeted psionic effect is canceled. Reach C. Costs 1 FP. See *Dungeon Fantasy 14*, p. 5.

**Odic Bite (16):** 1d+1 impaling + 2 points toxic follow-up. Reach C, 1. Follow up damage ignores DR other than Psychic Armor.

**Webbing (16):** Binding ST 16. Ranged Attack (Acc 3, Range 10). Webs are *Sticky* (see p. B40). After binding a target, the spider can take a Ready maneuver to drag the victim into the Astral Plane. Roll a Quick Contest of ST; the victim becomes insubstantial for minutes equal to the spider's margin of victory. Once a victim is insubstantial, subsequent attacks with the webs have the *Engulfing* enhancement (p. B40).

**Traits:** 360° Vision; Astral Entity (Insubstantiality has Affects Substantial); Combat Reflexes; Clinging; Dark Vision; Dispel Psi 1; Extra Legs (Eight Legs); Fragile (Unnatural); High Pain Threshold; Horizontal; Indomitable; Injury Tolerance (Unliving; No Neck); No Fine Manipulators; Psi Talent 3; Psychic Sensitivity 2; Terrain Adaptation (Webbing); Temperature Tolerance 10 (-25° to 150°); Transdimensional Sight; Unfzable; Unusual Background (Psionic); Vacuum Support.

**Skills:** Brawling-16; Innate Attack (Projectile)-16; Stealth-12.

**Class:** Elder Thing/Spirit (Extradimensional).

**Notes:** Affected by anything that influences spirits (as for *Astral Thing*, *Dungeon Fantasy 14*, p. 42). Webbing is the only attack that affects substantial and does so at full skill. Unwilling to negotiate.

## BRAINWORMS

These terrible alien parasites are attracted by mental energy, because they feed on brains! They are purplish spiny segmented worms a few inches long, with complex mouth parts.

A swarm consists of several hundred worms. They crawl (and can burrow through the ground) at Move 3. They bite for 1 HP per turn and are dispersed after losing 10 HP. Ordinary clothing protects completely for two turns, after which the worms are inside and cannot be evaded (only dispersed).

After the fight, roll to resist Brainworm Fever (see below).

**Class:** Animal (Swarm).

**Notes:** Despite insect-like intelligence, they can sense sapient minds and use **Psight** (*Dungeon Fantasy 14*, p. 9).

## CHAOS OOZE

Created as slaves by mindwarpers in some forgotten epoch, these shapeless masses of glowing, iridescent slime are 15' in diameter. Since their creation, some have rebelled and are driven by a fanatical hatred of anything that uses psionics. Others still serve loyally.

They're capable of forming limbs and organs to suit specific purposes. In combat, they typically form a few pseudo-pods for strikes and grapples, as well as myriad eyes facing all directions.

Chaos oozes are among the Elder Things' most terrible creations and are nearly unstoppable engines of destruction. Fortunately for delvers, they have a serious weakness – their masters used hypnotic suggestion and psionic conditioning

to “program” them. This has left them weak-willed and vulnerable to suggestion and mind control. They are susceptible to Hypnotism, bardic Enthralment Skills, the psionic Mind Control ability, and Mind Control spells (although spells are offset by the creature's innate Magic Resistance). They can't be controlled for long because they can change the structure of their minds in order to escape. Each minute an ooze is under mental influence, it may roll a new resistance roll or Contest at a cumulative +3 per minute. Once it succeeds, that ooze is immune to that specific method, from that character, permanently.

<b>ST:</b> 100	<b>HP:</b> 200	<b>Speed:</b> 6.00
<b>DX:</b> 10	<b>Will:</b> 8	<b>Move:</b> 3
<b>IQ:</b> 8	<b>Per:</b> 10	
<b>HT:</b> 12	<b>FP:</b> 15	<b>SM:</b> +4
<b>Dodge:</b> 9	<b>Parry:</b> 10	<b>DR:</b> 8

**Absorb:** As a free action, can roll a Quick Contest of HT 15 vs. the opponent's ST to absorb a victim in contact with the main body that is grappled or trampled. Once absorbed roll a Quick Contest of ST 100 vs. the highest of the victim's ST or HT each turn and do margin of victory points of crushing damage. The victim also takes 1d-1 corrosion each turn and will eventually start to suffocate (p. B436) – if he lives that long!

**Corrosive Surface:** 1d-3 corrosion. This harms anyone in physical contact with the ooze.

**Maddening Chant (Resisted by Will-5):** While active, the ooze constantly chants words in the maddening language of the Mindwarpers from hundreds of obscene siphons. Everyone within earshot must make a Fright Check at -5.

## BRAINWORM FEVER

**Vector:** Brainworms.

**Resistance Roll:** HT-(damage done by swarm).

**Delay:** 24 hours.

**Damage:** 1 point toxic.

**Cycles:** 25; daily cycles.

**Symptoms:** -1 IQ after losing 1/3 HP; -1 IQ and Chronic Pain (Severe, 2 hours, 9 or less) after losing 1/2 HP (severe headaches); -2 IQ and Chronic Pain (Severe, 4 hours, 12 or less) after losing all HP. The symptoms remain even if the cycles are stopped and all injury has been healed; only surgery to remove the worms is effective!

**Contagiousness:** If someone dies while still suffering symptoms, a number of swarms equal to 1/4 IQ bore out of the skull and seek new hosts.

**Diagnosis and Treatment:** A successful **Diagnosis** roll can identify the disease. **Cure Disease** (*GURPS Magic*, p. 91) or a day's treatment with **Esoteric Medicine-4** will stop the cycles (at which point healing is effective), but it won't cure the symptoms. **Surgery** (see *Horrible Grubs*, *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons*, p. 13) is required to remove the worms, at an additional penalty of -3 (for head surgery).

*It was a terrible, indescribable thing vaster than any subway train – a shapeless congeries of protoplasmic bubbles, faintly self-luminous, and with myriads of temporary eyes forming and un-forming as pustules of greenish light all over the tunnel-filling front that bore down upon us, crushing the frantic penguins and slithering over the glistening floor that it and its kind had swept so evilly free of all litter.*

– H. P. Lovecraft, *At The Mountains of Madness*

As per *Heeeeeeeere's Spawny* (*Dungeon Fantasy 14*, p. 38), Unfazole gives +7 (for a net +2) and the +5 for "heat of battle" doesn't apply.

**Slam (14):** 6d+12 crushing (at Move 3) + Corrosive Surface (above). Can trample (p. B404) foes of SM 2 or less (SM 3 or less if prone) for 11d+11 crushing + Corrosive Surface (above).

**Strike (14):** 11d+11 crushing + Corrosive Surface (above) (x4). Reach C-4.

**Torso Grapple (14):** Damage from Corrosive Surface (above) and on subsequent turns can squeeze (see *Choke* or *Strangle*, p. B370) with ST 97 or win a Quick Contest of ST 102 against the best of opponent's ST, DX, Judo, or Wrestling to pull him into contact with the body for absorption. Reach C-4.

**Traits:** 360° Vision; Amphibious; Arms (Two, Long, +1 SM); Dark Vision; Doesn't Breathe (Oxygen Absorption); Doesn't Sleep; Double-Jointed; Extra Arms 2; Extra Attack 3; High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Indomitable; Injury Tolerance (Homogenous; No Head; No Neck); Invertebrate; Magic Resistance 6; Morph (Improvised Forms; Appendages and Organs Only); No Fine Manipulators; No Legs (Slithers); Pressure Support 3; Slave Mentality; Temperature Tolerance 20 (-115° to 240°); Unfazole; Universal Digestion.

**Skills:** Brawling-14; Sumo Wrestling-14.

**Class:** Elder Thing/Slime.

**Notes:** This is a typical battle form. Also common: a *rooted-tree-like form* with No Legs (Sessile), two additional arms (for a total of six), and +2 DR; and a *sphere* with no Extra Attacks, No Legs (Rolls), No Manipulators, and Move 6/24 (which does 48d+96 on a full speed slam!). Torso Grab assumes two arms. Each additional arm used gives +2 to skill and +2 to ST. Renegade oozes have Fanaticism and Obsession (Kill all psis!) instead of Slave Mentality. Remains yield 2d oozing doom (\$100 each) and 4d acid (\$10 each) grenades. Too alien to negotiate.

## TENTACLES!

Some vast Thing That Man Was Not Meant to Know in a higher spatial dimension sticks its mouthparts into three dimensional space when attracted by yummy mental energy. These greenish tentacles are roughly one yard long, 5" in diameter, and covered with toothed sucker-mouths. They seem to

emerge in pairs from flat surfaces near the intended morsel (ceiling, walls, floors, tables . . .) with no apparent regard for spatial orientation.

<b>ST:</b> 16	<b>HP:</b> 8	<b>Speed:</b> 6.00
<b>DX:</b> 12	<b>Will:</b> 24	<b>Move:</b> 0
<b>IQ:</b> 24	<b>Per:</b> 12	
<b>HT:</b> 12	<b>FP:</b> 12	<b>SM:</b> -2
<b>Dodge:</b> 9	<b>Parry:</b> 9	<b>DR:</b> 5

**Grab and Tear (12):** No damage but on subsequent turns will attempt to pull victims to the ground and then rip them apart. Roll a Quick Contest of ST 16 against the highest of ST, DX, Judo, or Wrestling to pull the victim down. Once the target is prone, the tentacles grapple with an additional pair of appendages for +2 to both DX and ST. On following turns, roll a Quick Contest of ST 18 against the higher of ST or HT; the tentacles inflict their margin of victory as crushing damage. Reach C.

**Sucker-Mouths:** Victims grappled by at least one tentacle lose 2 FP per turn (ignoring DR).

**Traits:** Blindness; Deafness; Dependency (Mana; Constantly); Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Sleep; Double Jointed; Fragile (Unnatural); Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Immunity to Psionics; Indomitable; Injury Tolerance (No Blood; No Vitals); Magical Resistance 10; Temperature Tolerance 5 (-15° to 100°); Pressure Support 3; Vibration Sense (Air); Unfazole.

**Class:** Elder Thing.

**Notes:** The physical attributes are for individual tentacles. The mental attributes are for the larger being. Unwilling to negotiate with lesser beings.

## VOID WYRM

These dragon-like creatures sail between the stars carrying out inconceivable missions in the service of primal cosmic forces of balance. They resemble "ordinary" dragons except that they are luminescent green, with transparent wing membranes, and deep black eyes in which the depths of the starry void are visible. While they eventually grow large enough to consume entire worlds, this one is just a baby, at 45' long. At this age, they act as emissaries to mortals, commanding adventurers to complete tasks or face the very personal wrath of this servant of impersonal forces.

**ST:** 40                    **HP:** 42                    **Speed:** 7.00  
**DX:** 14                    **Will:** 16                    **Move:** 10/20 (Air)  
**IQ:** 16                    **Per:** 18  
**HT:** 15                    **FP:** 15                    **SM:**+5  
**Dodge:** 14\*              **Parry:** 15\*              **DR:** 10

**Abyssal Breath (20):** 3d corrosion in a 1-yard cone; Acc 3, Range 5/25; affects insubstantial. This is a blast of pure *nothingness*. It can “power-parry” attacks, even if insubstantial or energy-based, with Parry 17\*; if successful, roll 3d, subtract that from the basic damage, and *apply* it as damage to the weapon or unarmed attacker! Costs 2 FP to attack or parry.

**Bite (16):** 4d+4 impaling. Reach C-5.

**Claw (16):** 4d+4 cutting or impaling. Reach C-5.

**Dispel Psi (22 vs. Will):** Target psionic effect is canceled. Ranged (uses *Size and Speed/Range Table*, p. B550). Costs 1 FP.

**Traits:** Bad Grip; Bad Temper (12); Battlesense 3; Combat Reflexes; Danger Sense; Dark Vision; Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; Dependency (Mana; Daily); Dispel Psi 2; Elder Lore; Fear; Horizontal; High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Indomitable; Intuition (Psionic); Magic Resistance 10; Mind Reading (Psionic); Mind Shield 10 (Psionic); Mr. Universe; Nictitating Membrane 2; Pressure Support 3; Psi Talent 6; Psychic Sensitivity 3; Second Nature 2; Sense of Duty (Cosmic Balance); Speed of Thought; Telesend; Temperature Tolerance 10 (-105° to 100°); Transdimensional Sight; Unfzable; Unusual Background (Psionic); Vacuum Support; Your Tongue Is My Tongue.

**Skills:** Brawling-16; Hidden Lore (Psi)-15; Hidden Lore (Elder Things)-16; Innate Attack (Breath)-20.

**Class:** Elder Thing.

**Notes:** Enjoys two free mental maneuvers. Can use mental abilities before anyone else can act (thanks to Second Nature 2 and Speed of Thought). Affected by anything that specifically affects dragons and reacts to dragon-blooded at +3.

\* Includes Battlesense 3.

## PSIONIC MONSTER PREFIXES

These prefixes work like the ones in *Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1* (pp. 36-38).

### Astral

This creature is a native of the Astral Plane. Unlike normally harmless astral life, this one has the ability to injure substantial creatures.

**Statistics:** Add Astral Entity (Insubstantiality has Affects Substantial). Any supernatural attacks can affect substantial at -3, and any normal physical attacks ignore DR (other than Psychic Armor or other DR that protects the soul).

### Psionic

Some creatures are naturally psionic or have been altered by Elder Things to be so (often with *distorted* and *chaos*).

**Statistics:** Add +2 to IQ or set IQ to 12, whichever is *higher*, and increase FP by 20%. Add Psionic Talent 2 and Unusual Background (Psionic). Add one of Battlesense 1 and Mindreading; Fear and Telesend; Levitation 3 and Psychic Armor 6; Ergokinetic Shield 4, Innate Attack (Gaze) at DX+4, Psychic Sensitivity 1, and Pyrokinetic Bolt 2; or any set of psionic abilities worth 45-55 points.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cole M. B. Jenkins lives in the mystical land of central California where he has spent thousands of hours trying to kill things with his mind. He would like to thank Kevin Hosford's mentalist character, "Ignacio," for inspiring such terrible things. He would also like to thank Pyramid Write Club, but the first rule of Write Club is . . . No, it isn't even safe to *think* it.



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# DUNGEONS

For most issues of *Pyramid*, adventures are challenging to write and evaluate.

First is the problem that many readers are players, so they often can't find an immediate use for articles geared almost exclusively at GMs.

Perhaps more problematic, even though many GMs say they want ready-made scenarios, often these adventures aren't satisfying if they can't be dropped into any campaign with minimal prep work. And since *GURPS* has always encouraged the canvas of the imagination when it comes to campaign design, it's quite difficult to come up with a good adventure that can fit any power level and multiple design assumptions . . . even when focusing on a single genre.

*Now the PCs must outfight, outrun, and outwit roving bands of monsters . . .*

*– GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Adventure 1*

Fortunately, *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* is more conducive to creating adventures. This is probably because its power level is well-defined – 250 points for starting heroes – and its assumed campaign framework is open enough to allow a lot of wiggle room. (“Guys and gals with armor, swords, and magic versus monsters” – just about everything else is negotiable.)

This section includes four ready-to-use adventures, including one – “The Golden Geniza of Ezkali” – by *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Adventure 1: Mirror of the Fire Demon* author Matt Riggsby (who's also the cartographer extraordinaire of that piece). None of these require anything outside of the *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* library. One of them – David L. Pulver's “Dark of the Woods” (pp. 151-156) – is systemless, but was selected because it should prove particularly inspirational to *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* GMs. In fact, Mr. Pulver has two articles in this section, and his column *Eidetic Memory* has been a regular fixture of *Pyramid* since 2011. A quick glance at the table of contents (p. 2) shows how valuable his contributions have been to *Pyramid*.

What are you waiting for? You've got the heroes, rules, treasures, and threats. Adventure awaits!



# THE GOLDEN GENIZA OF EZKALI

BY MATT RIGGSBY

A valuable treasure awaits adventurers. An ancient legend is their guide. The problem? It may look like a standard dungeon crawl with puzzles and a list of clues to work from, but the adventurers can't agree on what clues they're being given. How is that going to work?

This adventure is written for *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*, though the core idea can easily be adapted for similar genres.

## THE PHILOSOPHICAL APPARATUS

This adventure is less about the content of myths (gods, culture heroes, the foundation of moral orders, etc.) and more about their form and how they are transmitted. One of the fixtures of fantastic literature is the old myth or legend that turns out to be true. It warns of a great evil that will arise, a hero who will save his people, or something similar. Sure enough, it all happens just like the story says, with the protagonists at the center of things.

Nevertheless, a fundamental though often-overlooked aspect of myths – as well as fairy tales, folk songs, and anything else transmitted through an oral tradition (or even many textual traditions) – is that they are *variable*. That is, people are familiar with slightly different versions of the same stories.

For example, many people know the Biblical version of the story of the Great Flood, wherein Noah and his family, forewarned by an angry God, build a ship to save various animals from water that covers the whole world. The Quran contains a similar story. The ancient Greeks, the Babylonians, and many other cultures across Europe and Asia had similar myths. However, the names of the protagonists, the deities involved and their motivation, the manner in which the survivors ride out the flood, and many other specifics are different. The version in the Quran, though close to the Biblical version, has Noah bringing some pious friends with him as well as family. Where Noah builds an ark, fills it with animals, and sails it for over a year, the Greeks Deucalion and Pyrrha float in a chest for nine days without animals; they repopulate the world by throwing stones that turn into people. In the Babylonian version, the gods send a flood to prevent human overpopulation

rather than to curb human wickedness, and the flood lasts for only seven days.

In many conventional fantasy settings (which are frequently semi-literate and religiously diverse), it's therefore reasonable to have people share a range of similar myths and legends, but each knowing variants of the same stories. Thus, when an Inadequately Lit Lord must be destroyed or a Chosen One found, everyone will have a different opinion on just what the ancient prophecies say on the matter. This can be a plausible way to keep some suspense for clever players whose practiced legalistic reflexes deconstruct the GM's prophetic statements far too quickly. Any gamer worth his Cheetos would quickly react to the witch-king of Angmar's boast that "no man may kill me!" with "Women, children, and non-humans on the ready line!" However, what if one adventurer has heard that no *man* may kill him, while another has heard no *one* could kill him?

*Nothing shall grow  
above or below them.  
No seed shall flower,  
neither in man nor . . .  
they're rebels and they'll  
never ever be any good.*

– Giles, in *Buffy  
the Vampire  
Slayer*, #3.10

This adventure takes advantage of this phenomenon in a less world-shaking context. It presents a myth with which many heroes in a group of adventurers are familiar. An ancient religious order built a now-lost stronghold based on that myth, the details of which provided a mnemonic device by which initiates could easily bypass the many lethal traps that protect the final treasure. The delvers know versions of the same story, which differ from one another on the vital details that will let them stroll through all the spikes and pits. The question is not just how the story relates to the stronghold, but *whose* legend – if anyone’s – applies.

## PREPARING FOR THE ADVENTURE

*The Story of Ezkali* (below) presents a summary of the tale with which at least two adventurers in a group are familiar. For each adventurer who knows the legend, or perhaps for a few groups of people, the GM must create the version they know. Copy the summaries below and modify them as necessary with any text editor. Points of variance are noted in brackets, with different options separated by slashes. For example, “The nuclear bomb is detonated if the [red/green/yellow/plaid] wire is cut.” Pick the desired option and remove the ones that aren’t appropriate; make sure that different versions disagree on at least some points. In this example, one version might say the bomb will go off if the red wire is cut, while another suggests it’s the yellow wire. Distribute different accounts to different players when the adventure begins. Make sure they each read their own rather than relying on one or two players to read them aloud; the point of the exercise is for them to discover that their *characters* know different versions of the story and to negotiate the differences. It’s very important to keep track of which options are chosen through the story. Some are red herrings, but others constitute vital clues concerning how to disarm the traps associated with each section of the story; see the individual entries under *The Temple of the Golden Geniza* (pp. 6-8) for details.

The GM has a few choices as to setting up relationships between the variations handed to the players and the actual situation at their destination, although the question here isn’t which rendering is the historically “true” version of the myth so much as which version is closest to the one the builders of the underground complex knew. Here are three options to consider:

*One True Version:* One person (or one subset of the party) knows the *one* right version – or, at least, the variation used by the builders.

*Majority Rule:* Several versions vary here and there, but more often than not, their information is correct. In any given situation, a majority of the versions with which adventurers are familiar will be correct.

*Independent Versions:* No particular relationship exists between the versions the questers know and the one used by the builders. Any of the adventurers’ accounts could match the builders’ version here and there, but there’s no pattern.

The first two present a solvable puzzle. The third largely introduces an element of randomness into the process, but still provides an interesting complication for the adventurers.

## The Golden What, Now?

The word *geniza* refers to a practice of document storage in the Jewish tradition. Documents containing the name of God cannot simply be thrown away. Rather, they must be ritually disposed of (for example, by burial in a graveyard). Instead of going through the formalities for each individual document as it wore out, people bundled batches together to dispose of all at once. Communities created repositories called *genizot* (singular *geniza*) to contain waiting documents. A *gineza* – often just a cabinet in a synagogue – ended up containing not just ritual texts, but also letters, legal records, contracts, and other items with glancing references to deity. In some places, *anything* in Hebrew and stacks of papers that *might* somewhere contain a reference to God ended up in the *geniza*, just to be on the safe side.

If people were scrupulous about gathering documents but in no hurry to send them to their final destination, a *geniza* could become huge. One of the largest – the legendary Cairo *geniza* – contained nearly a thousand cubic feet of material in an obscure side room, with documents dating from the late ninth century A.D. to the 1880s, when its contents were taken over by a rabbinical scholar, and provided invaluable evidence on a stunning range of topics about daily life in Cairo during the later Middle Ages.

## THE STORY OF EZKALI

The first part of the story sets up Ezkali’s quest. Ezkali is the son of an elderly chief in the frozen lands of the distant south. Carolias is a wanderer who came to live with the tribe, later becoming Ezkali’s boon companion. On the night of the first [full/new] moon of the new year, the benevolent god Zatulu appeared to them both in a dream in the guise of a wise old man, telling them that they were to destroy the temples of the evil god Chuhukag. The next morning, they discover that they have had the same dream, so they set out with the strongest spears they can find. For a [month/year], they go raiding, riding a pair of white bulls sent for them by Zatulu himself. After destroying an evil temple, Carolias loots the bodies of slain priests. Chuhukag sees this destruction and furiously transforms the gold armband of one of his priests into a poisonous [viper/spider/scorpion]. Carolias inadvertently steps on it and is stung. Ezkali kills the venomous creature, but not in time to save his friend. A dying priest tells Ezkali that Chuhukag has taken Carolias’ soul with him to the pits of Hell. Ezkali swears to avenge his friend’s death and – if possible – to save him from Chuhukag.

In the second part of the legend, after taking Carolias’ weapons and wandering for four days, Ezkali encounters the great sage Mbale. Mbale tells him that he may recover his friend only by going to Hell and [defeating the guardians of the underworld/challenging Chuhukag personally]. To reach Hell, Mbale says, he must take his father’s boat across the western ocean to an island. Ezkali spends seven weeks in his boat fighting storms and [sea serpents/sharks/giant squid] sent against him. At dawn of the first day of the third month, he reaches the shore of the island foretold by Mbale.

*Urgent necessity prompts many to do things, at the very thoughts of which they perhaps would start at other times.*

– Cervantes, *Don Quixote*

In the third part of the story, Ezkali finds the black gates of the underworld and ventures into it. He converses with several lost souls who try to get him to turn back: a thief, a [warrior who betrayed his lord/cruel lord who oppressed his people], and an unfaithful [wife/husband]. They also tell him that the spirit of Carolius is not among them. Chuhukag has taken it to a lower hell, to which they eventually direct him. Finally, he comes to the bridge from the upper circle of Hell to the lower. A gong stands next to it, which he rings [three/four] times. Then, taking out his spear, he strikes the gong and breaks it in half. Having struck the alarm to formally challenge Chuhukag, he begins to cross the bridge.

The fourth part of the story covers the grand battle. No sooner does Ezkali cross the bridge than he is confronted by a fierce horde of demons. He faces [crawling/striding/flying] demons first, then [crawling/striding/flying] ones, and finally [crawling/striding/flying] ones. [Here, pick options so that each is faced but the order is different between conflicting versions.] Ezkali and the demons, including Chuhukag himself, fight a long battle, shaking the pillars of Hell and causing earthquakes above. Ezkali strikes the evil god in the eyes with his [spear/fist]. Blinded and screaming, Chuhukag falls back, and Ezkali rushes past him. Ezkali finds Carolius and breaks his bonds. Together, they return to the surface, bearing many treasures.

### *Prolonging the Agony*

This adventure only presents only the core. The GM may want to expand the events, adding complications for getting to the temple (Is it in a jungle somewhere? Atop an inaccessible mountain?) and more areas separating the trap rooms, containing monsters and making it a proper dungeon with more for warriors and wizards to do.

## THE TEMPLE OF THE GOLDEN GENIZA

At the beginning of the scenario, the adventurers learn (in any suitable way) about the ruins of a temple complex dedicated to the hero Ezkali and sheltering the long-lost “golden geniza,” a repository of remarkable wisdom. The founders of the temple, who were hyper-conscious of possible blasphemy, had a practice of never throwing away any document that mentioned any deity. In time, it is believed, they accumulated a vast library of all kinds of information.

Of course, the way to the geniza is now without protection. The library lies in an underground stronghold at the end of a series of tests in the form of elaborate traps, each of which was

inspired by a section of the story of Ezkali. The adventurers must make their way through the rooms and disarm or simply survive the traps to claim the prize, using their knowledge of details of Ezkali’s story as clues. The GM may want to make that much clear to the players, with a resident sage learning of the general nature of the lost temple in finding a treasure map to it, or perhaps inscriptions making it abundantly clear that the temple is inspired by Ezkali once they get there. Plus, of course, the GM should give them a chance to read over their own versions of the story of Ezkali before things start in earnest.

Once inside the ruined temple, there are four areas corresponding to parts of the story: The spike corridor draws clues from the death of Carolius. The sea monster room was inspired by Ezkali’s sea voyage. The bridge was based on Ezkali’s journey to the underworld. The demon room symbolically recounts his battle with the demons. Only when they pass through those do they arrive at the geniza itself.

Each trap in this adventure is described by the following statistics:

*Detect:* The skill to roll against to spot the trap before it gets triggered.

*Disarm:* The skill to stop the trap from going off. “No” indicates that the trap cannot be disarmed.

*Circumvent:* How to avoid the trap entirely; e.g., stepping over tripwires or walking stealthily so as not to waken sleeping guard animals. “No” indicates the trap cannot be circumvented.

*Evade:* How to avoid or resist the trap’s effects if it can’t be circumvented. “No” indicates the trap cannot be evaded.

*Effects:* What the trap does if it isn’t disarmed, circumvented, or evaded.

*Shots:* How many times the trap can go off before it has to be reset or reloaded. A trap which does not need resetting, such as an open pit, has an infinite number of shots.

*Rearm:* The skill to roll against to reset the trap after it has gone off. This statistic does not exist for a trap with infinite shots.

### *Spike Corridor*

Map on p. 139

This long, narrow corridor has moderately sized (9” square) tiles decorated with images of a variety of unpleasant creatures (spiders, scorpions, snakes, spiky lizards, and so on). The walls are decorated with what appears to be an elaborate fretwork screen made of stone, with many small openings.

The key to avoiding the spikes that stand ready to shoot out of the wall is knowing the right poisonous animal to evade from the first part of the story. Refrain from stepping on the type that killed Carolius, and the corridor is safe. In an ironic twist, this part of the temple is infested by poisonous snakes (treat as the rattlesnake on p. B458), who are too light to trigger the spikes.



*Detect:* Traps+2 to discover that sections of floor down the corridor are pressure-sensitive. *All* are sensitive, but only *some* actually trigger the trap.

*Disarm:* No.

*Circumvent:* Automatic, assuming no one steps on the wrong tiles. Tiles are large enough that avoiding the wrong ones is easy if moving at a walking pace (half Move or less), but roll against DX for each yard of movement if moving faster than that to avoid inadvertently stepping on a wrong tile. An exceptionally nimble hero could use the holes in the wall for the spears as finger-holds and climb the whole length of the corridor, never touching the ground. This requires a Climbing (minus encumbrance) roll to begin, then another every five minutes; failure means falling onto several tiles, triggering the trap on a 15 or less. Climbers can move four horizontal yards per minute.

*Effects:* If a hero walking down the corridor steps on the wrong tile (12 or less each turn if he doesn't know which to avoid), several short spears thrust out of the gaps in the screen on each side and immediately retract. Treat as two separate attacks at skill 10. However, an additional spear hits for every two points in the margin of success (that is, one hit on a roll of 10, two on a roll of 8, and so on). Each spear does 1d+3 imp. Active defenses are possible, but at least one set of attacks is likely to come from side or rear hexes.

*Shots:* Infinite.

*Rearm:* Spears retract into the walls, rearming the trap immediately.

*A man should keep his little  
brain attic stocked with all the  
furniture that he is likely to use,  
and the rest he can put away in  
the lumber-room of his library,  
where he can get it if he wants it.*

– Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

## Sea Monster Room

Map on p. 140

This room is at the bottom of two flights of steps, one leading down and in, the other leading up and out. All surfaces are covered with glazed tile, though the floor also has a great many small (4-6" square) metal gratings. The ceiling is peaked 15' above the floor, like the inside of a gabled roof. The floor, walls, and even ceiling are slightly damp. Along the ceiling are a series of large brass disks, 3' across and dark brown with age. Reliefs on the disks depict a series of aquatic items: a ship, a whale, a serpent, a shark, a squid, and a giant turtle. A brass socket suitable for a pole about 2" across is embedded in the floor beneath each disk, and there's a matching indentation in the center of each disk. A brass-bound pole resembling a dull spear, exactly the correct height to reach from socket to disk-center (about 8'), lies near the foot of the stairs leading out.

The key to avoiding this trap is knowing which monster Ezkali fights in part two of the story.

A door at the top of the stairs leads out of the room, with a sluice gate directly over it. If the adventurers want out, they must open the door; to open the door, they have to go up the stairs, which triggers the trap (see *Effects*, below), assuming it hasn't been disarmed. Because the door is locked, someone must pick the lock or bang open the door, which takes time; with the massive jet of water coming from overhead, any attempts to try to get that door open once the trap is triggered are at a massive penalty (see *Effects*).

*Detect:* Traps+2 to discover that the steps leading out of the room are all pressure-sensitive.

*Disarm:* If the "spear" is set against the disk depicting the monster Ezkali fought, the trap is disarmed for five minutes. After that time, the disk retracts slightly, allowing the "spear" to fall to the floor and roll away. Additionally, if the delvers have enough spears and 8' poles, they can try putting those in place in every position around the room. The fit won't be as good as the spear, so it can go wrong; roll against Traps-2 to make this work.

*Circumvent:* Automatic with levitation or some other way to avoid touching the long set of stairs; otherwise no.

*Effects:* If two steps out are stepped on (a lower, then a higher one; people coming back down the steps don't trigger the trap), all of the disks and a number of other panels in the ceiling are unlocked. These sluice gates release torrents of water into the room, rushing in at a rate of 6" per second, filling the room nearly to the top in 30 seconds. Anyone standing under a disk or at the door out of the room is directly under a particularly strong jet of water; such heroes must roll against ST-4 to retain their footing and are at -4 to any DX-based tasks. Once the room is close to full, the spouts close again and drains in the floor let the water out half as fast as it came in. The water is also full of leaping leeches (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1*, p. 22): 1d/2 of them per second the water flows into the room.

*Shots:* Infinite.

*Rearm:* The trap rearms after the room has drained of water.

## The Bridge

Map on p. 141

A narrow stone and metal bridge spans an underground chasm. The bridge is clearly divided into several sections. A little pressure, even a firm push on one edge, will make it flip over completely, spinning around what is probably a central beam. Each section has a metal ring at either end, attached to a chain that is anchored to a mechanism deep inside the body of the bridge itself. The ring may be pulled out a few feet, and automatically retracts like the pull-cord on a talking doll.

Several swarms of angry but mundane bats (treat as a swarm of bats, p. B461) equal to the number of adventurers are hidden among the stalactites overhead, as are half that many foul bats (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2*, p. 23); both will attack as soon as anyone makes enough noise to be heard. The floor below is muddy (a slow stream runs through it) and inhabited by a seemingly inexhaustible supply of erupting slimes (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2*, p. 23).

The secret to dealing with the bridge is *not* to pull the ring on one section of bridge, depending on how many times Ezkali rings the gong; it's that number plus one. For example, if it was rung four times, the fifth ring should not be pulled (that is, "no fifth ring").

*Detect:* Traps+5 or IQ to discover that sections of bridge are unsteady.

*Disarm:* When the ring is pulled on most sections, that section becomes secure and will not turn over (see *Effects* below) until the chain has fully retracted five seconds later. However, *one* section acts in the opposite way. It wobbles if touched, but won't flip over *unless* the ring is pulled.

*Circumvent:* Walk very, *very* carefully down the center. For each yard moved along unsecured sections, roll against (DX - total distance moved that turn) to avoid tipping the section over. Also roll against DX-4 after any violent action is taken, including any melee attack or active defense. Those with Perfect Balance don't need to make the DX roll when walking and get +4 to rolls for violent actions. Or bypass the bridge (e.g., via flight).

*Effects:* If a section of bridge is not secured, it can easily flip completely over, dumping anyone on it to the floor 30' below.

*Shots:* Infinite.

*Lightning Attainment, these are a Bodhisattva-Mahasattva's five stores of wisdom, which are great stores of wisdom, inexhaustible stores of wisdom, universally inexhaustible stores of wisdom, and boundless stores of wisdom.*

– Chen-chi Chang,  
*A Treasury of  
Mahayana Sutras*

## Demon Room

Map on p. 12

This long room is divided at intervals by sets of three gates equipped with tall turnstiles made of sturdy iron bars (firing missiles through a set of bars is done at -2 per set). In each set, one gate is decorated with the image of a demonic creature on all fours, the second with a demon walking upright, and the third with a winged creature. Only one SM 0 or +1 person at a time can fit through a single turnstile, and all other turnstiles are locked down while another is in motion.

To safely pass through, adventurers must know the order in which Ezkali fought the various types of demons in the fourth part of the story.

*Detect:* Per-based Thaumatology, or Perception + Magery for mages.

*Disarm:* No.

*Circumvent:* Walk through the gates in the correct order. If the story indicates that Ezkali fought flying demons first, the gate marked with the flying monster is the one providing safe passage through that set of gates, and so on.

*Effects:* If someone passes through the wrong gate, *all* gates lock down and a pair of monsters suddenly appear at the edges of the section to attack the offending person, depending on which gate he should have passed through: obsidian jaguars (*Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1*, p. 24) for creeping monsters, as-Sharak (*Dungeon Fantasy 2*, p. 21) for striding monsters, and winged Demons of Old (*Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1*, p. 10, but with Flight (Winged), giving them an aerial move of 14) for the flying monsters. The gates remain locked until either the monsters or the trespasser is defeated; monsters then vanish as they appeared.

*Shots:* Infinite.

## The Geniza

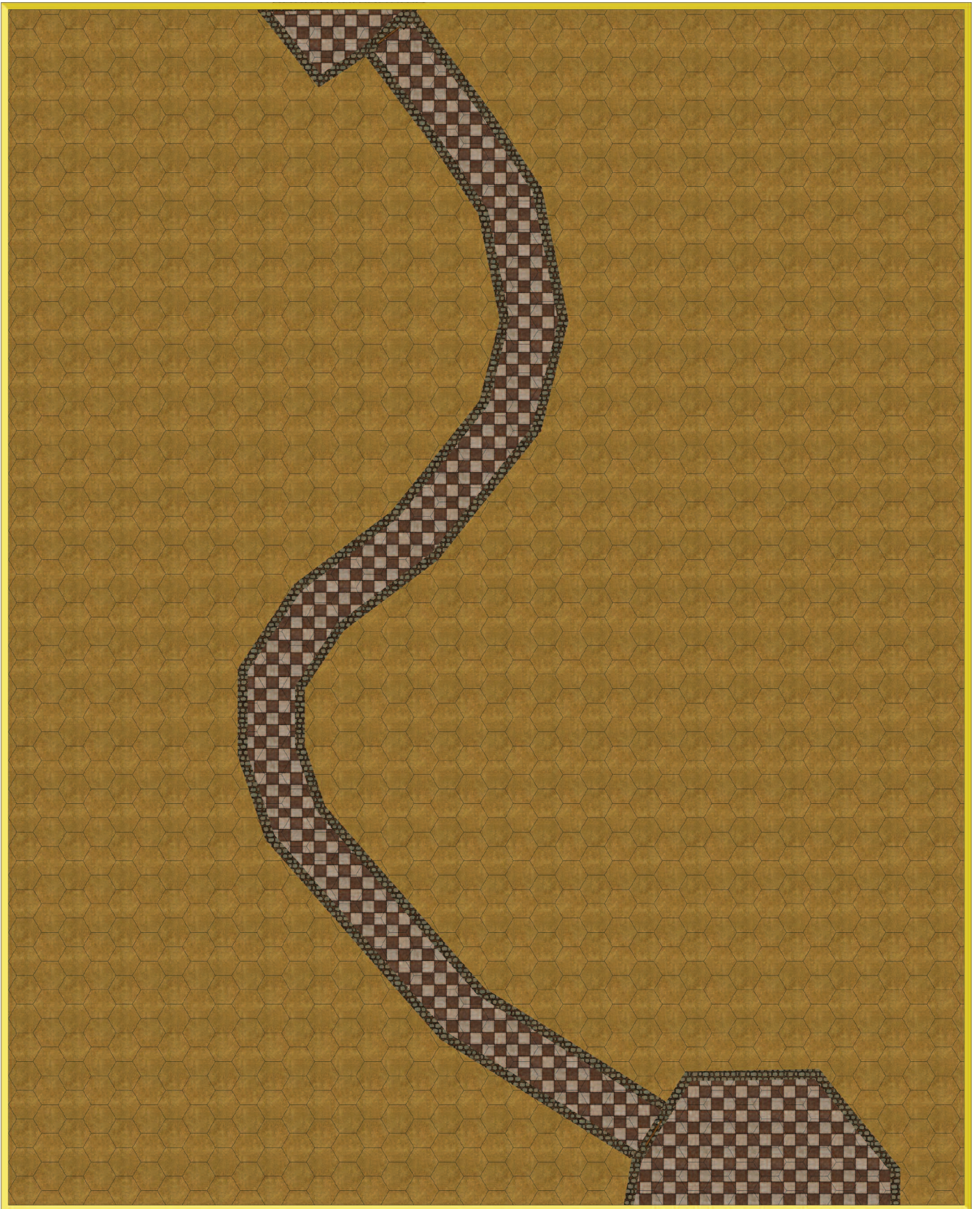
Once past the demon room, only the geniza remains. It is held in a small but extremely well-decorated room. The walls and ceiling are adorned with shallow geometric carvings, and every inch of it is coated with gold leaf (about a half-pound total weight if adventurers are determined to scrape it all off and take it with them). The documents are found in cupboards around the room, closed with latches but unlocked.

The geniza may be used as a library for esoteric topics, but it's difficult to work with. A scholar may dig through the jumble of papers to find a useful manual, selecting one of these subjects before doing so: Alchemy, Cultural Familiarity (dead civilizations only), Esoteric Medicine, Heraldry, Hidden Lore, any mortal language, History, Naturalist, Occultism, Pharmacy, Philosophy, Physiology, Poisons, Strategy, Thaumatology, or Theology. Each attempt takes eight hours and requires a roll against Research-10. If the attempt succeeds, roll a die. On a 1-3, the manual is the equivalent of a primer, 4-5 gives the equivalent of a textbook, and 6 the equivalent of a thesis. (See *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 4: Sages*, p. 13, for the game effects of each type.) If desired, use the tables in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 8: Treasure Tables*, p. 27 to determine the precise form of the manual. On a critical success, the scholar finds a scroll containing a useful spell, as determined by the GM. On a critical failure, the scholar finds a text which is fascinating but useless. Regardless of the result, the GM determines the skill and type of manual, and the scholar *must* use one of his Book-Learned Wisdom slots (*Dungeon Fantasy 4*, p. 8) to learn it; he must retain it until he acquires a *new* manual with which to replace it.

The drawback is that the geniza is also large and heavy. *Very* large and *very* heavy. All told, the documents of the geniza weigh four tons – giving it 160 HP; it's also Fragile (Flammable) – and taking up about 125 cubic feet. If adventurers can only recover parts of it, or if the collection is damaged, Research rolls are at -1 for every 50 lbs. they fail to keep *and* -1 for every 3 HP of damage the collection takes.

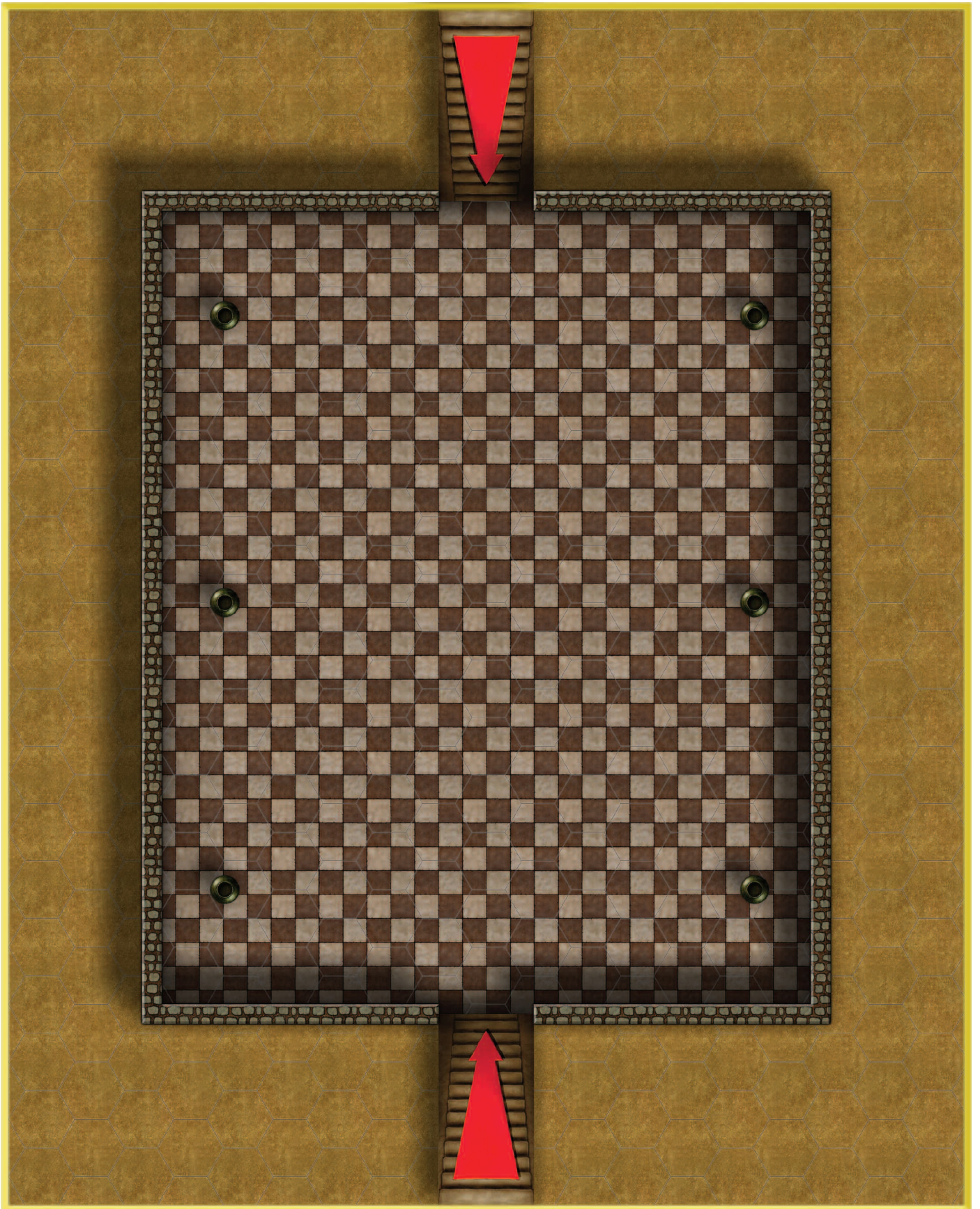
## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Matt Riggsby has been playing RPGs since the only game in town came in three poorly typeset tan booklets in a white box, using cheap dice that slowly converted themselves from icosahedrons to spheres. Having been educated in the lore of lost civilizations, he still kills things and takes their stuff while working a day job for artificers of engines of great healing. The marching order for the rest of his party includes a sorceress, a third-level rogue, and a pack of dogs.



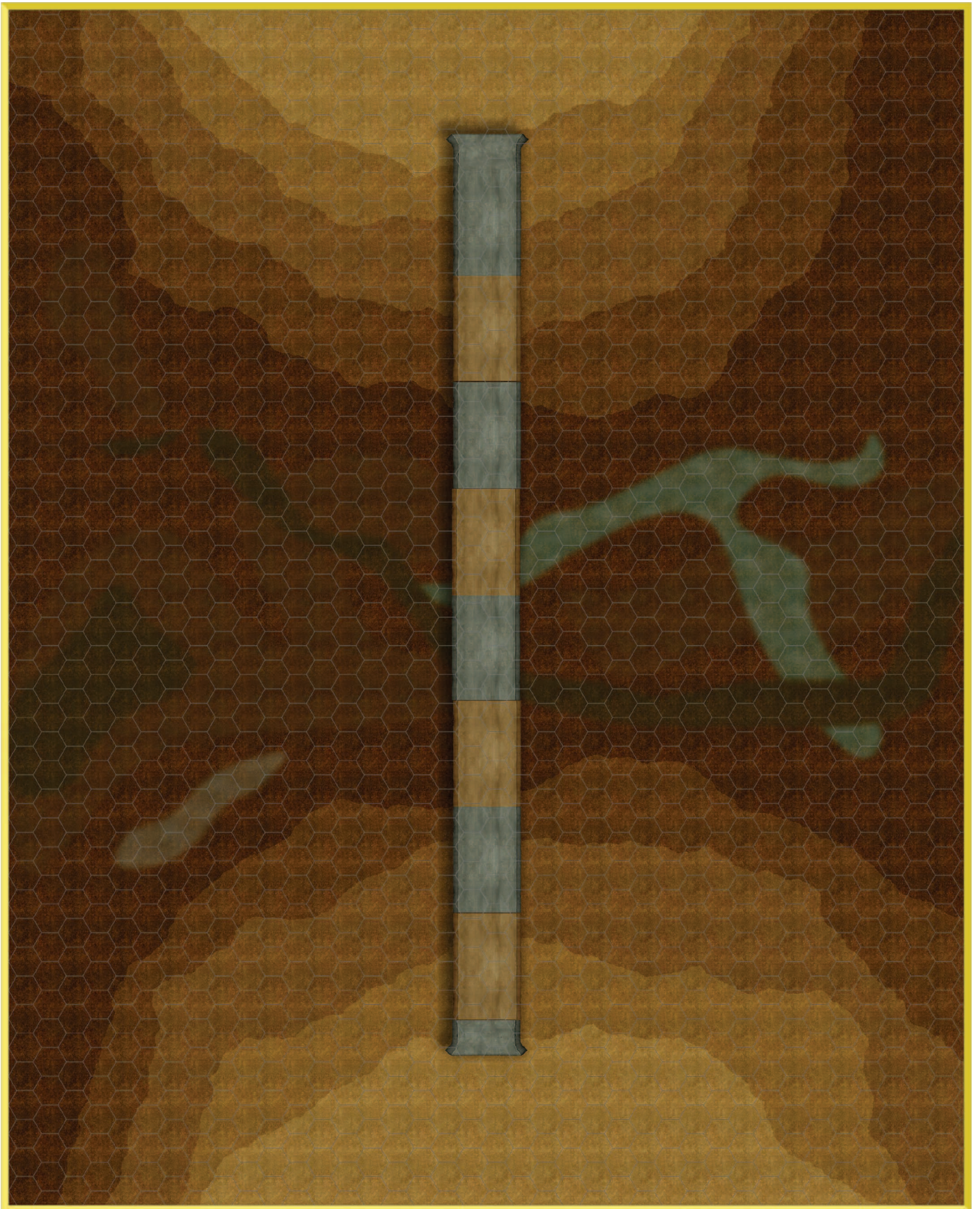
**MAP OF THE SPIKE CORRIDOR**

*Scale: 1 hex = 1 yard*



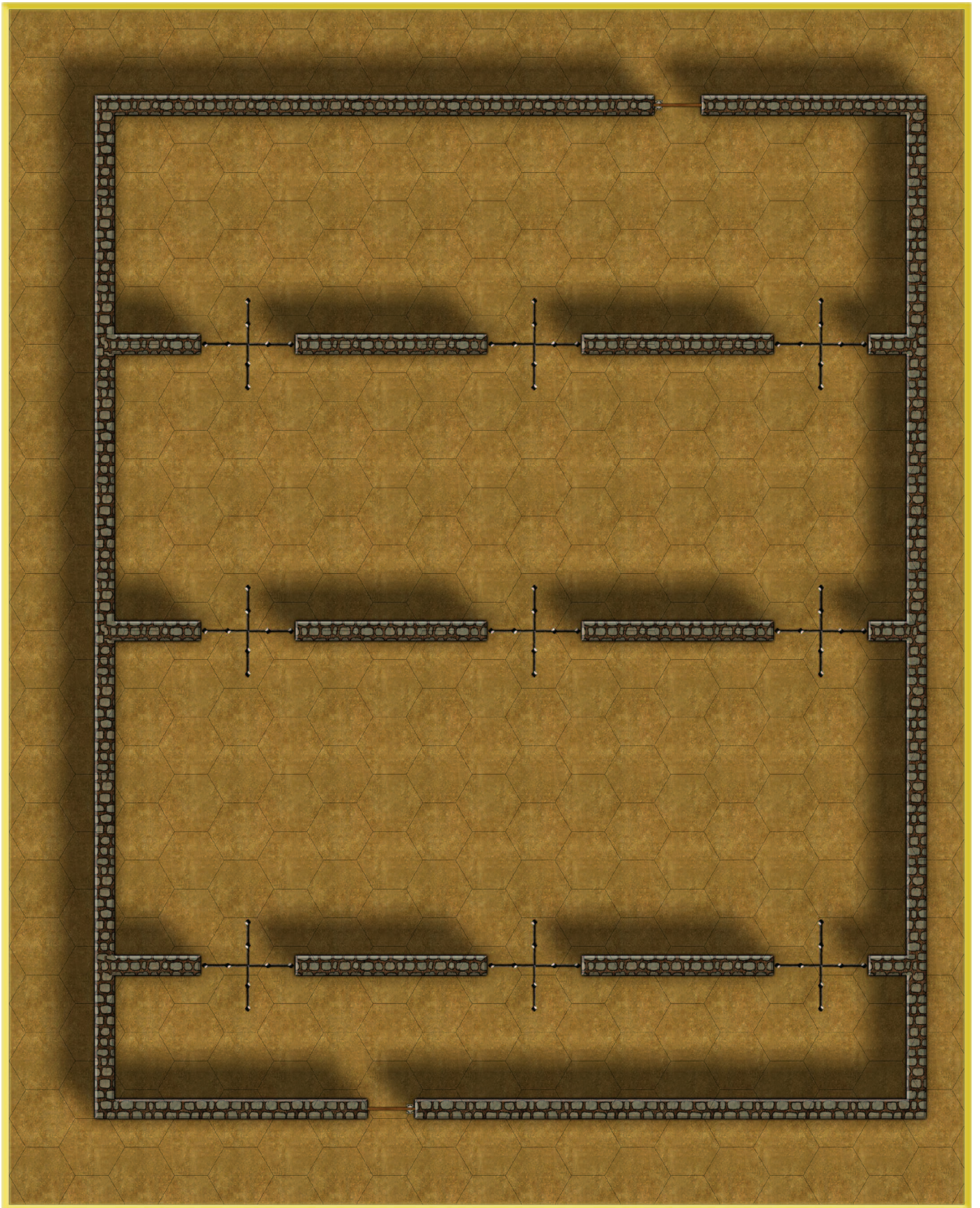
**MAP OF THE SEA MONSTER ROOM**

*Scale: 1 hex = 1 yard*



**MAP OF THE BRIDGE**

*Scale: 1 hex = 1 yard*



**MAP OF THE DEMON ROOM**

*Scale: 1 hex = 1 yard*

# EIDETIC MEMORY

## CAVERNS OF THE CHRONOMANCER

BY DAVID L. PULVER

This is a *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* adventure is suitable for a mid-sized party of novice adventurers or a smaller party of experienced delvers. With minor changes it can also be adapted to the Yrth setting of *GURPS Banestorm*.

### RAIDERS

The local lord has received disturbing reports that something or someone has been raiding farms and livestock near the hamlet of Goatwater, in a sparsely populated hilly region. Yokels have gone missing, and dogs and livestock have vanished. A party of foresters led by a local ranger disappeared after being sent to investigate. Disturbingly, a wizard, one Ilarion Ubermanthus, lives in the area. According to rumor, for the past decade or two, Ilarion has lived as a hermit in a well-furnished cave in the hills, apparently engaged in arcane magical research. For several years, he has written vague letters to old friends and mentors promising great things. Did something go wrong with one of his spells or experiments, releasing some summoned demon?

It's not clear whether Ilarion is involved in whatever is happening in the hills, or a victim of it, but the local authorities would like the adventurers to look into it. There's a reward of \$2,000 to stop whatever is attacking the villagers, but more importantly, Ilarion's cave is reputedly stocked with a lot of valuable magic items, including the mage's library of spells and wizard's staff tipped with a mighty Powerstone. If he's dead, they're free for the taking (after whatever killed him is disposed of).

### ILARION'S CAVE

The innkeeper of the nearest inn on the road to Stonedragon Hills can give them an earful.

*Master Ilarion?* "Everyone's heard of him – he's the most famous wizard in these parts, even if no one sees much of him. He and an apprentice or two have been living in a cave for the last 10 years or so, researching new spells or enchanting or

whatever wizards do! Some hill folk say he pops round once a year at the nearest village or the inn, often materializing out of thin air! Then, he spends some coin to buy flour, cheese, and the local cider, ogles the barmaids – he's a lusty fellow for a graybeard – picks up any mail, then vanishes again in a puff of smoke. It's said Ilarion is a cantankerous old buzzard, though, and not fond of unwanted company. I heard that the last time anyone bothered him – some fool wanting to be his next apprentice – he just pointed his finger, and the young idiot vanished from the cave entrance and reappeared in Goatwater Pond." (Anyone with magical knowledge will recognize the rarity of teleportation, and may suspect that Ilarion has access to other "impossible" Gate spells.)

*Directions?* "No secret. Just follow the Old King's Road west for five miles from here. You'll see some low green hills rising up north of the road, out of the mists. The one on the right's Stonedragon Hill. When you reach the first two hills, turn off the road and follow the valley between them north. Take the old goat track, and after a quarter mile or so, the track forks. If you take the northeast fork along the valley for another half mile, you'll reach the hamlet of Goatwater (population 40). Take the northwest fork, and it climbs Stonedragon Hill. Look for a lightning-blasted tree near the summit; the cave's right there."

*How'd the hill get its name?* "Long time back, some local goatherds found some ancient dragon bones, hard as stone, in the caves there -- along with some old drawings on the walls of animals and hunters. Local folk say they may have belonged to the 'first men who worshipped the old gods' or were made by 'ancient wood elves.'"

### GOATWATER FORD

This tiny hamlet nestled in the valley is centered on a small, dilapidated church run by a single priest. About 20 poor families farm the sparse soil and raise sheep and goats in the surrounding meadows and hillside. There's a small smithy and the village elder's house that doubles as a wanna-be tavern.

The locals are armed with spears and pitchforks, because they're afraid of whatever is stealing their livestock. The local priest, Father Bruce, says troubles started last week when some a goatherd named Rolf went missing after he went looking for some lost animals. Then Old Man Vin, a

trapper, said he heard growls and grunts in the night on the track near Stonedragon Hill, and said he saw a print like he'd never seen before – a giant claw mark! Sheep started to go missing, too. A few local foresters went to investigate, but haven't been since.

## Adventure Background

Ilarion Ubermanthus is a reclusive mage who lives in a cave in the Stonedragon Hills, a wilderness region several miles outside of town. Ilarion was a master of Gate magic, and his particular interest was the study of the world's ancient past. He and an apprentice chose this particular site for his experiments because of the exotic fossils of ancient and apparently long-extinct beasts, some resembling monstrous lizards like wingless dragons, and ancient cave paintings left by peoples that once inhabited the region.

After perfecting his time-gate spell, Ilarion decided it would be interesting to seek the origins of the dragons! Early attempts at using a Time Shift spell convinced Ilarion that it was too easy to get lost, so he took the slow-and-sure approach of creating a magical gate. Ilarion first used Divination spells on fossilized bones to determine how far back in time he should cast his portals to find the "age of wingless dragons." Receiving an answer – one that seemed almost incredible – he flung a portal back millions of years into the past.

Discovering a world with a strange, hot climate filled with giant reptiles (actually dinosaurs), Ilarion was delighted. He enchanted the gate to make it permanent, and ventured into the world several times, only to stop when he was nearly killed and his apprentice slain by a monstrous bipedal lizard. He sealed the gate behind a thick iron-bound door, and continued his researches in other times.

Next, Ilarion grew interested in the question of how long these monstrous lizards had ruled the earth, and whether they were the ancestors of real dragons. To test these theories he constructed a second portal, one that led vastly further into the past. He encountered nothing there but a foul air that smelled of rotten eggs, along with frightening pools of primordial slime, some of it animate. Still, it was interesting, so he made the gate permanent so he could research it at leisure, even bringing back a few samples of these ancient slimes to compare with more modern slime monsters. He sealed the gate behind a thick door.

Still, the redoubtable enchanter did not give up his studies. The aged mage opened a third gate just last week. Deciding to see whether proto-dragons had survived into the recent past, he drew upon his power to create another magical time-gate at the site of some of the old cave paintings on the wall, and stepped back 100,000 years in time.

He found the caves still existed in an era of glacial ice. They were inhabited, not by dinosaurs or slimes, but by fur-clad savages. Skulking through the stoney passages, he heard a crude drumming and guttural chancing. Tiptoeing forward, he spied Ika-Loana, the shaman of the Bear Clan. Ilarion watched from the shadows as the savage cave-girl danced naked, clad only in body paint and a necklace of

animal teeth, ritually calling up the spirits of her ancestors to bless her clan's next hunting trip.

It had been a year since Ilarion had seen a woman, and as he watched this untamed beauty writhe in the circle of firelight, and felt the power she invoked, he became distracted by unfamiliar feelings stirring in him. Indeed, he was so entranced that he did not notice her mate, Oog the Bear-Hunter, as he crept up behind him and bashed the wizard's brains out with his great club.

So passed Ilarion the Chronomancer. But with their shaman's sacred dance interrupted, the other cavemen were concerned at the bad omen, and feared intruders might be here in their sacred caves! The shaman ordered the hunters in her tribe to follow Ilarion's tracks back, which led to a strange rectangle of softly shimmering energy in the rear of their caverns. It was next to a sacred cave painting the shaman had done last year! The rest of the tribe covered back, but Ika-Loana decided this was a sign from the spirits; feeling that she was on the path to some great revelation, she strode through the shimmering portal. Oog and his strongest hunters, unwilling to let her face danger alone or lose their shaman, followed her (the rest of the clan remained behind.)

They cavemen found themselves in a warmer yet strangely familiar world: the caves of Ilarion. But only moments after they entered the portal, the gate suddenly vanished behind them. Ilarion had never made this gate permanent, and with the mage dead, the gate spell collapsed after its duration expired. As a result, it has left Ika-Loana and her hunters trapped in the present.

The cavemen spent time exploring the wizard's cave complex. They pried open doors, smashed chests, all in search of food and valuables. After finding and eating the wizard's strange provisions and getting drunk on his casks of wine and cider, one of the cavemen forced open the locked doors that led to the primal and dinosaur world. Their brief exploration revealed the air was bad in one and the other was full of scary monsters, so they retreated.

The cavemen ventured outside, finding the present-day world comfortably warm and disturbingly green. Their scouts found Goatwater, but the village, with its houses and odd-faced people was scary, so they retreated. They have limited themselves to killing a few rangers, shepherds, and goatherds, raiding some outlying woodcutter's hovels, and stealing goats, sheep, and chickens, taking the animals back to the caves to eat.

While they were relaxing after their latest raid, however, some dinosaurs and slimes have crept through the portals . . .



# STONEDRAGON HILL

This steep hill is about half a mile wide, covered with brush and riddled with old limestone caves. A few goat tracks wind up the hill. Following one past a lightning-blasted tree reveals a cave mouth 12' wide. There's a heavy red-painted wooden frame and door on the mouth of the cave, with a lock on it, but it's been smashed open. (If someone asks, or if one of them examining it makes an IQ roll, reveal it was broken from the *inside*.)

Once the investigators are inside the caves, they'll notice the faint scent of rotting flesh, with the stench getting stronger as they get closer to dead bodies.

## Map

The scale of the map is *two* yards per hex. The caverns are dark except where noted, and of rough natural stone, though there are some signs they have been widened.

*Continual Light:* Ilarion regularly created several of these to light his sanctum without filling it with smoke. He placed them through the cave as permanent lights. Some are white light, but he used a Color spell to make others red so as to preserve night vision. A few of these have gone out, but rooms marked (L) are still illuminated.

*Time and space are fragments  
of the infinite for the use of finite  
creatures.*

– Henri Frédéric Amiel

## 1. Entrance

This tunnel slopes gradually downward, running perhaps eight yards below ground before leveling out.

## 2. Painted Cave

On the cave wall are red and black markings: hand prints or circles or spirals, but also recognizable deer and giant elephants being hunted by stick-figure men with spears. Most designs are faded, but a few look recent.

On the floor here is the skeleton of a horse, stripped of meat. Its head is caved in. Next to it is the recent corpse of a man clad in forester-green (one of the missing rangers), his skull smashed in. He has no weapons on him.

## 3. Storage Cave (L)

This is a cave filled with smashed wooden barrels and pots. On the floor are splinters of wood mixed with a mess of cheese scraps, spilled milk, fish bones, bread crumbs, shards of pottery and apple cores, and smears of honey. Cloth sacks of flour have been split on the floor. On a shelf attached to one wall are open, half-spilled jars of cloves, all-spice, black pepper, and other spices, some of their contents dumped onto the table. There is about \$600 worth of spices (weighing 4 lbs.) here.

This was the wizard's pantry, raided by the cavemen on their first day here.

## 4. Cave of the Well (L)

There are two cavemen here (see *Caveman Hunters*, below). In the middle of this room is a 3' wide shaft. In one corner of the room is a coil of rope (30'), two tin one-gallon buckets with hinged lids, and a wooden barrel (filled with slightly brackish water). A third bucket stands in one corner, with a 2-lb. rock placed on top of the lid.

The cavemen are guarding their water source. The hole is a well Ilarion dug using earth magic. The well shaft leads down 24' into a pool of fresh, icy-cold water.

## 5. Wizard's Library Cave (L)

Adventurers approaching may hear grunts, and the sound of something wooden being smashed up. This cavern, illuminated by a magical light, has good ventilation (thanks to a few small (1') shafts in the ceiling. It seems to have once been furnished but now it's a mess.

In the cave are five hairy savages in skins. One of them is butchering a goat with a shortsword taken from the forester slain at the entrance. The others are building a fire in the middle of the cave. They are feeding it with the forester's longbow, some broken arrows, bed clothes, and pages ripped from a large black book. Also in the room is a smashed bookshelf, and remnants of a desk and writing papers.

Close examination of the fire will reveal they have been feeding it with tomes of occult lore. Spending five minutes poring over the few papers that remain coupled with a Thaumatology skill roll will identify it as a wizard's grimoire, relating to the college of Gate magic. There are perhaps 1d spells still remaining intact among the pages. The GM should choose spells from the Gate college, following the prohibitions in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 1* (p. 20) to avoid unbalancing the campaign. (Ilarion's mastery of time and space travel should die with him, as the plot device it is.)

## Caveman Hunters

These hairy, half-naked savages wear crude animal skins. They are 5' tall but quite muscular. Their heads have small chins, large jaws, sloping foreheads, and bulging beetle brows. They walk erect, are armed with big clubs, and speak a primitive grunting tribal language augmented by plenty of exaggerated gestures. (They are Neanderthals from 100,000 years or so in the past, or this world's equivalent era.)

<b>ST:</b> 13	<b>HP:</b> 13	<b>Speed:</b> 5.25
<b>DX:</b> 11	<b>Will:</b> 11	<b>Move:</b> 5
<b>IQ:</b> 9	<b>Per:</b> 10	
<b>HT:</b> 10	<b>FP:</b> 10	<b>SM:</b> +0
<b>Dodge:</b> 8	<b>Parry:</b> 9	<b>DR:</b> 0

**Light Club (12):** 2d crushing. Reach 1.

**Spear (12):** 1d+3 impaling. Reach 1-2.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Appearance (Unattractive); Bloodlust (12); DR 1 (Partial, Skull); Impulsiveness (9); Intolerance; Low TL (TL0); Sense of Duty (tribal shaman); Short Lifespan 1; Temperature Tolerance (Cold); Tribal Language (Native).

**Skills:** Brawling-13; Broadsword-12; Dropping-11; Gesture-10; Naturalist-9; Spear-12; Stealth-11; Survival (Mountains)-10; Throwing-11; Tracking-10; Wrestling-11.

*Roam abroad in the world, and take your fill of its enjoyments before the day shall come when you must quit it for good.*

– Sa'di

## 6. Dinosaur Gate Cave

This room was the wizard's dining room and kitchen. There is a wooden table and two stools in the center of the room, and a shelf with cooking utensils, a fireplace with an iron cauldron and a narrow (1'-wide) ventilation shaft above it. On the east side of the cave is a smashed-in iron door that leads to shimmering rectangular portal. The door was obviously heavily barred, but now it is broken.

If the explorers venture through the gate, the GM can have them find the tyrannosaur on the other side after they discover the grave mentioned below. If they do not, the GM should have the monstrous lizard come through the gate and enter the caverns.

The gate was a permanent gate created by Ilarion. It leads out to a time millions of years in the past, before these caves were formed. The gate opens into a humid forest filled with towering oaks, cypresses, and giant sequoia trees. The forest is alive with reptiles, large insects, but no sizable mammals. If they remain long enough, huge dinosaurs may be spotted moving through the trees. For dramatic effect, the adventurers may quickly encounter a herbivorous creature pursued by a tyrannosaur.

The oxygen in this world is thicker. After a few minutes, suffer a -1 IQ; roll vs. HT to avoid euphoria leading to being Overconfident. It will also dry out eyes (-1 to Vision rolls).

Fifty yards past the gate, something black and shiny can be spotted through the trees. Taking a minute to explore reveals it's a stone slab set before a giant sequoia tree. The marker reads (in whatever local tongue is used by scholars, such as Latin):

*In memory of the apprentice Signy Mallorian, slain valiantly defending her master Ilarion against an armored proto-dragon as we explored this world of the dawn.*

*Rest in peace, loyal servant.*

Under 8' of sod is a grave containing a tall skeleton clad in a ragged blue dress and leather boots. Tucked into the robe's pocket is an ivory wand tipped with a opal gem in the robe's pocket (with a 2-point Powerstone; it's worth \$1,000 for the ivory alone).

### Proto-Dragon King (Tyrannosaurus)

This 39'-foot long and 15'-tall green-and-brown-scaled bipedal reptile tears at its prey with a jaw full of 6"-long fangs, or thrashes them with its long tail. The creature has only one eye, however, a relic of its battle with Ilarion a few years ago.

<b>ST:</b> 34	<b>HP:</b> 34	<b>Speed:</b> 7.00
<b>DX:</b> 14	<b>Will:</b> 11	<b>Move:</b> 17
<b>IQ:</b> 2	<b>Per:</b> 14	
<b>HT:</b> 13	<b>FP:</b> 13	<b>SM:</b> +5
<b>Dodge:</b> 10	<b>Parry:</b> N/A	<b>DR:</b> 2

**Bite (13\*):** 3d+1 impaling. Reach C.

**Tail Swipe (13\*):** 3d+4 crushing. Reach 1-7.

**Traits:** DR 4 (skull only); Fangs; One Eye; Sharp Claws; Short, Weak Arms (1/4 ST); Striker (Tail; Crushing; Cannot Parry; Long, SM+1; Limited Arc, Rear Only); Wild Animal.

**Skills:** Tracking-15.

\* Includes -1 from One Eye.

## 7. Bedchamber (L)

This chamber, illuminated by a red continual light, holds a four-poster bed and thick rugs. The chamber has delighted the cave shaman, and she and her mate Oog were trying out the bed together. Oog is now resting in the bed admiring his mate, while Ika-Loana paints the walls, using her fingers and pots of ash-paste and mashed berries to draw a picture of a stick-figure Oog bashing in the head of a pointy-headed figure (the wizard); she has also drawn illustrations of local sheep and goats. The adventurers may note the style is identical to the cave paintings at the opening Painted Cave.

This bedchamber was shared by Ilarion and (when she still lived) his apprentice/lover, Signy Mallorian. One of two unlocked chests in the room holds the wizard's spare clothes: a tall hat, hooded cap (fur-trimmed, worth \$1,000), a long coat, and a long scarf. Hidden in the back is a bottle of 100-year-old whiskey worth \$400. Beside the bed lies a staff with onyx tip and 20-point Powerstone, which the cavemen took from the wizard. A second chest contains neatly folded women's clothing and shoes of simple but attractive cut (\$500), plus some personal basics including an ivory comb (\$100) and a small silver hand mirror (\$200).

### Cave Shaman Ika-Loana

An unusually pretty cavewoman with startling blue eyes emphasized by mask-like black markings around them. Her body is daubed with blue paint. She wears a necklace of animal teeth, strategic bits of fur, and a (currently) sheathed bone knife. Her life-mate, Oog (p. 147) is always near.

**ST** 11; **DX** 12; **IQ** 13; **HT** 14.

Damage 1d-1/1d+1; BL 24 lbs.; HP 13; Will 15; Per 17; FP 14. Basic Speed 6.50; Basic Move 6; Dodge 9; Parry 10 (Knife). SM 0; 5'5"; 124 lbs.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Animal Empathy; Impulsive (12); Low TL (TL0); Magery 2; Nosy; Proud.

**Skills:** Artist (Painting)-13; Area Knowledge-11; Brawling-12; Cooking-12; Dancing-13; Hiking-12; Knife-14; Knot Tying-12; Leadership-14; Naturalist-14; Stealth-14; Survival (Mountains)-14; Religious Ritual-15; Tracking-13

**Spells:** Beast Soother-15; Create Fire-14; Death Vision-20; Deflect Energy-14; Heat-14, Ignite Fire-14; Lend Energy-14; Lend Vitality-14, Minor Healing-15, Recover Energy-15, Resist Cold-14 Shape Fire-15, Flame Weapon-15, Flame Jet-15, Summon Spirit-17, Warmth-15.

**Equipment:** Bone knife (1d-2 imp).

## Oog the Bear-Hunter

The shaman's mate is large (6' tall) and fat initiate of a pre-historic bear cult. He wears a hooded bearskin and a necklace of bear fangs. If confronted by well-armed adventurers, he will grin, throw down his club, roar, and shape change into a giant cave bear!

**ST** 14; **DX** 12; **IQ** 9; **HT** 10.

Damage 1d/2d; BL 39 lbs.; HP 14; Will 11; Per 11; FP 10.

Basic Speed 6.00; Basic Move 6; Dodge 9; Parry 9 (Broadsword).

SM 0; 6'; 300 lbs.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Alternate Form (Cave Bear; Reduced Time, 1 second); Appearance (Unattractive); Bloodlust (12); Combat Reflexes; DR 1 (skull only); Impulsiveness (9); Low TL (TL0); Lunacy; Overweight; Sense of Duty (clan); Short Lifespan 1; Temperature Tolerance (Cold); Tribal Language (Native).

**Skills:** Brawling-13; Broadsword-12; Dropping-11; Gesture-11; Meditation-10; Naturalist-11; Stealth-12; Survival (Mountains)-11; Throwing-11; Tracking-10; Wrestling-12.

**Equipment:** Club (2d+1 cr; Reach 1).

### Oog's Cave Bear Form

**ST:** 30                      **HP:** 30                      **Speed:** 6.50

**DX:** 14                      **Will:** 13                      **Move:** 7

**IQ:** 5                        **Per:** 13

**HT:** 12                      **FP:** 12                      **SM:** +1

**Dodge:** 10                **Parry:** 11                **DR:** 3

**Bite (16):** 3d+2 cutting. Reach C.

**Claw (16):** 3d+5 crushing. Reach C.

**Torso Grapple (14):** No damage, but on further turns can squeeze (*Choke or Strangle*, p. B370).

**Traits:** Claws (Blunt); Combat Reflexes; Fearlessness 5; Fur; Teeth (Sharp); Temperature Tolerance 5 (Cold).

**Skills:** Brawling-16; Survival (Mountains)-13; Swimming-13; Tracking-12; Wrestling-14.

**Class:** Animal.

*The lands past the gates are dangerous.*

## 8 and 10. Slime Trails

Coming from 11 and running in a circle between 8, 9, and 10 is a 3'-wide trail of caustic purple slime (1 point corrosive damage if touched).

## 9. Cavern of the Slime

In this cavern is a yard-wide purple slime monster, feeding on the smoking body of a caveman. The slime recently came through the gate in 11.

### Primordial Purple Slime

**ST:** 0                        **HP:** 20                        **Speed:** 6.00

**DX:** 12                      **Will:** 0                        **Move:** 1

**IQ:** 0                        **Per:** 10

**HT:** 12                      **FP:** 12                        **SM:** 0

**Dodge:** 9

**Parry:** N/A

**DR:** 0

**Pseudopod (11):** 3d-1 corrosion. Reach C, 1.

**Torso Grapple (11):** No damage, but on further turns can squeeze (*Choke or Strangle*, p. B370) using its HP 20 instead of its ST.

**Traits:** Amphibious; Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Sleep; High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Injury Tolerance (Diffuse; Infiltration, Can ooze under barriers and through tiny holes); Innate Attack (2d corrosion; Melee; Reach C, 1); Invertebrate; No Legs (Slithers); No Manipulators; Vibration Sense (Air).

**Class:** Slime.

**Notes:** Nonsentient – *can't* communicate or negotiate. Unaffected by Animal or Plant spells that don't specifically target slimes. Once dead, slime can be used (or sold) as one dose of Oozing Doom. As a strange primordial from the dawn of time, valuable to scholars interested in researching the origins of life (\$2,000).

## 11. Cavern of the Dawn

The air in the cavern reeks of rotten eggs. In the center of the room are bleached, corroded bones of some creature – perhaps a cave man. A purple slime trail leads to (or from!) a smashed iron-bound door. Visible through it is a shimmering rectangle in the north wall.

The gate is a permanent gate created by Ilarion. It leads back hundreds of millions of years into the ancient past, when the only life on land was primordial slime.

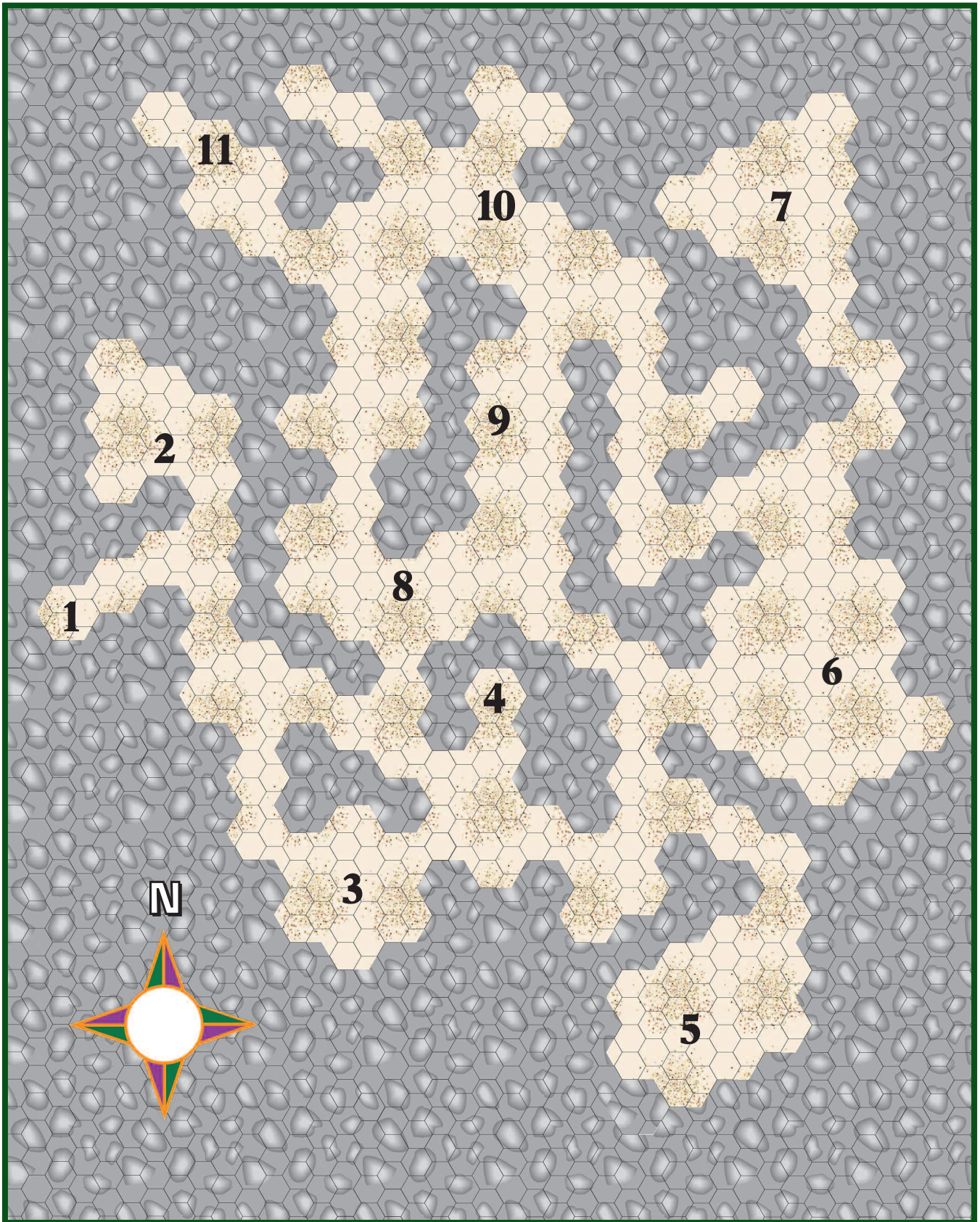
The gate opens into barren, rocky shore by a purple sea. In the sky above, the moon is visible, unnaturally large. On the horizon, a volcano sends a plume of ash into the air. The lands is barren rock, split with occasional dark cracks and crevices. However, emerging from the shallow water just beyond the shore are many dozens of brownish, dome-shaped formations, each a yard wide and 4' high. They seem too regular to be ordinary rocks. (Close up, a faint fizz of small bubbles surrounds them).

The air past the gate is dangerous. The primal world has less oxygen and more sulfur and carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. The atmosphere is Thin (p. B249) and somewhat toxic due to high carbon dioxide and sulfur levels (HT-2 roll each minute or take 1 point toxic damage). The ozone layer is also thinner, so in addition to the breathing issues, there's a risk of painful sunburn (hourly HT-4 roll or 1 point burn damage).

A more immediate threat are the primal slimes that lurk beneath the ground. There's a 1-in-6 chance each minute that one or more will ooze out of a crack to try and absorb any visitors!

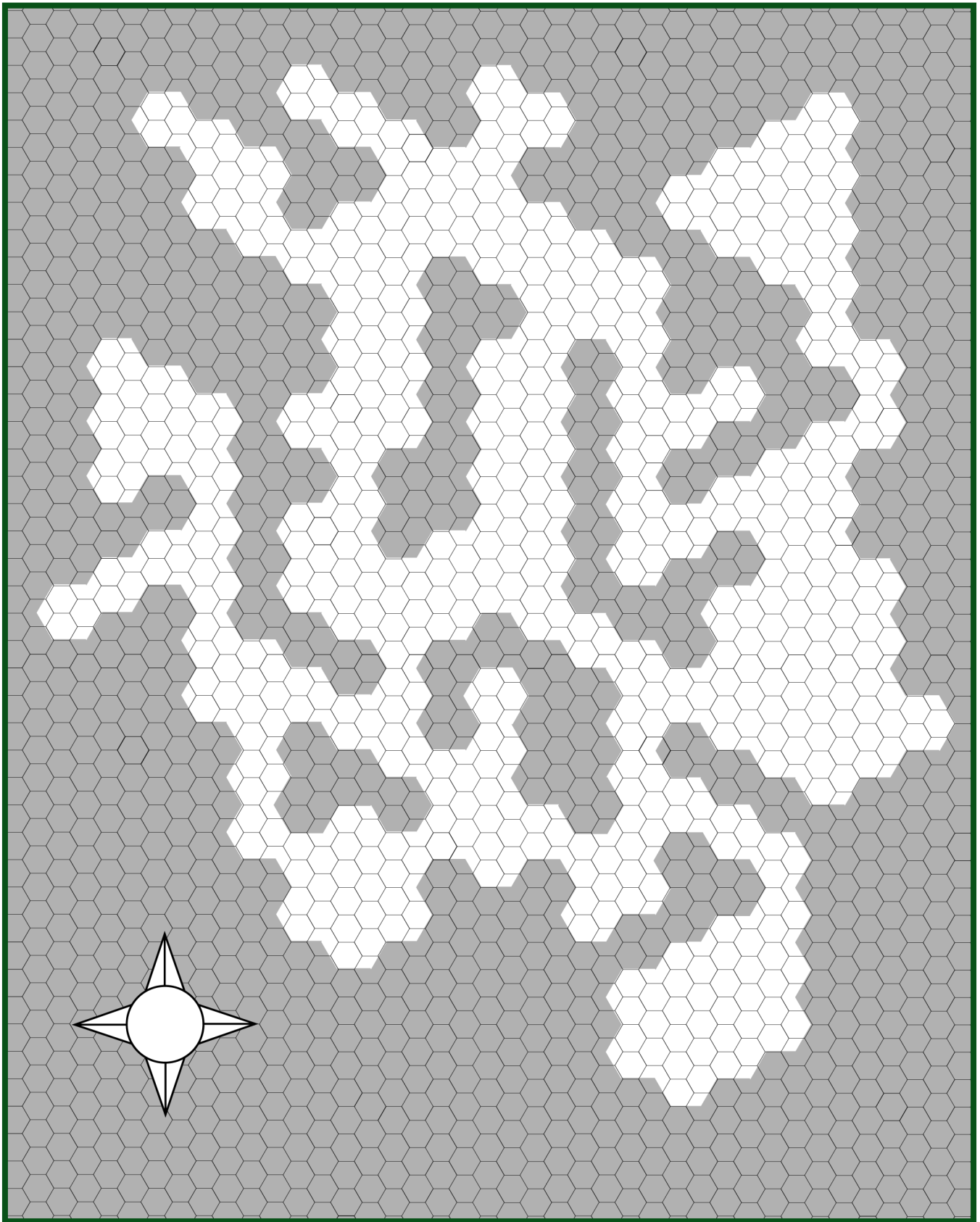
## ABOUT THE COLUMNIST

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



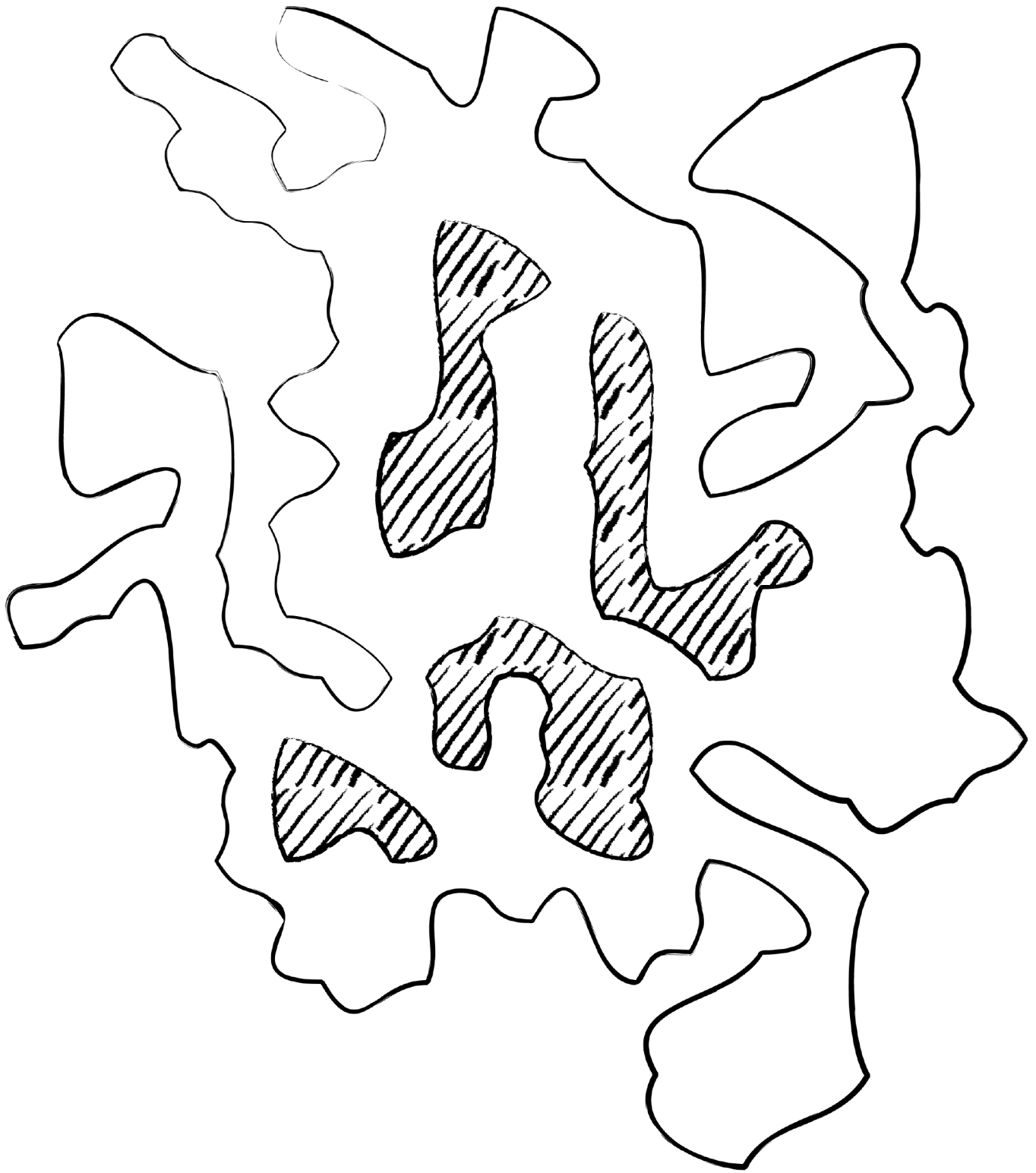
## MAP OF THE STONEDRAGON HILL CAVES (DETAILED)

Scale: 1 hex = 1 yard



## **MAP OF THE STONEDRAGON HILL CAVES (BLANK)**

*Scale: 1 hex = 1 yard*



*The Caves of Stonedragon Hill*

# EIDETIC MEMORY

## DARK OF THE WOODS

BY DAVID L. PULVER

In this systemless scenario outline for a fantasy campaign (even *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*), the authorities seek help to defeat the rising power of a vengeful druidic cult.

### THE MERCHANT'S DAUGHTER

Guy Talbot (age 40) is a traveling merchant who deals in antiques, gems, and jewelry, and the occasional magic item – just the sort of fellow that will buy the loot you haul out of a dungeon! He achieved his wealth by acting as such a middleman, and should be someone who has dealt favorably with the party before – if there's no time to set him up properly, the GM could introduce him as “the merchant who bought your last haul.” Goodman Talbot is well-dressed, with a neatly trimmed beard, expensive clothes, plenty of gold rings on his fingers, and a hulking bodyguard.

Talbot meets with the adventurers at their favorite local tavern. He treats them to a good meal and explains the situation: While Talbot is certainly now well off, he comes of common stock and wanted his family to rise in station. About 16 years ago, he arranged for his pretty daughter, Alyssa, to marry an adventuring knight he knew. This worthy, Sir Gringamore, was nearly landless (which is why he was willing to marry a merchant's daughter) but was of good family and a proven warrior. Talbot had hoped the young man would rise in his liege-lord's service, and so it proved.

Over the last 15 years, Talbot received occasional letters from Alyssa telling of the birth of her son Galloran and her daughter Isilda, and Sir Gringamore's gradual rise in the service of his liege-lord. Then, just last year, Sir Gringamore was rewarded with grant of the vacant fief of Swyngate Forest, a border region whose prior lord had died without an heir. Talbot was exultant – his daughter had become Lady Alyssa of Swyngate.

Her initial reports were positive but guarded: The people were rustic, with quaint customs. Sir Gringamore was kept busy suppressing highwaymen and hanging poachers (who had proliferated while the fief was vacant). The fief's lands were undeveloped but had plenty of promise. However, the locals were superstitious and afraid to venture into the deep woods, and Gringamore had to hire new foresters to clear

land. The hunting was excellent, for many of the forest beasts had little fear of men!

Her last letter revealed a far different tale. If Talbot trusts the party, he will let them see (or will read aloud) his daughter's letter (see p. 152). Otherwise, he paraphrases it and pleads for their help.

### HISTORY

Swyngate Wood was a small remnant of a once-mighty oak forest that long ago covered the region. Like many such woods, it had been inhabited since before history began by a wide range of creatures: wild beasts, nature spirits, fey creatures, a few sylvan monsters, and a scattering of humans.

Among these people was a small cult of nature worshippers, essentially druids, who maintained a sacred grove deep in the wood's heart. With the passing of elder races, they assumed the role of the wood's protectors. They held rites in the sacred groves and at the standing stones that crowned the surrounding hills. The populace joined in druid rites, and some sons or daughters were pledged to the cult's service. In exchange, the druids used their spells to help mitigate nature's wrath when it manifested as a drought, devastating storm, or plague, and permitted some use of younger parts of the woods for human purposes.

Over the centuries, more humans settled in the region, and Swyngate Wood became part of Swyngate Manor, a feudal holding that came to encompass the manor itself and the nearby village of Lower Swyngate (population 450 today). The nature cult's power diminished as many villagers converted to the nondruidic faith of their feudal overlords. Still, the villagers respected the druids' wisdom (and feared their powers), and never entered the woods or used the wood's resources without the druid cult's permission. It was quietly understood the manor lord's authority ended at the forest's edge.

Gradually, the number of druids diminished, until there was but one left: The sole surviving archdruid of Swyngate Grove, an orphaned goatherd named Rhedyn, now in his 50s. He had himself been the final disciple of the last high druid.

While not a misanthrope, Rhedyn had far more interest in nature and sylvan creatures than in his fellow humans.

Even so, members of a few families, who still followed the old ways, occasionally come to him, seeking his counsel or to be initiated into secrets of his magic.

After teaching them the rudiments of his faith, he halted because he saw in them only a lust for power over things of man – control of crops and weather and harvests – and not a true love of wild nature. Instead, he simply warned them against certain things – old powers that slept in the earth that should not be disturbed – and told them they were not ready for the deep faith. When they protested, he shifted himself into an owl and retreated into the depths of the woods, using his spells to hide his path.

Then came the great famine. Severe storms ruined the manor's crops for two years in a row. Father Ogen, the backwoods cleric who ran the village church, could heal wounds and sickness, but his prayers were ineffective against a disaster of such magnitude. Some villagers sought out archdruid, but he was hidden in the deeps of the wood and could not be found. In truth, Rhedyn had barely noticed the heavy storms, for they were just one more natural cycle. He was far more concerned with learning the secrets of trees and animals, the contemplation of the stars, and the company of his beloved owls, spiders, and nature spirits. He was also spending his time with one Whisperwind, a shapely dryad he admired, often turning himself into a tree for lengthy periods to sleep next to her in the fall.

Unable to find their master, the druid students tried to save the crops themselves, but while they had knowledge, they lacked the magical energy to do so. In desperation, they turned to older

rites – half-understood rituals the archdruid had warned them against: blood magic and the sleeping powers of the earth. A sacrifice of a sacred king and queen: the young “spring queen” of the village's innocent spring rites, and with her, a king – none other than the manor's own young lord, the 20-year-old Sir Dafyd.

The romantic Sir Dafyd was lured into the woods by one of the cultists with a false tale of a mystic artifact guarded by a dragon that lived under a hollow hill. He was led to believe that he would find treasure that could buy food for his starving people. Instead, he was trapped and woke up in a giant wicker cage. There he found himself dubbed the “rain king” and saving his people in another fashion.

That year, the ritual burning of the spring queen and the rain king brought the nascent cult the power they needed to end the famine. But it also ended another line, for young Dafyd, with his pure heart, died without leaving an heir.

## RECENT EVENTS

Thus it was that Swyngate Manor passed for the first time in centuries to a new lord who was also a complete outsider – in this case, Sir Gringamore, a lesser knight who received it as a reward from his local feudal magnate in recognition of his battle prowess in some foreign war or other.

Sir Gringamore loved hunting; war; his teenage son, Galleron; and, perhaps, his devoted wife, Alyssa. New to the parish, Sir Gringamore was contemptuous of the warnings and taboos the locals placed on the use of the “his” estate.

## Alyssa's Letter

*A version suitable as a prop for players is on p. 156.*

Dearest Father,

I have long been blessed with good fortune, but now, as Pastor Bardas would say, the worm has turned, and I have bitter news indeed. My eldest son is dead, and my husband lies in miasma of bleak despair, for it was his own hand that slew him! A terrible hunting accident – or a horrid curse of black magic? My heart is heavy and I can scarce credit the report of the bizarre and ungodly transformation that befell my son, though there were credible witnesses. He is dead, and surely black magic was behind it!

Let me start again. It seems a sinister cult has for many centuries lurked in the dark woods north of our new estate. In recent months, they have risen again, allied with fell creatures such as giant spiders, hideous bears, and werewolves. The cult's leader is one Rhedyn, former goatherd who is now an unholy priest; my husband had scorned his prior threats and posturing as mere words, but his power is very real and his reach is long.

With my husband no longer riding on patrol, the roads that pass the outskirts of Swyngate Forest have reverted to haunts of outlaws and robbers. Brigands waylay travelers, then vanish into dens in the wood, to consort with a witch-cult that offers them sanctuary where our foresters fear to tread. I have also heard whispers that the country folk at the forest's edge now pay tribute to the cult. On the same

day my son Galleron was murdered, lightning smote the village church. And others report an apparition in the hills, a foul idol or giant that some villagers now sacrifice to for fear of death!

My lord and I still remain safe in our castle, protected by our retainers and hired men. Yet my anguished heart cries for vengeance for my firstborn, and I fear for the lives of the villagers and my daughter who is but 13 years old. With my lord succumbed to a malignant despondency, I have no one but you to turn to.

Father, I know you consort with many adventurers, as you have often enlivened your letters to me with tales of their valor. I implore you to prevail upon some of these stalwarts to journey to Swyngate Castle and come to my aid! I stand alone against a rising tide of darkness and chaos. While I am not rich, neither am I poor in goods, and surely the robbers and cultists must now be sitting on a mound of ill-gotten gains that might tempt such men. Too, I have heard tales that Rhedyn makes his lair amid ancient barrows filled with treasures (it was apparently seeking one such that cost the last lord his life).

Indeed, my lord's desire for vengeance is such that he would even consider some kind of alliance with the worthy gallant who slays the dark master and liberates our land from fear.

Your loving daughter,  
Alyssa of Swynwood



Soon after establishing himself, he and his son began to regularly flout their powers with hunting expeditions and new permits issued to clear the land.

Rhedyn might have cared little for what his followers did, but there were some things he was not willing to tolerate, and that was one of them. However, his warnings – howling beasts, sudden rainstorms, paths that appeared and vanished – were dismissed by the hardheaded Sir Gringamore as pagan trickery.

“Too long has this wood filled with foul beasts and heathens been allowed to grow unchecked,” the lord told his wife. “Perhaps it should be cleared! Your father’s letters say there is a market for wood for ships. With the price of wool going up, we also need more grazing land for sheep.”

When Sir Gringamore’s foresters next entered the wood, they came with axes and fire. Elder groves were violated. Ancient trees were felled or burned. Standing stones were toppled. The audacity of their onslaught took Rhedyn by surprise – and worst of all, one of their victims was the birch tree that housed his close friend, the dryad Whisperwind.

Rhedyn felt rage, grief, and a desire to protect his charges. His first impulse was to transform himself into a terrible beast and besiege Sir Gringamore’s castle, leading a company of several of his fiercest sylvan allies, bears and wolves. Yet he realized he had little experience at such warfare, and as he contemplated the injuries his animal friends would suffer, he balked at risking their lives for his own vengeance.

At this moment of indecision, he was visited by a delegation of villagers. It was Sister Owl, his former student, and two of her followers. While he, the archdruid, might have forgotten them, Sister Owl said, they had not forgotten their debt to him. She understood his grief: She too had been scorned by Sir Gringamore, who had often trampled their fields while pursuing game, and had raised their taxes to pay for his foresters and the pretty fineries his wife loved. Well, she had a plan – and if Rhedyn would listen to his old student, they could have a fitting revenge upon Sir Gringamore without endangering any of their charges . . . her only price was that he acknowledge her existing role as leader of the village’s cult.

## *Rhedyn’s Revenge*

Acting under Sister Owl’s advice, Rhedyn did not strike back. Instead, he urged those beasts and entities under his care to retreat deeper into the wood, and made preparations of his own.

As Sister Owl suspected, Sir Gringamore noted the seeming hesitation and retreat of his foe. He exalted in what seemed an easy victory over this rustic enemy.

To celebrate, Sir Gringamore decided to hold a hunting party, accompanied by Galleron, several retainers and foresters, and a pack of fierce hounds. During the hunt, a beautiful white deer was spotted. Young Galleron, who had boldly ridden ahead, went after it, only to be separated from his father and the rest of the party by a sudden growth of bushes, the inexplicable disappearance of the trail, and a mysterious mist that sprang up.

A few minutes later, the mist cleared. As the party tried to find each other in the woods, Sir Gringamore thought he heard his son’s cry. He sounded his horn, only to see, moments later, a handsome white stag he had evidently surprised! Thoughts of his misplaced son (doubtless just behind the trees a few hundred yards away) were driven from his mind by the desire for the chase; he sounded his horn and charged. The startled

stag froze, then suddenly turned and fled! After a few minutes of frenzied pursuit, his hounds ran down the stag, tearing bits out of its flanks. He plunged his spear through the beast himself, finishing it off. As he cheerfully sawed off its antlered head, he absent-mindedly ordered his retainers to call out for his son. What a trophy it would make for the manor’s wall, and a pleasing meal of venison for his evening feast!

A moment later, his joy turned to ashes. The dead stag shimmered, and its body – and the bloody the head in his hands – transformed into that of his son. He screamed.

The druid had his revenge. As Rhedyn used his spells to distract the hunting party, Sister Owl had used her own weaker animal magic to seize mental control of Galleron’s horse. Unable to ride, he had tried to flee on foot, only to be tripped and snared by animated vegetation. It only took Rhedyn a half-minute to follow Sister Owl’s suggestion and transform the youth into a stag. The former man was released, and the mist was dispelled – just as Sir Gringamore’s hunting party regained their bearings. As the druids faded into the woods, the now panicked Galleron ran toward the familiar sound of his father’s hunting horn – and met his doom.

Thanks to Sister Owl’s plan, Rhedyn had achieved his revenge and the nature cult gained many believers.

Dazed and in a state of shock, Sir Gringamore allowed his terrified men to lead him home to his castle, where they broke the horrible news, as best they understood it, to his wife Alyssa. It took him several days to recover his wits, during which he did not eat or sleep, and could only mutter “. . . the stag. I killed the stag.” He would eventually regain himself, and vow revenge upon the cult, but forever after he was a haunted, broken man.

Meanwhile, word of Galleron’s fate spread among the manor and villagers. As the nights filled with the howls of wolves and the shrieks of owls; giant shapes were seen to move in the woods at twilight. Then came a terrible storm; lightning blasted down, striking the church and destroying its holy symbol. People locked their doors and shutters.

Yet those villagers who had secretly been druid cult members were exalted that their master, the great druid, had finally showed his power. They spread the word: The old *true* faith had returned. If the clerics of the new faith could not protect their lord’s son, who would be safe? Only those who returned to the old ways! They would walk in the woods without fear, by day or night. Their crops would grow strong, without storms or pestilence to ruin them.

Yet there was a price. To remind the villagers of how they had turned from their forefather’s faith, and its consequence, there would be a payment exacted upon those who had strayed. Beginning with the next festival of spring a few weeks hence, there would be a lottery, to fairly determine who would appease the gods of wood and harvest.

And the villagers awoke to find a great shape looming on the distant hill overlooking the village green: the form of a giant man, 30’ tall, made of wicker, as had been present in the days of yore, in the time before the druid faith was forced underground . . .

## **SWYNGATE MANOR AND ITS SURROUNDINGS**

This is a forested and hilly border region near ancient woodlands.

## Ibareth Aranel

This is the secret ancient name of the druid cult (blood-sworn of the earth), which claims a connection to rituals lost in time. Their exact level of power is up to the GM.

*Archdruid Rhedyn:* He's a powerful druidic spellcaster with several animal allies. Thanks to his druidic spells, he is very hard to catch, but he cannot fight alone. In addition to numerous plan and animal spells, he can shapeshift into deer and owl forms. He is presently eager for vengeance, but he has little interest in human politics, outsourcing those decisions to the cult leadership.

*The Mother Bear:* Rhedyn has several animal allies, but among his closest is an old female grizzly bear he befriended many years ago when he saved her cubs from a forest fire. She leads a pack of other beasts, including two giant owls, three bears, and five wolves.

*The Tree Spider:* A cunning giant spider that makes its lair hundreds of feet up in the branches of a grove of ancient pines, spinning her webs between them and catching unwary birds just like flies! She can talk and is a friend of Rhedyn, who is a master of all forms of poetry, an art she loves. She also extends some of her webs downward into the forest floor. The Tree Spider will sometimes spare a victim who gives her a fresh verse.

*Starkad Silverstring:* This tall, strong minstrel's satirical songs and dalliance with a powerful border-lord's wife led to his being outlawed. Starkad became a successful leader of a band of outlaw-bards, the Mourn-Singers. That lasted until the full-moon night when his camp was attacked by a hungry werewolf. After a fierce struggle, Starkad garroted the man-beast with a silver harp string, but was himself infected. Following his first change, he fled his band and disappeared into the woods. There he met Rhedyn, who took pity on him, gave him sanctuary until he could learn to master his urges and survive as a werewolf. A grateful Starkad now follows the druid with a doglike devotion, treating him as a sworn liege-lord. Starkad has contacted

his former associates – a half-dozen hardened brigands – who have joined their forces to that of the druid.

*The Village Cultists:* The cult has been operating in secret for about 20 years. They largely do so autonomously, for the Great Druid of the Woods have little interest in the village. When they meet, cult members wear brown robes, hoods, and animal masks of forest animals (rabbit, wolf, goat, crow, pig, weasel, dog, owl, bear, badger, etc.) and address each other that way (e.g., Brother Rabbit or Sister Badger). Unknown to the archdruid, the cult began performing human sacrifices five years ago, ever since unseasonable storms ruined crops and led to several deaths from hunger. There are five committed initiates who have joined the cult. Members keep their animal masks hidden in their homes, but their identities are secret – and up to the GM.

*Sister Owl and Brother Fox:* The two leaders of the newly revived "druid cult" who claim to be the deputies of the archdruid. Their specific identities within the cult are unknown, but they are presumably natives of the village or the manor. Actually, they are opportunists and liars. For several years they have been trying to get Rhedyn to teach them true druid magic. He'd refused, so they turned to human sacrifice, augmenting the weakness of their own spells with ceremonial magic and extra energy from blood sacrifice. The other members of the cult believe Rhedyn is supporting them, but in reality he is unaware of their agenda. Their particular version of the sacrifice ritual requires that the victims be "pure" youths (under 21), be burnt alive on a sacred date such as an equinox or full moon, and either be born of high status or be ritually designated as such (e.g., as a "spring queen" for a festival). Are the powers they call upon the same as Rhedyn's? (In *GURPS* terms, they have mastered a Sacrifice spell – see *GURPS Thaumatology*, pp. 54-58. This allows them to spend one energy but, by killing their victim, receive back energy equal to the victim's IQ, provided he is sapient, times the lower of his HP or HT. This energy bounty must be spent within 10 seconds of casting.)

*High Road:* A well-traveled road that runs from wherever the party came from (e.g., the nearest large town) to Swyngate Manor. The terrain gradually changes from pasture (with the occasional shepherd) to light wooded hills and then denser, untamed forest.

*Swyngate Manor:* The manor itself stands on a low hill overlooking the High Road and a stream, the Swynbrook. The keep itself is a small stone tower encircled by a moat and a wooden palisade. A simple gatehouse, always guarded by alert watchmen and archers, provides access. Inside is a well and a courtyard surrounded by timber buildings. The terrain around the manor is dotted by small farmsteads.

*Buildings:* Outside the keep but inside the palisade are the smithy, the kitchens and bakery, the kennels (with the lord's hounds), the foresters' barracks, and Zendel's Store (a trader's shop). Just outside the walls where the moat meets the Owl River is a mill and a gallows.

*The Keep:* There is a simple three-story stone tower. The first floor is without outside openings and is used as storeroom, and,

if necessary, a dungeon. The second floor can be reached by outside stairs. It is a drafty great hall with a fireplace and a trapped door to the first floor; the lord's guards also sleep here. The third floor contains the lord's personal chambers, a small room for his son, and a private chamber for the lady, her daughter, and their maidservants.

### The Manor's Residents

*Lady Alyssa* (age 32): A merchant's daughter who married into the gentry, she has strong attractive features, a sharp chin, sad green eyes, and long, curly, black hair. She dresses in clothes perhaps a bit too fashionable for a rural estate (gifts from her father) but despite her slight vanity, is a practical administrator who is doing her best to keep things together after her husband went off the deep end. Recently she has written to her father for aid, but she has also had the idea of putting up bounty for the druid.

*Isilda* (age 13): A mirror of her mother as a maiden, Alyssa's daughter is a spirited child who used to like playing in the woods with her maid, Violet Gunderson, before the recent unpleasantness.

*Sir Grigamore* (age 37): A skilled warrior and experienced huntsman who is now suffering from nightmares and black depression. He has developed a phobia against eating meat, but like many gentry, dislikes vegetables, and so has lost a lot of weight, and now appears rather cadaverous. He spends most of his days locked in his son's former room or in his small study, reading an ever-growing library of works on natural magic to try and understand the horror that befell him. As he has some residual magic aptitude, it's likely not long before he will start meddling in things he shouldn't. Every so often, he orders a large party of men into the forest in search of the druid or, sometimes, "to find my son" forgetting, temporarily, that he had slain him.

*Zendel* (age 41): A local trader, with connections to the Talbot family business. He imports a variety of goods and exports furs and wood.

*The Servants*: The manor's retinue include Pastor Bardas (steward and cleric-sage), Martin the Forester (a scout and archer); Hobart Blackwulf (his guard captain); Quin (the lord's squire), six men-at-arms (with chainmail and horses), 12 foresters (bowmen), Tara the Minstrel-Maiden (a bard), Yoric the Cook (who could be better), and 15 servants, maids, and pages.

## LOWER SWYNGATE

Farmhouses and barns are clustered around a well, a timber-framed church, and an inn/tavern, the Owl and Maiden. Most of the villagers live here in some 40 thatched houses, huts, and cottages (population 450). Another 50 or so villagers are scattered in outlying farmsteads or cottages. Most of the buildings have attached sheds for cattle, chicken coops, and pigsties. Those who don't work in the village or fields travel to the manor to labor or visit the smithy, carpenter, and miller.

The farmland spread out to about 500 yards of the village itself, nestled between the High Road and the forest. The fields grow barley (to make bread and ale) and oats (for porridge). Half the fields are left fallow each year and used for grazing cattle and pigs.

Woodsmen live in huts or cottages on the fringes of the forest. They include charcoal burners, rope makers, and forest beekeepers. Most of these folk are supporters of the Druid cult.

*The Smallwood*: This light "managed" woodlands is managed by the village as their main source of firewood. Wildflowers and herbs can be found here, pigs forage here seeking acorns, and a few deer occasionally stray into it

*Owl Hill*: The nearest of two hills overlooking the village has a huge (120' high) prehistoric stick-figure drawing cut into the turf that is visible from the village. The outline vaguely resembles a bigheaded horned and winged creature. Locals say it's a giant owl, though some feel it's a demon. The top of the hill is lightly wooded.

*Spider Maiden Hill*: The second hill sports another geoglyph that suggests a female rider on an eight-limbed, horned horse. The top of the hill is barren save for an ancient lightning-blasted oak tree. It provides an excellent view. There are old stones forming a circle. It is here that the cult erected its wicker man –

a 30'-tall stick giant – for the next sacrifice they plan, which they hope to use to bless crops over the entire village.

*The Horn Gate*: A tall dike and hedge mark the gap between the Owl and Maiden Hills into the Swyngate Forest (below). A track runs through the forest for a mile or so, leading to a glade, before splitting into several different paths.

## The Villagers

The villagers are a mix of indenture peasants and yeomen. There are a few notable persons.

*Grim Morrack*: The village blacksmith and a widower, his pretty daughter Mara was chosen as Spring Queen 10 years ago . . . and vanished the next day, following the festival. Some items she had worn were found in the remains of a wicker man on Sleeper's Hill (see below). His wife later drowned herself in the Owl Brook (see below).

*Swen Gunderson*: The village headman, who is the richest freeman and has several parcels of land he rents to other tenants. His wife Maruna is an infamous gossip but a skilled healer. Violet is their 14-year-old, bright, and cheerful daughter, a bit of a chatterbox who loves hunting mushrooms in the woods. Violet is also the maid of the lord's daughter.

*Jon Brewer*: Owner of the Owl and Maiden tavern with his wife, Gwen, who is also a noted cook. They have a handsome young son, Markus. Of late, their tavern has been host to various strangers drawn to the village.

*Father Ogen*: An aging and somewhat senile cleric at the village church.

*The Widow Libby*: A successful farmer, her children and her grandfather died during the great famine 10 years ago.

## SWYNGATE FOREST

This heavily wooded deciduous forest is about seven miles wide and eight miles long. The trees grow tall. The wildlife includes deer, wolves, bears, and owls.

*Owl Brook*: A stream that crosses the forest track and winds deeper into the woods.

*Whisperwind's Grove*: An outer grove, now only stumps and ashes.

*The High Grove*: Located deep within the heart of the woods near the old hollow hills. It is here – or perhaps under Sleeper's Hill – that the archdruid can be found.

*Sleeper's Hill*: Located about two miles deep in the forest, said to be ancient burial mound. Atop the hollow hills is another stone circle, a place of sanctity for the druids.

## ABOUT THE COLUMNIST

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

*Dearest Father,*

*I have long been blessed with good fortune, but now, as Pastor Bardas would say, the worm has turned, and I have bitter news indeed. My eldest son is dead, and my husband lies in miasma of bleak despair, for it was his own hand that slew him! A terrible hunting accident – or a horrid curse of black magic? My heart is heavy and I can scarce credit the report of the bizarre and ungodly transformation that befell my son, though there were credible witnesses. He is dead, and surely black magic was behind it!*

*Let me start again. It seems a sinister cult has for many centuries lurked in the dark woods north of our new estate. In recent months, they have risen again, allied with fell creatures such as giant spiders, hideous bears, and werewolves. The cult's leader is one Rhedyn, former goatherd who is now an unholy priest; my husband had scorned his prior threats and posturing as mere words, but his power is very real and his reach is long.*

*With my husband no longer riding on patrol, the roads that pass the outskirts of Swyngate Forest have reverted to haunts of outlaws and robbers. Brigands waylay travelers, then vanish into dens in the wood, to consort with a witch-cult that offers them sanctuary where our foresters fear to tread. I have also heard whispers that the country folk at the forest's edge now pay tribute to the cult. On the same day my son Galleron was murdered, lightning smote the village church. And others report an apparition in the hills, a foul idol or giant that some villagers now sacrifice to for fear of death!*

*My lord and I still remain safe in our castle, protected by our retainers and hired men. Yet my anguished heart cries for vengeance for my firstborn, and I fear for the lives of the villagers and my daughter who is but 13 years old. With my lord succumbed to a malignant despondency, I have no one but you to turn to.*

*Father, I know you consort with many adventurers, as you have often enlivened your letters to me with tales of their valor. I implore you to prevail upon some of these stalwarts to journey to Swyngate Castle and come to my aid! I stand alone against a rising tide of darkness and chaos. While I am not rich, neither am I poor in goods, and surely the robbers and cultists must now be sitting on a mound of ill-gotten gains that might tempt such men. Too, I have heard tales that Rhedyn makes his lair amid ancient barrows filled with treasures (it was apparently seeking one such that cost the last lord his life).*

*Indeed, my lord's desire for vengeance is such that he would even consider some kind of alliance with the worthy gallant who slays the dark master and liberates our land from fear.*

*Your loving daughter,  
Alyssa of Swynwood*

# GOG AND MAGOG

BY W.A. FRICK

Deep in the twisting caverns of an abandoned dwarven mine (where else?), two tribes of goblins fight a never-ending feud over . . . over . . . oh, who even remembers why they're fighting? They certainly don't. They fight and fight, but no matter how long the war goes on, neither side can gain the upper hand. Both are *desperate* for something to happen that will tip the balance of power. Something like a party of adventurers straying into their little ecosystem . . .

This adventure framework is perfect for any fantasy game that finds itself in need of a cave full of goblins. It's especially suited for a *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* campaign that's tired of mindless killing and wants a little unexpected intrigue . . . and then probably some mindless killing. The material can also be salvaged for parts: either tribe makes a fine "theme" for a dangerous location – or Iron Fortress, Spider Forest, etc. – and the individual monsters can vex heroes in any setting that will have them.

## TERRITORIAL MARKINGS

Long, long ago (maybe 20 years – goblins have short lifespans and shorter memories), *two* tribes of goblins found their way into *one* set of caves. These caves were in a mighty mountain range that separated two lands, and entrances were on both sides. Almost no one knew this, except for the dwarves that had mined the caves – but they've been dead for quite a while. As happens to dwarves now and again, they unsealed a cavern deep in the bowels of the earth, which housed something *unpleasant* (something that the current residents have come to call *The One Who Eats*; see pp. 158, 159). This thing ate the dwarven miners one and all, leaving a vacancy.

The two tribes of goblins, each finding their way into the caves from a different side of the mountain, were refugees from the Dark Armies of two Lords of Evil, each crushed by the Forces of Light in spectacular battles. Neither group remembers much about those days, other than how awful it was to serve in a Dark Army.

### The Caves

The caves in question have no terribly remarkable qualities, unless being infested with goblins, giant spiders, and *something else* counts as remarkable. They began as natural, geologic tunnels. Then one day, dwarven prospectors found something they wanted, and set to digging. The natural tunnels and passages have been widened to comfortably accommodate a dwarf (or goblin – but humans sometimes have to hunch down in tighter passages). Many contain the rusted-out fragments of what were once mine-cart tracks. Many of the larger caverns have been evened out for habitation, and these tend to be where the tribes have settled.

The uppermost level (where the tribes live) is large enough to comfortably accommodate both tribal commons, each consisting of several large caverns and the twisting tunnels that connect them. At least a good mile of winding, interconnected passages separates the two fortified tribal areas. The Fungus Room (p. 158) and other unclaimed caverns (or claimed by creatures not affiliated with the tribes) can be found in the contested territory.

There's natural bio-luminescent fungus throughout the caves, as well as occasional torches left wedged in cracks by Garguk raiding parties. The overall lighting is good for a -5 darkness penalty without a light source. As it happens, the goblins' keen vision allows them to see perfectly in this environment (but see *Garguk Caves*, p. 161, and *Skrixid Caves*, p. 164). It's very likely that the caves connect to a lower series of tunnels, which may house any number of ancient subterranean treasures or horrors. However, neither tribe has been brave enough to explore any deeper. They will, eventually, if they can just get rid of that *other damn tribe!*

### The Tribes

The *Garguk* are a tribe of hearty, infernally inclined warrior goblins who train and ride massive hell-hounds. They are lead by a vicious two-headed ogre and his insidious warlock adviser. The *Skrixid* are a tribe of stealthy goblin skulkers whose "mother" – a giant centauroid spider-sorceress-thing – has magically bred and altered them to more closely resemble her *other* children, a host of giant spiders. Goblins being prolific breeders, both tribes' numbers remain fairly static in spite of high casualty rates.

Neither tribe is particularly ambitious. No one has any use for *yet another* Dark Lord or War Against the Light, but both are exceptionally petty, vicious, and vindictive. Hence, the feud.

### The Feud

Whether it was a misunderstanding, a struggle for territory, or "hate at first sight," the *Garguk* and *Skrixid* tribes have been at war for as long as any of them can remember. Upon spotting members of the opposite tribe, all will either attack, sound an alarm, or flee, depending on circumstance and relative numbers. There's no chance of an encounter between the tribes ending in Kumbaya around the campfire; if they meet and one side doesn't avoid the encounter, there will be blood. For this reason, both usually travel in war parties anywhere outside of their own tribal commons. Both are at an advantage in their own caves and a disadvantage in the other tribe's, so most conflicts take place in the common caves around the Fungus Room (p. 158).

Both tribes are wary of outsiders. However, unlike most goblins that adventurers meet, these guys *don't* necessarily attack on sight. They are instantly suspicious that any outside group is a spy or raiding party for the other tribe, but they willingly and peacefully take the party to their leader for parlay. They don't insist that anyone surrender weapons, but they do insist that weapons are sheathed, stowed, etc. If pressed, they will reciprocate, sheathing/stowing their own.

*In that darkness, the white walkers came for the first time. They swept through cities and kingdoms, riding their dead horses, hunting with their packs of pale spiders big as hounds . . .*

*– Old Nan,  
in Game of Thrones #1.3*

### **The Fungus Room**

In the “buffer caves” between the two tribal commons, there's a cavern that has a natural water flow that has given rise to a pocket of vibrant life. In addition to magnificent stalactites, stalagmites, and crystal formations, the cavern has a profusion of edible mushrooms and lichens, and an even-greater profusion of other lifeforms that live on the fungus and the things that eat it – giant grubs and beetles, huge spiders and burrowing critters that eat the beetles, and so on. There's enough to feed two tribes of goblins without making a dent.

### **The One Who Eats**

One other thing populates the Fungus Room's food chain – sitting right at the top. Just as the fungus feeds beetles that feed spiders that feed critters that feed goblins, goblins (and anything else it can grab) feed the One Who Eats. Having eaten all the dwarves, the entity went back into hibernation – but its prison had been unsealed, and when life stirred in the caves above again, it awoke . . . hungry.

Whether because it was smart enough to devise a scheme to give it a steady supply of food, or it simply hasn't gotten hungry enough to depopulate the caves again, it only eats one or two goblins at a time – and then only when they go to the Fungus Room.

This is a simple fact of life that the tribes have come to accept: when you go to get food, you're going to lose somebody. Both already tend to travel in war-bands, and often come back with fewer than they left with due to skirmishes, so a foray to the Fungus Room is just another day in the caves.

### **A Delicate Balance of Power**

A strong group of adventurers could probably wipe out *both* tribes. Although the tribal leaders don't automatically assume this (both are Overconfident), they're each aware that an outside force could very well tip the balance. Thus, both groups treat adventurers something like a powder keg: quite useful, but to be handled with care. Each will come to the conclusion that their best approach is to get the outsiders to attack the *other* tribe, possibly by hinting that their rivals guard some marvelous treasure, and then follow the adventurers in. Let the strangers take point and do the heavy lifting, the goblins will clean up any survivors and possibly even finish off the outsiders if they're weakened enough.

Of course, adventurers being adventurers, they may give the goblins the old hack-n-slash treatment right off, despite any efforts made to parlay. In this case, it's a pretty typical, shortish dungeon crawl, though the dungeon will seem to “change themes” about halfway through.

## **THE GARGUK TRIBE**

The Garguk are large and strong for goblins, and those that survive an attempt to become hound-riders still more so. Natural dungeon Darwinism has provided a sort of survival of the fittest: the core of the tribe is made up of those goblins who have the brawn and skill to survive training and riding a beast who'd love to eat them. They're also naturally resistant to fire and smoke, which helps assure them the advantage in their sooty section of the caves (see *Garguk Caves*, p. 161).

They favor hatchets and light spears in battle. They carry at least half a dozen of each for melee and throwing. They're trained to snatch one from a fellow (or a corpse) if they run out, and they can do so as a free action with a Fast-Draw roll if they're within one yard of an enweaponed corpse.

Like all goblins, they have a natural horde instinct, which causes them to gang together and pile on to take down an opponent too large for any one of them. Even the hell-hounds

get in on it, using a biting grapple worry to rip an enemy apart, or to help pin him in place for a more casual dismemberment.

### **GORG0 AND MORMO**

Gorgo and Mormo are the two heads of one really big ogre who leads the Garguk tribe. He's in charge because he's the biggest, pure and simple; he thinks nothing of snatching up a goblin who's annoying him and casually popping the creature's head like a zit. If it were a matter of smarts, Gramm (p. 160) would be in charge . . . but it's not. Gorgo and Mormo is interested in outsiders, but acts disdainful, praising his own might and making excuses or changing the subject when asked why he can't lead his tribe to victory.

His heads refer to themselves by name instead of pronouns, speak in broken Common, and bicker constantly.

## THE ONE WHO EATS

The being that the tribes call the One Who Eats is a subterranean predator with preternatural stealth and/or speed. The tribes don't even know what it looks like, only that it will grab one of their number from the shadows of the Fungus Room (p. 158) without warning. They've long since disabused themselves of the notion of killing it, having lost many of their number to previous attempts. They've simply come to accept that the One is a feature of their world. When the dungeoneers venture into the Fungus Room, they too are candidates for an attack – determine a victim randomly, and give him a Vision -2 (plus the current darkness modifier of -5 without a light source) or Danger Sense roll to notice the giant rubbery tentacle whipping out of the shadows that cling to the ceiling. If successful, the person may attempt to defend at -2. Failure means he's grappled around the torso by a ST 24 tentacle. On the next turn, it will attempt a takedown (p. B370), actually lifting the character off the ground instead of throwing him down. Once successful, it will pull him to its mouth for a bite, a process taking two turns – during which the victim can try to break free. A buddy lending a helping hand gives a bonus of 1/5 his ST, round down. The tentacle has DR 8, and takes 15 points of damage to break its hold. On the third turn, if it still has a victim in its grasp, it attempts a pin (p. B370) to get him into its mouth. Once successful, it chews on him for an automatic *5d cutting* each turn. *Chomp, chomp, munch, munch, GULP!*

Those who attempt to engage the One directly will face the following.

<b>ST:</b> 45	<b>HP:</b> 45	<b>Speed:</b> 6.00
<b>DX:</b> 10	<b>Will:</b> 12	<b>Move:</b> 12 (Air)
<b>IQ:</b> 6	<b>Per:</b> 12	
<b>HT:</b> 14	<b>FP:</b> 14	<b>SM:</b> +2
<b>Dodge:</b> 9	<b>Parry:</b> 11	<b>DR:</b> 8

**Tentacle (16):** Grappling ST 24. Reach C-6.

**Bite:** 5d cutting. Reach C. Can only bite victims that have been grappled and brought to its mouth; in that case, damage is automatic each turn.

**Traits:** 360° Vision; Cannot Speak; Chameleon 4 (Only in darkness or shadow); Dark Vision; Doesn't Breathe; Extra Arms 6 (Long +5; Weak); Extra Attacks 6; Extra-Flexible (Tentacles); Flight; High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Injury Tolerance (Unliving; No Brain; No Eyes; No Neck; No Vitals); No Legs (Aerial); Unfazeable; Silence 4.

**Skills:** Stealth-14; Wrestling-16.

**Class:** Elder thing.

**Notes:** Multiple tentacles grappling one target give +2 to effective grappling ST per tentacle. Unwilling to negotiate; just hungry. The One itself doesn't intentionally keep treasure, but its victims' belongings scatter the floor. Most are rotted/rusted and worthless, but if the One is killed and the adventurers are free to search the Fungus Room, they can find an old dwarven thesis on mining and prospecting (worth \$1,000 due to the etched metal pages), a bloodstone worth \$360, and a beautifully decorated medium dwarven shield (enchanted, Defending Shield +2), worth \$20,540. They can also find scattered coins worth \$4 × margin of success on a Per or Search roll.

Gorgo seems to be the “smarter” one, and typically does the talking; Mormo interrupts to agree or disagree and often blurts out what they're both really thinking (which is usually violent). Nevertheless, it would be a bad idea to underestimate Gorgo and Mormo; he's much more cunning than he comes off, ruthless and deadly in battle.

In combat, he's fearless and brutal but at least passably tactical, using the mobility of the hound-riders to his advantage. His heads can coordinate separately, each usually guiding one arm (with a club in each hand), allowing him to take mixed or double actions. Although not an actual goblin of the tribe, he's acquired some of their characteristics through prolonged cohabitation (and possibly through eating so many of them), including a resistance to fire and smoke.

<b>ST:</b> 25	<b>HP:</b> 30	<b>Speed:</b> 6.50
<b>DX:</b> 12	<b>Will:</b> 13	<b>Move:</b> 8
<b>IQ:</b> 10	<b>Per:</b> 13	
<b>HT:</b> 14	<b>FP:</b> 14	<b>SM:</b> +1
<b>Dodge:</b> 9	<b>Parry:</b> 11	<b>DR:</b> 9 (+4 vs. Fire)

**Fist (16):** 2d+3 crushing. Reach C, 1.

**Giant Club (16):** 5d+3 crushing. Reach 1, 2.

**Hurled Rock (16):** 2d+6 crushing. Acc 0, Range 88, RoF 1, Shots T(1).

**Traits:** Altered Time Rate 1 (Temporary Disadvantages: Move -4, One Arm); Ambidextrous; Appearance (Monstrous); Bad Temper (12); Bloodlust (12); Bully (12); Danger Sense; Easy to Read; Extra Head 1; Fearlessness 3; Filter Lungs (Smoke Only); Fit; High Pain Threshold; Infravision; Laziness; Magic Resistance 4; Night Vision 5; Overconfidence (12); Peripheral Vision; Sure-Footed (Slippery).

**Skills:** Axe/Mace-16; Brawling-16; Intimidation-16; Throwing-16; Wrestling-16.

**Class:** Mundane.

**Notes:** DR 4 from Tough Skin and 5 from the malodorous layers of skins and hides he wears, which don't cover his heads or necks, and leave many gaps at the joints, etc.; targeting chinks in armor (p. B400) allows the attacker to ignore, rather than halve, DR from armor (leaving DR 4). His personal effects include 10d silver pieces (\$1 each), and an ornate (even gaudy) hand mirror; the glass is broken and filthy, but the gilded and gem-encrusted frame itself is worth \$600.

## GARGUK GOBLINS

All Garguk train as warriors. The largest and strongest become hound-riders.

### Garguk Groundling

A Garguk groundling generally carries a javelin, a shield, several hatchets on his belt, and several more javelins in a quiver on his back.

Garguk are competent formation fighters. They will use tactics such as shield-walls, flanking, and wedges where effective. While in formation with a line of his fellows, he will throw weapons at his enemies, keeping the last one or two for melee.

**ST:** 13      **HP:** 14      **Speed:** 6.00  
**DX:** 12      **Will:** 10      **Move:** 6  
**IQ:** 9      **Per:** 10  
**HT:** 12      **FP:** 12      **SM:** 0  
**Dodge:** 9      **Parry:** 10      **DR:** 4 (+4 vs. Fire)

**Bite (12):** 1d-1 cutting. Reach C.

**Hatchet (15):** 2d-1 cutting. Reach 1. *Thrown:* Acc 1, Range 19/32, RoF 1, Shots T(1), Bulk -2.

**Javelin (15):** 1d+1 impaling. Reach 1. *Thrown:* Acc 3, Range 19/32, RoF 1, Shots T(1), Bulk -4.

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

**Traits:** Appearance (Monstrous); Bad Temper (12); Bloodlust (12); Chummy; Infravision; Filter Lungs (Smoke Only); Night-Adapted Vision; Resistant to Metabolic Hazards (+3); Shield Wall Training (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 11: Power-Ups*, p. 12); Sure-Footed (Slippery); Teamwork (Formation fighting); Teeth (Sharp). If alone, Cowardice (9); if in a group of five or more, Overconfidence (12).

**Skills:** Climbing-12; Fast-Draw (Axe or Spear)-14; Jumping-12; Melee (Axe or Spear)-15; Running-12; Shield-14; Stealth-14; Thrown Weapon (Axe or Spear)-15.

**Class:** Mundane.

**Notes:** Medium shield (DB 2, Block 10) gives +2 to all defenses against frontal attacks. DR 2 from Tough Skin, 2 from hides and skins; see notes for Gorgo and Mormo. Night-Adapted Vision gives the groundling no penalty in darkness -5, as for most places in the caves, but -5 in full daylight or -5 in total darkness (see *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 3: The Next Level*, p. 16). Loot includes 3d silver pieces.

### Garguk Hound-Rider

Those Garguk who show an aptitude with hell-hounds, and who survive the process of choosing one to train and ride, become the elite cavalry and shock troops of the tribe. They use their mount's mobility to make circling passes that bring them briefly into melee range (ideally they attack in the *middle* of the hound's full Move, so they're out of range when their turn ends), then throwing weapons when out of reach. Their saddles carry many extra hatchets and spears, and they're not afraid to use them. They only have their mounts close into biting range when they've got a target on the ropes; then it's dinner time.

**ST:** 15      **HP:** 16      **Speed:** 6.00  
**DX:** 12      **Will:** 12      **Move:** 6  
**IQ:** 8      **Per:** 10  
**HT:** 12      **FP:** 12      **SM:** 0  
**Dodge:** 9      **Parry:** 10      **DR:** 5 (+5 vs. Fire)

**Bite (12):** 1d cutting. Reach C.

**Hatchet (15):** 2d cutting. Reach 1. *Thrown:* Acc 1, Range 22/35, RoF 1, Shots T(1), Bulk -2.

**Javelin (15):** 1d+1 impaling. Reach 1. *Thrown:* Acc 3, Range 19/35, RoF 1, Shots T(1), Bulk -4.

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

**Traits:** As Groundling, above, plus Good with Hell-Hounds.

**Skills:** As Groundling, above, plus Animal Handling (Hell-Hound)-12; Hands-Free Riding-15; Riding (Hell-Hound)-15.

**Class:** Mundane.

**Notes:** Medium shield (DB 2, Block 10) gives +2 to all defenses against frontal attacks. DR 3 from Tough Skin, 2 from hides and skins; see notes for Gorgo and Mormo. When mounted on a hell-hound, use the *hound's* movement; the rider can take a full (or All-Out) Attack without suffering the penalties of a Move and Attack.

## GRAMM, GARGUK WARLOCK

Gramm is the tribe's warlock, a clever and devious goblin if ever there was one. He's figured out how to play Gorgo and Mormo against one another to get what he wants. Although it doesn't always work – he risks being squeezed to death like a tube of toothpaste each time – he often sways the leader by such tactics. He also has a great deal of leverage, being the only spell-caster in the tribe *and* the one who most easily and reliably controls the hell-hounds. For Gramm's part, he naturally thinks he'd make a better leader, but he doesn't want the tribe to lose Gorgo and Mormo's strength.

**ST:** 10      **HP:** 11      **Speed:** 6.00  
**DX:** 12      **Will:** 14      **Move:** 6  
**IQ:** 14      **Per:** 14  
**HT:** 12      **FP:** 12      **SM:** 0  
**Dodge:** 9      **Parry:** 12      **DR:** 3 (+5 vs. Fire)

**Bite (12):** 1d-3 cutting. Reach C.

**Burning Touch (15):** Staff damage + 1d to 3d burn that *ignores* DR from armor. Costs 1 FP/1d.

**Fiery Breath (16):** 1d+1 to 4d+4 burn. Reach 1-4. Costs 1 FP/1d+1.

**Fireball or Explosive Fireball (16):** 1d to 9d burn. Acc 1, Range 25/50. Costs 1 FP/1d; Explosive Fireball costs 2 FP/1d.

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

**Staff (15):** 1d+2 crushing. Reach 1, 2.

**Traits:** As Garguk Groundling (above), plus Animal Empathy; Energy Reserve 8 (Magic); Magery 3; Weapon Bond (Staff).

**Skills:** Alchemy-14; Fast Talk-14; Innate Attack (Breath, Projectile)-16; Intimidation-14; Occultism-14; Poisons-14; Staff-14. Most spells in the Animal (specialized in hell-hounds where appropriate), Fire, and Healing colleges at level 15, including the attack spells above *and* Shapeshifting (Hell-Hound).

**Class:** Mundane.

**Notes:** Magic staff set with a sizable black onyx (worth \$580 and acting his power item with 5 FP for spells). -1 FP cost to all spells due to high skill. He owns a single major healing potion (worth \$350), which he won't hesitate to drink if sorely injured. Loot also includes 6d silver pieces.



The rider is effectively 3' above a foot-bound opponent, giving him +1 and his target -1 to defend in melee; if he attacks while the hound is moving at 7 or more, he gets -1 to skill but +1 to damage. Due to his training, a rider ignores penalties for "no hands" riding, and uses his full skill when attacking with melee or ranged weapons. See *Mounted Combat* (p. B396) for details.

*I was going to tell you . . . I found something in the Goblin tunnels.*

– Bilbo Baggins, in *The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug*

## GARGUK HELL-HOUNDS

Fire-breathing infernal canines the size of a tiger, they are strong and vicious enough to carry a fully armed Garguk warrior into battle. Although highly aggressive, they can be trained to follow the commands of a rider, and will generally do so unless something sends them into a frenzy.

<b>ST:</b> 21	<b>HP:</b> 22	<b>Speed:</b> 7.00
<b>DX:</b> 13	<b>Will:</b> 12	<b>Move:</b> 10/15
<b>IQ:</b> 4	<b>Per:</b> 14	
<b>HT:</b> 13	<b>FP:</b> 13	<b>SM:</b> +1
<b>Dodge:</b> 11	<b>Parry:</b> N/A	<b>DR:</b> 5 (+10 vs. Fire)

**Bite (18):** 2d+1 cutting + linked 1d burn. Reach C, 1.

**Fiery Breath (16):** 1d+1 burn, Jet, Range 5/10.

**Traits:** Berserk (12); Bloodlust (12); Combat Reflexes; Discriminatory Smell; Enhanced Move 0.5 (Ground); Filter Lungs (Smoke Only); Gluttony (12); High Pain Threshold; Injury Tolerance (Damage Reduction 3; Fire/Heat only); Infravision; Night Vision 9; Quadruped; Sure-Footed (Slippery, Uneven); Teeth (Sharp); Wild Animal.

**Skills:** Brawling-18; Innate Attack (Breath)-16; Stealth-15; Tracking-18.

**Class:** Demonic Animal.

**Notes:** A rider is Light Encumbrance, for Dodge 10, Move 8/12.

## GARGUK CAVES

The Garguk have selected caves with certain specifications and optimized them for defense against creepy-crawly spider goblins. Although tall enough to accommodate a hound-rider or ogre, most don't have high vaulted ceilings where spiders can skulk. In places where attacks have been common, the floors, walls, and ceiling are routinely coated with oil, both to make them slippery (-2 to skill, -1 to defenses; any failed DX-based roll forces a DX check to avoid falling – but all Garguk ignore this effect), and so they can be ignited (1d-1 burning per second per square yard). Being resistant to fire damage, the goblins won't hesitate to torch the room even if they're inside. All passages into the tribal commons have built-up mounds of

rubble that act as cover, from behind which sentries can make pop-up attacks (p. B390). The passages also have large gongs that can be struck to alert the rest of the tribe to an attack.

Further, all Garguk areas are filled with smoke, giving a -3 to vision *on top of* lighting penalties to anyone who lacks Infravision. Anyone who breathes the smoke for over one minute must make a HT roll (and another after each minute spent breathing smoke) to avoid coughing (-3 to DX, -1 to IQ, can't be stealthy). Air spells can clear an area temporarily (for the duration of a battle), but the smoke is coming from a great bonfire in the tribal commons, which will have to be put out before the caves will clear permanently. Garguk (including Gorgo and Mormo as well as hell-hounds) can all see and breathe fine in smoke.

The tribe is on high alert due to the constant threat of Skrixid attack. A typical sentry group or war-party consists of at least six goblins (or *twice* the number of adventurers, if more), about a third of which are hound-riders. In a sentry group, one always has the job of hitting the alarm gong, and he will do so on the second turn of combat (one turn to get there, and a Fast-Draw roll to Ready the mallet instantly). Once the alarm has been sounded, another group of Garguk guards arrives in 3d turns; then 1d minutes later, Gorgo and Mormo arrive, along with Gramm and yet more goblins, to investigate. The tribe is at least 50 strong altogether, with no noncombatants.

# THE SKRIXID TRIBE

Goblins of the Skrixid tribe are nimble and sleek, some might say downright spider-like. The magical experiments of Shiirith have left them with several traits adapted to living among arachnids – clinging to walls, immunity to venom, and the ability to see and move through the many spider webs that choke their section of the caves (see *Skrixid Caves*, p. 164).

Skrixid usually crawl stealthily across the ceiling (-2 to be spotted), and either snipe enemies from afar (falling back when approached) or wait in ambush and attack from above (-2 to target's defenses; see *Attack from Above*, p. B402). They use long knives (not balanced for throwing) and pistol crossbows in battle, all treated with a sticky spider venom. A successful Fast-Draw (Arrow) roll allows them to reload and

ready a crossbow to fire in a single turn; Skrixid war-bands will stagger shots so someone is firing every turn.

## SHIIRITH THE MOTHER

It's unclear exactly *what* Shiirith is, or was. She has the torso, arms, and head of what might once have been a beautiful raven-haired human, elf, or faerie woman . . . but from the waist down, she has the bulbous abdomen and spindly legs of a gigantic black widow spider. Whether she is some sort of demon, is the victim of a curse, or has done this to herself (intentionally or otherwise), she's a monster, if an unusually comely one above the hips.

Ruthless and cunning, she accepts – nay, *demands* – the worship of the Skrixid tribe as the goddess she likes to think she is. She often refers to herself in the third person, and her demeanor is generally imperious and aloof (in a creepy, arachnid way). Those who don't address her with the proper respect are normally slain on the spot, though she's willing to be lenient for strangers who may be able to tip the balance of power in the caves.

She's a talented and accomplished sorceress, to the point that she has magically altered the goblins of the tribe. She commands spiders of all kinds at will, and she is deadly in melee combat due to her spear-like forelegs – through which she can cast spells. Her cognitive acuity is such that she can concentrate on mental tasks (e.g., commanding spiders or casting spells) while doing others things, including casting *and* attacking with a Jet, Melee, or Missile spell in a single turn.

**ST:** 21      **HP:** 25      **Speed:** 7.00  
**DX:** 14      **Will:** 15      **Move:** 8 (Clinging 8)  
**IQ:** 15      **Per:** 15  
**HT:** 13      **FP:** 13      **SM:** +2  
**Dodge:** 11      **Parry:** 12      **DR:** 8

**Acid Ball (18):** 1d to 12d corr. Acc 1, Range 20/40. Costs 1 FP/1d.

**Bite (16):** 2d+1 impaling + follow-up 1d+2 toxic *and* roll vs. HT-2 or physically stunned. Reach C.

**Deathtouch (16):** Foreleg damage + linked 1d to 4d toxic; *ignores* DR from armor. Costs 1 FP/1d.

**Foreleg (16):** 2d+4 impaling Reach C, 1.

**Spider Silk (18):** ST 10 Sticky Binding (p. B40), DR 3 to break. Acc 3, Range 5 yard/1 FP spent.

**Spit Acid (16):** 1d to 4d corr. Reach 1-4. Costs 1 FP/1d.

**Traits:** Appearance (Monstrously Beautiful); Bloodlust (12); Callous; Climbing Line; Clinging; Combat Reflexes; Compartmentalized Mind 1 (No Mental Separation); Dark Vision; Energy Reserve 12 (Magic); Extra Attack 1; Extra Legs (Arachnid); Good with Spiders (**GURPS Power-Ups 2: Perks**, p. 13); Immunity to Poison; Magery 4; Mind Control (Spiders); Overconfidence (12); Penetrating Vision (Cobwebs; Line of sight range); Speak with Spiders; Strikers, Impaling (Forelegs, 2); Super Climbing 4; Teeth (Fangs).

**Skills:** Alchemy-15; Brawling-16; Innate Attack (Breath *and* Projectile)-18; Occultism-16; Poisons-16; Stealth-16; Thaumatology-15. Most spells in the Animal (specialized in giant spiders where appropriate), Body Control, Earth, and Water colleges at level 17, including the attack spells above *and* Shapeshifting (Giant Spider).

**Class:** Mundane?

**Notes:** She has -1 FP cost to all spells due to high skill. Shiirith has the torso, arms, and head of a shapely and beautiful (if still clearly inhuman) woman, which is good for the full reaction penalties for Monstrous Appearance, and those with traits such as Xenophilia may find her . . . intriguing. She wears a silver tiara (worth \$575), a silver chain set with a large ruby (worth

*Shiirith  
demands to be  
worshiped as  
a goddess.*

## MOTHER'S FAVORITE

There are many giant spiders in the Skrixid caves, but there's one that Mother loves best. Her web is in the cavernous vaults above the main entrance, and she will attack *any* nontribe members she sees, unless they're accompanied by enough Skrixid to make clear that they're not invaders.

**ST:** 27      **HP:** 30      **Speed:** 7.00  
**DX:** 14      **Will:** 12      **Move:** 10 (Clinging 10)  
**IQ:** 6      **Per:** 14  
**HT:** 14      **FP:** 14      **SM:** +2  
**Dodge:** 11      **Parry:** 12      **DR:** 6

**Bite (16):** 3d+1 impaling + follow-up 1d+2 toxic. Reach C, 1.

**Forelegs (16):** 3d+5 impaling. Reach C, 1.

**Webbing (16):** ST 20 Sticky Binding (p. B40), DR 6 to break. Reach C. This is a melee attack that allows Mother's Favorite to grapple and cocoon an enemy and then save him for later, often hanging from the ceiling.

**Traits:** As Giant Riding Spider (p. 163), plus Compartmentalized Mind 1 (No Mental Separation; Only for Mind Control); Extra Attack 1, Mind Control (Spiders), and Strikers x2 (Impaling; Forelegs).

**Skills:** Brawling-16; Climbing-16; Stealth-16.

**Class:** Dire Animal.

**Notes:** As Giant Riding Spider (p. 163).

\$900 – used as her power item, holding 7 FP for spells, and an expensive silver hairbrush (worth \$100).

## SKRIXID GOBLINS

As a rule, all Skrixid are good at sneaking, stalking, and attacking from ambush.

### Skrixid Skitterer

The Skrixid are nimble, quick wall-crawlers who skulk along the shadows across the ceiling and harass enemies from afar for as long as they can, before dropping down onto them from above. They carry their knives in their teeth so that their saliva repoisons the blade when not in use. Each carries a bandoleer of poisoned hand-crossbow bolts. If one runs out, he will salvage ammo from a fallen comrade.

**ST:** 11      **HP:** 12      **Speed:** 6.25  
**DX:** 13      **Will:** 10      **Move:** 6 (Clinging 6)  
**IQ:** 9      **Per:** 12  
**HT:** 12      **FP:** 12      **SM:** 0  
**Dodge:** 10      **Parry:** 9      **DR:** 2

**Bite (12):** 1d-2 cutting + poison. Reach C.

**Crossbow (15):** 1d+2 impaling + poison. Acc 1, Range 165/220, RoF 1, Shots 1(4), Bulk -4.

**Knife (15):** 1d cutting *or* 1d-1 impaling + poison. Reach C, 1.

**Poison:** All Skrixid teeth and weapons are coated with a mild spider venom, causing 1d toxic damage as follow-up.

**Punch (12):** 1d-2 crushing. Reach C.

**Traits:** Appearance (Monstrous); Bloodlust (12); Chummy; Clinging; Crossbow Finesse; Dark-Adapted Vision; Enhanced Dodge 1; Flexibility; Good with Spiders (*GURPS Power-Ups 2: Perks*, p. 13); Immunity to Poison; Infravision; Penetrating Vision (Cobwebs; Line of sight range); Quick Reload (Crossbow); Super Climbing 3; Teeth (Sharp). If alone, Cowardice (9); if in a group of five or more, Overconfidence (12).

**Skills:** Attack From Above (Knife)-15; Climbing-16; Crossbow-15; Escape-15; Fast-Draw (Arrow or Knife)-14; Jumping-14; Knife-15; Running-12; Stealth-16.

**Class:** Mundane.

**Notes:** Dark-Adapted Vision is similar to Night-Adapted Vision (see *Dungeon Fantasy 3*, p. 16), but gives them no penalty in darkness -5 or worse, as is found throughout the caves. Loot includes 3d silver pieces.

*It is not merely cruelty that leads men to love war; it is excitement.*

– Henry Ward Beecher

## Skrixid Spider-Rider

Some Skrixid are born not just with an affinity for spiders, but with the ability to communicate with them. These become spider-riders, deadly venomous cavalry that can scurry across walls and ceilings along with the skitterers. They attempt to use their mobility to keep out of range and fire crossbow bolts at enemies, only engaging in melee when cornered or confident of victory – at which time the spider likely does most of the damage.

**ST:** 13                    **HP:** 14                    **Speed:** 6.25  
**DX:** 13                    **Will:** 10                    **Move:** 6 (Clinging 6)  
**IQ:** 9                      **Per:** 12  
**HT:** 12                    **FP:** 12                    **SM:** 0  
**Dodge:** 8                **Parry:** 9                **DR:** 3

**Bite (12):** 1d-1 cutting + poison. Reach C.

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

**Crossbow (15):** 1d+3 impaling + poison. Acc 1, Range 195/260, RoF 1, Shots 1(4), Bulk -4.

**Knife (15):** 2d-2 cutting or 1d impaling + poison. Reach C, 1.

**Poison:** As Skitterer (pp. 162-163).

**Traits:** As Skitterer (above), plus Speak with Spiders.

**Skills:** As Skitterer, plus Animal Handling (Spider)-12; Hands-Free Riding-15; Riding (Spider)-15.

**Class:** Mundane.

**Notes:** See *Garguk Hound-Rider* (pp. 161-162) for notes on mounted combat.

## SKRIXID SPIDERS

Mother loves spiders, and so all of her children do too. The Skrixid caves are literally crawling with them, from regular-sized to puppy-sized to Mother's Favorite (p. 162). The following are the most likely to vex intruders.

## Giant Riding Spider

A spider about the size of a motorcycle or small pony, fitted with a special saddle that allows a Skrixid to cling to the saddle while inverted, and control the spider's movements without reins. It obeys the commands of its rider in combat and sneaking; left on its own, it does what spiders do (spin webs, hunt, etc.). It just does them *bigger*.

**ST:** 21                    **HP:** 22                    **Speed:** 7.00  
**DX:** 14                    **Will:** 12                    **Move:** 10 (Clinging 10)  
**IQ:** 4                      **Per:** 14  
**HT:** 12                    **FP:** 12                    **SM:** +1  
**Dodge:** 11              **Parry:** 12              **DR:** 5

**Bite (16):** 2d+1 impaling + follow-up 1d+1 toxic. Reach C, 1.

**Traits:** Appearance (Monstrous); Bestial; Bloodlust (12); Callous; Cannot Speak (Mute); Climbing Line; Clinging; Combat Reflexes; Dark Vision; Extra Legs (Arachnid); Horizontal; Immunity to Poison; No Fine Manipulators; Penetrating Vision (Cobwebs; Line of sight range); Super Climbing 5; Teeth (Fangs).

**Skills:** Brawling-16; Climbing-16; Stealth-16.

**Class:** Dire Animal.

**Notes:** A rider is Light Encumbrance, for Dodge 10, Move 8 (Clinging 8). Can use Climbing Line to lower itself (and its rider) from the ceiling, or pull back up, at *half* normal Clinging Move.

## Spider Swarm

The thousands of crawling spiders in the Skrixid caves aren't just for show; they will swarm to attack at Mother's (or Mother's Favorite's) command. See *Swarm Attacks* (p. B461) for more details. Several swarms will also attack anyone who attempts to set the webs in the caves aflame; see *Skrixid Caves*, p. 164.

**ST:** 1                      **HP:** 10                      **Speed:** 5.50  
**DX:** 12                    **Will:** 8                      **Move:** 5  
**IQ:** 1                      **Per:** 12  
**HT:** 10                    **FP:** 10                      **SM:** 0  
**Dodge:** 9                **Parry:** N/A                **DR:** 1

**Attack (16):** 1 point impaling + follow-up 2 points toxic, no defense, each turn to anyone in the same hex as the swarm; DR from armor doesn't protect, and Tough Skin doesn't stop the toxic follow-up damage.

**Traits:** Appearance (Horrific); Bestial; Bloodlust (12); Callous; Cannot Speak (Mute); Climbing Line; Clinging; Combat Reflexes; Dark Vision; Extra Legs (Arachnid); Horizontal; Immunity to Poison; Injury Tolerance (Diffuse; Body of Swarm); No Fine Manipulators; Penetrating Vision (Cobwebs; Line of sight range); Super Climbing 5; Teeth (Fangs).

**Skills:** Climbing-16; Stealth-16.

**Class:** Animal.

**Notes:** Individually, the spiders are Size -10 to -15; the stats above are for a one-yard-square swarm, which attacks by getting close its intended victim, creeping inside armor and under clothes, and biting. Larger swarms have 10 HP *per square yard*, but don't do any additional damage to those within.

## SKRIXID CAVES

Like the Garguk, the Skrixid have selected and customized their home to fit their needs, including defenses against their primary foes. Skrixid areas tend to have high ceilings for them to skulk along. They have been deliberately cleaned of the phosphorescent lichens that light the rest of the complex (total darkness -10 without a light source). The floors are often scattered with rubble to make them uneven (-2 to skill, -1 to defenses for those lacking the appropriate version of Sure-Footed); this has no effect on wall- or ceiling-crawlers, of course.

The most notable feature of Skrixid areas is the ubiquity of spider webs – hanging from every wall and ceiling, strung from boulder to stone over the rubble-strewn floor, and constantly crawling with thousands of spiders. In addition to triggering Squeamishness and the like, this gives all non-Skrixid -3 to vision *on top of* lighting penalties, increased to -5 when attempting to spot hidden spiders or Skrixid. Although the webs won't normally catch human-sized victims (pixies might need to worry . . .), anyone who falls down or is knocked against a wall must make a DX roll or be grappled by the webs with effective ST 11 – and then attacked by a spider swarm in 1d turns.

Any attempt to burn these webs will meet with limited success. The dank air in the caves makes it so that only webs *directly* exposed to flames are destroyed. The fire doesn't spread, and it takes one second per square yard with an open flame (torch, etc.) to clear an area enough to remove vision penalties. Other fire sources don't have much more success: non-area Fire spells (Fireball, Flame Jet, etc.) can clear a single square yard per use (or turn). Larger-area fire effects are -1 *per die* to burning damage due to the clammy atmosphere, and alchemist's fire only covers a one-yard radius due to the rubble-strewn floor. Of course, this will upset the spiders, who will swarm to attack the intruder – one swarm *per hex* that is cleared. An Explosive Fireball might *seem* like a good idea, until the 19-square-yard spider swarm responds . . .

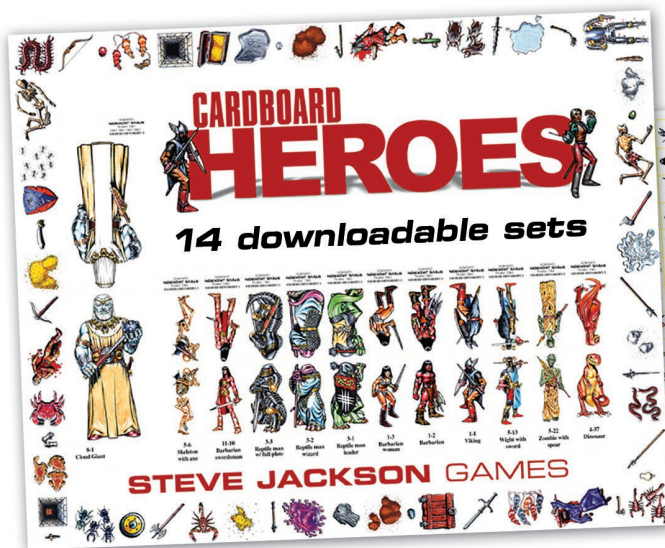
The webs and spiders also act as an early warning system. Anyone approaching is sure to disturb them, which will bring sentries to investigate. Once intruders have disturbed any webs (including by burning them, or even just walking across them), a Skrixid sentry party arrives in 3d turns. The sounds of combat will draw others in short order, including both Mother and her Favorite. The tribe is at least 50 strong altogether, with no noncombatants.

### “So, Why Are We Here Again?”

These caves of goblins are designed to be dropped into a campaign as a “side quest,” or even just some interesting distractions while the adventurers are on their way from Point A to Point B. It's up to the GM to decide exactly why the heroes need to head into *these* caves . . . perhaps this is the best or only passage across the mountains, or it's at the top of a much deeper complex of tunnels that contain some other quest-worthy object. Maybe the dungeoneers have been sent by the clan of those dearly departed dwarven miners to discover their fate, or they're exploring rumors of “that mine that ate those dwarves a while back.”

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Crestfallen from his ignoble defeat at the hands of the Forces of Light, and the mass desertion of his once-mighty Dark Army, W.A. Frick broods in his cave deep under the mountains. He passes the time by pacing, plotting, and excoriating his few remaining minions for their incompetence. He uses an arcane system of occult numerology and strange symbols called “*GURPS*” to play out his various wicked schemes in order to predict their effectiveness, but he still has yet to run a successful simulation for world domination. He would also like to give thanks to the *Pyramid* Write Club, but the first rule of Write Club is “We do not talk about Write Club.”



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