

GURPS

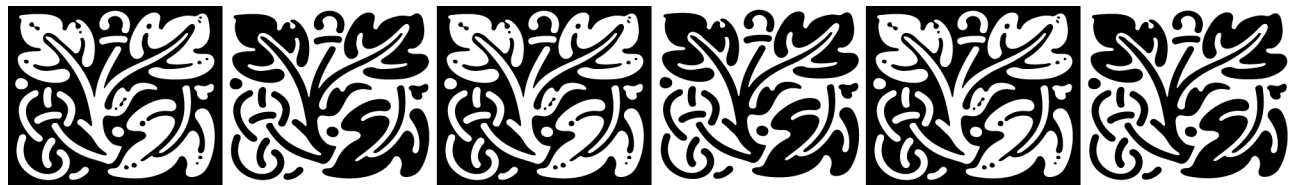
Fourth Edition

DUNGEON FANTASY™ 16

WILDERNESS ADVENTURES™

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“And now,” cried Max, “let the wild rumpus start!”

*– Maurice Sendak,
Where the Wild Things Are*

INTRODUCTION

This can be an adventure in itself: the party is sent to explore and map the trackless waste, virgin planet, mysterious dungeon, steaming jungle, dead city, or whatever.

– *GURPS Basic Set*

It's strange that hack-'n'-slash gaming is so dungeon-bound, given how many of the sword-and-sorcery tales that sowed the seeds were set outdoors. Conan, the archetypal monster-slaying freebooter, got his start fighting and pillaging his way across the wilds. Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser, fortune-seekers extraordinaire, likewise spent a lot of time trudging and sailing. The saga of Middle Earth saw heroes of all professions slogging through forests, mountains, and marshes – and featured battles involving giant eagles, huge wolves, and walking trees. Yet what stood out was that fantasy adventurers, unlike most others, *also* delved into caves, mines, sewers, and tombs. Which didn't change the fact that they had the wind in their hair most days and slept under the stars most nights.

GURPS Dungeon Fantasy tends to overlook the trip in favor of the destination, too. It has “Dungeon” in the name. The supplement on adventure planning and adventuring activities is titled *Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons*. Could it be less subtle?

Dungeon Fantasy 16: Wilderness Adventures sets out to redress this shortcoming. It looks back over *Dungeon Fantasy 1 to 15* (that's why it's so *long*) and adds extra detail where outdoor action is concerned. Chapter 1 advises players on abilities and equipment for wilderness quests; Chapter 2 holds expanded rules for travel, camping, exploration, outdoor hazards, and fun with rope and wooden stakes; and Chapter 3 counsels the GM on how to use Chapter 2 to challenge heroes built with Chapter 1 in mind. In short, this supplement provides everything needed to drag delvers into the fresh air to discover the joys of quicksand and sunburn!

Not that this stuff is *only* useful under the sun. Many a dungeon is home to wilderness environments and dangers ranging from quicksand pits, through underground vegetation for monsters to lurk in, to subterranean rivers as broad and as swift as the outdoor kind. A mega-dungeon might be so extensive that the GM wants more-detailed rules for travel, camping, and so on. And many a fantasy tale borrows from classical myth, portraying an underworld almost indistinguishable from the outdoors. Everything here works in *those* situations, too.

PUBLICATION HISTORY

This is the first edition of *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 16: Wilderness Adventures*. It refers to earlier *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* volumes to enhance rather than reiterate, but invokes *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 1: Adventurers* and *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons* often enough that the reader will find it more useful with those supplements in hand. Except for liberties taken in the name of fantasy, equipment stats are consistent with *GURPS Low-Tech*, *GURPS Low-Tech Companion 3: Daily Life and Economics*, and even *GURPS High-Tech*. This work doesn't repeat those ones verbatim, however.

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. Sean has been a gamer since 1979. His non-gaming interests include cinema, mixology, and most recently tango. He lives in Montréal, Québec with his wife, Bonnie.

About GURPS

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Internet. Visit us on the World Wide Web at sjgames.com for errata, updates, Q&A, and much more. To discuss *GURPS* with our staff and your fellow gamers, visit our forums at forums.sjgames.com. The *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 16: Wilderness Adventures* web page is gurps.sjgames.com/dungeonfantasy16.

Bibliographies. Many of our books have extensive bibliographies, and we're putting them online – with links to let you buy the resources that interest you! Go to each book's web page and look for the “Bibliography” link.

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata pages for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are available on our website – see above.

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

GARMENTS

Savvy wilderness trekkers appreciate the light weight of *fine, giant spider silk*, and *orichalcum* armor – and the way *thieves'* mail waives Climbing and Stealth penalties. See p. 27 of *Adventurers* for details.

Magical garb of special interest includes Boots of Balance for negotiating treacherous slopes and slippery logs, an Ironskin Amulet for near-weightless protection, and armor enchanted with Lighten. Learn more about these goodies on p. 30 of *Adventurers*.

Further items of value appear below. When applying clothing modifications, note that a delver starts with ordinary clothing that weighs 2 lbs. That's free regardless of Wealth, but replacement cost and the price used when applying cost factors (CF) is \$120. Smart travelers bring extra clothes: \$120, 2 lbs. per set.

Arctic Clothing: Counts as winter clothing *and* gives +5 to HT rolls for cold (p. 30) in arctic climates. Also gives +1 DR vs. *all* damage, but -1 to DX if layered with armor. +1 CF and 5 times weight. Upgrade from free starting clothes: +\$120, +8 lbs.

Camouflage Clothing: For one of *arctic, desert, jungle/woodlands, mountain, plains, or swampland*. Provides a bonus to Camouflage, and Stealth vs. Vision, *in that terrain*: +1 for +2 CF, or +2 for +7 CF. Weight is unaffected. Upgrade from free starting clothes: +\$240 (+1) or +\$840 (+2).

Elven Boots: Light boots (DR 1*) specifically designed to foil enemy trackers: -2 to Tracking attempts. In a group, only useful if *everybody* wears them. \$50, 2 lbs.

Elven Cloak: A heavy cloak bought with the CF for camouflage clothing, matched to a particular terrain type. Gives the same bonuses as such clothing when *worn*, functions as an ordinary heavy cloak when *wielded*. A cloak with only this feature is \$150 (+1) or \$400 (+2), 5 lbs.

Hobnails: Added to footwear, these cancel the -2 to DX and -1 to active defenses – though not the movement penalties – for bad footing (p. 38), at the cost of -1 to Stealth vs. Hearing. \$25, 1 lb.

Moccasins: Light footwear (DR 1*) optimized for sneaking around. Cancels -1 in Stealth penalties for encumbrance, crunchy leaves, etc. \$40, 1 lb.

Swarm Suit: Reduces injury from stinging swarms by 1 HP, granting immunity to the mundane kind (p. 34). Light and tight; layering with armor (which keeps out swarms for only five seconds!) gives no DX penalty. Also protects against insect-borne disease (*Fresh Air Is Good For You*, p. 34). \$80, 5 lbs.

Winter Clothing: Prevents -5 to HT rolls for cold (p. 30) in icy places such as arctic and high mountain terrain, and gives +1 DR vs. *cutting* damage. +0.5 CF and 2.5 times weight. Upgrade from free starting clothes: +\$60, +3 lbs.

SURVIVAL GEAR

Survival isn't merely a matter of dressing nicely (except at Wizards' Guild dinners). It calls for all manner of tools and supplies.

Same Old Same Old

Many tried-and-true items from pp. 23-26 of *Adventurers* (and included in the basic kits on pp. 5-6 of *Dungeon Fantasy 13: Loadouts*, for players who find gearing-up boring) merit additional notes when using the rules in Chapter 2.

Blades: Tasks that involve sharpening stakes or making shelters *assume* a hatchet or a machete. A weapons-grade blade is overkill – a tool-grade (\$15) hatchet works fine. The generous GM *might* allow such tasks at -2 with a knife or -5 with good intentions.

Blanket/Sleeping Fur: A camper without a bedroll must sacrifice some other campsite benefit to sleep in comfort (*Sites*, p. 24). In arctic terrain, only sleeping fur avoids this.

Canteen/Wineskin: The simplification under *Water Supplies* (p. 43) assumes that each traveler has such an item! A group lugging a barrel is also fine. Delves without *must* roll vs. Survival daily; failure results in the more severe FP losses given under *Starvation* (p. 43).

Fire: Heroes without Fire spells need fire-starters. Personal basics suffice; so does a burning glass, on days with no penalty from *Nasty Weather* (pp. 30-31). Alchemist's matches always work – expending one gives +1 to one fire-related skill roll. Pyromaniacs can use alchemist's fire for +2!

Fishhooks and Line: Someone without at least this gear has -2 on the Fishing rolls in *Food and Water* (pp. 42-44).

Group Basics: Parties without this suffer -2 to Survival rolls for pitching camp (*Sites*, p. 24) or building shelter (*Shelters*, pp. 24-25), and to any Survival roll involving a combined or group effort.

Mirrors: On *sunny* days (no penalty from *Nasty Weather*, pp. 30-31), these enable signaling per *Smoke and Fire* (p. 28) without annoying wilderness denizens who disapprove of flame.

Sage Supplies

These articles from *Sages* are especially useful on wilderness adventures:

Cobweb Kite: Falls of 40+ yards are common with outdoor Climbing failures. Also useful for descending quickly from great heights – make an Aerobatics+2, Acrobatics-2, or DX-4 roll to steer it to a specific spot (e.g., atop an enemy).

Dwarven Accurizer: Counts as a telescope for scouting or spotting signals.

Float Coat: A lifesaver around *Water Hazards* (p. 29) and freak waves (p. 33).

Manuals: Scholars take note that Animal Handling, Camouflage, Cartography, Disguise (Animals), Fishing, Naturalist, Navigation, Observation, Pharmacy (Herbal), Prospecting, Seamanship, Survival, Teamster, Tracking, and Weather Sense all count as *common knowledge*. Herb Lore is *esoteric knowledge*, but might be worth the extra cost on an outdoor quest.

Maps: The \$100 map mentioned in *Adventurers* is *annotated* by sage standards. It allows Navigation at +1 and an Area Knowledge default (IQ-4) in its area.

Universal Tool Kit: Meets the needs of *all* outdoor tasks that require tools – cutting down trees, making traps, prospecting for minerals, etc.

Sages should also consider investing in scroll belts, scroll cases, and wax tablets to protect their maps and writings from the elements.

Halve the group's daily progress on a day in which they're hit by any kind of flow.

Freak Wave*

Huge waves can overwhelm boaters and island/beach travelers. On water, the lookout gets an **Observation** roll. Then the vessel's handler must roll **Boating** or **Seamanship**, at +1 if the lookout succeeded or +2 if he critically succeeded, a bonus equal to the vehicle's Stability Rating (SR), and a penalty for severity. Intensity is from -1 to -6 (roll 1d), or worse if you've annoyed lake spirits or a sea god. Any failure capsize the craft as explained in *Boating Accidents* (p. 29), with the consequences described there (notably, **Swimming** rolls).

On land, the wave sweeps everyone into the water and forces **Swimming** rolls to return to land.

If **Observation** works on water – or if someone succeeds at **Survival (Island/Beach)** on land – there's enough warning to get +3 to **Swimming**, at least.

Lightning Strike*

In flat terrain (plains, on water, etc.) or up high (mountain terrain), being blasted by bolts from the blue is a concern. It isn't a *big* concern except for delvers who offend local druids or spirits, annoy a thunder god, fail to donate after being saved by prayer (*Dungeons*, p. 15), suffer from **Social Stigma (Excommunicated)** or **Unluckiness** . . . well, quite a few people, actually. Handle this like being zapped by a Lightning spell for 6d burning damage. A *Per*-based **Naturalist** or **Weather Sense** roll detects hair standing on end soon enough to try **Dodge**, at -2 for attack from above and optionally +3 for diving for cover (if any); otherwise, there's no defense.

Quicksand

Anyplace with loose soil and water – especially island/beach, jungle, and swampland terrain – might have pits of wet, sucking grit. In real life, the danger is becoming stuck and dying of exposure. In fantasy, you're dragged to your doom!

A potential victim may try **Survival (Island/Beach, Jungle, or Swamp)**, with failure meaning stepping in it and critical failure causing the next roll to fail automatically. If he steps in, he must roll vs. **Swimming** (or HT-4) every second, at *double* encumbrance penalties. Any success lets him flop to safety. Each failure costs 1 FP – and at 0 FP, each FP costs 1 HP.

Rescuers must *win* a Quick Contest of their highest ST plus (others' total ST)/5 against *twice* the victim's ST to pull him out. Rescue attempts take one second apiece. The rescuee decides whether to cooperate or attempt **Swimming** – he can't do both.

Sinkhole*

Anywhere but in rock-solid mountain terrain, the ground or ice might give way beneath an adventurer, dropping him into a pit. A successful *Per*-based **Prospecting** roll or

Survival roll for the terrain lets the would-be victim spot and avoid such danger. Otherwise, he takes falling damage (*Dungeons*, p. 19) for the hole's depth. The GM might pick depth randomly – say, 1d yards, but possibly much more in areas famed for the sorts of hidden caves where delvers go treasure-hunting.

Field Engineering

Most wilderness is full of building materials: wood, stone, etc. Though *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* isn't *GURPS Construction Work*, artificers might be inspired to turn their craft-related abilities to outdoor challenges. These traits cost a lot of points, so it's only fair to allow this.

When the heroes encounter a major barrier to travel (*Obstacles*, pp. 31-32), **Quick Gadgeteer** gives the option of rolling against **Engineer (Gadgets)** to rig a solution: log raft, pulley hoist, rope bridge, etc. Each associate with **Survival** for the terrain can roll to find useful materials – apply the local foraging modifier (*Terrain Types*, p. 22), and have the *best* result complement the attempt. Every \$250 in poles, ropes, spikes, and similar basic hardware dedicated to the task gives another +1. This is a major piece of work, so it slows travel speed no less than skirting the problem another way *unless* the artificer uses a **Gizmo**. In that case, there's no appreciable slowdown!

Successful field engineering lets the *whole party* avoid brute-force rolls that could result in mishaps – **Climbing**, **Swimming**, etc. It doesn't waive skill rolls to operate the resulting solution; e.g., an artificer can use **Engineer** and a **Gizmo** to whip up a raft quickly enough that a water hazard won't slow travel, but someone still has to roll against **Boating**, with the usual consequences on a failure. However, the engineer's solution is optimized for *that specific problem*, so reduce situational penalties by half his margin of success (rounded down); e.g., skill 16, +1 for a successful **Survival** roll, and +2 for \$500 worth of rope, lets a roll of 11 to lash together a raft offset up to -4 for swift current.

Field engineering is normally disassembled after use, allowing the travelers to recover any hardware tied up in it. If left intact, that equipment stays behind, too. The group can return later to reuse the setup and recover their stuff, but the GM should check to see whether it's still there or somebody else found it; treat this as an extra roll for wandering monsters.

Stampede

This pain falls mainly on the plains: a herd of ordinary herbivores gets spooked (often by fire) and comes charging. Realizing what the noise and dust mean in time to react requires a *Per*-based roll against **Naturalist**, suitable **Animal Handling** (say, for cattle or horses), or **Survival (Plains)**. Success gives the party time to try **Climbing**, magic spells, etc. to move out of harm's way. Each person gets one try, and failure (at warning or evasion) means facing 1d slams or tramples. Maniacs with **Animal Empathy** may forgo evasion to stand fast and attempt a Quick Contest of **Intimidation** vs. the beasts' Will (10 to 12), with margin of victory or loss subtracting from or adding to the number of attacks faced.

A successful **Dodge** roll avoids one collision plus impacts equal to margin of success. Delvers *can* exploit **Acrobatics** for +2, though neither retreating nor shield DB helps. Damage per hit is 1d cr for small deer, 2d to 3d cr for typical critters, and 4d cr for elephants.

Stinging Plants

Almost anywhere but arctic or mountain terrain can have a bunch of mundane plants that cause discomfort on contact.

Set encounters have an additional dimension outdoors: the potential for a huge enemy force. In the wilderness, a whole village of pygmies or an entire army on the move might be a single “encounter.” Sufficiently powerful delvers *can* prevail in such combats! The GM is advised to abstract the fight in terms of enemy attacks per adventurer per turn and a running tally of dead bodies. When using a tactical map, limited space and figures often make it necessary to recycle the counters or miniatures representing dead bad guys to the rear of the opposing formation.

WEIRDNESS

Finally, nothing says that wilderness can't be home to truly freaky stuff, and not just those mushrooms that druids and shamans eat. Adventurers eventually grow accustomed to the challenges of *Unnatural Threats* (p. 31) and even the supernatural complications of *Despoilers* (p. 43), *Boundaries* (pp. 51-52), and *Nature's Strength* (p. 53) – primarily because the *players* can quantify and work around these things. There ought to be some places and events that are too rare to typify. Dungeon standbys such as curses, illusions, places where time flows oddly, portals, regions of anomalous gravity, zones of unusual mana, etc. can work, but the sheer scale of the great outdoors supports additional weirdness. A few examples:

Inconstant Terrain: People take islands, mountains, rivers, etc. for granted. However, fantasy is full of forests that spring up overnight, archipelagos that emerge from and return to the ocean's depths, shifting peaks, and so on. Such weirdness can inflict serious Navigation penalties, demand unexpected Survival specialties, complicate exploration (“Who brought the mountaineering gear?”), lure adventurers on side-quests, and bring encounters and perils that nobody planned for. It could also menace nearby regions by threatening to overgrow them, displace them, or infest them with invasive monsters – all excellent excuses for heroic quests!

Strangely Connected Space: Most delvers assume that the world maps out as a flat surface on which they can plot nice courses, and tend to notice portals and space warps over short distances. It's much harder to realize that, say, those plains they set out across two weeks ago just wrapped back to where they started! Deducing that two points are connected when they shouldn't be calls for a Per roll – at a penalty if the shift is subtle, +3 for Absolute Direction, and with +5 for Eidetic Memory or +10 with Photographic Memory if the travelers pass the same place twice as a result.

Distorted Distance: Apparent and actual distances may be seriously out of whack. For instance, landmark-free wastes might insert 1,000 miles into a 10-mile gap, and cities or entire mountain ranges could be “hidden” within because everybody who looks assumes they're seeing the other side of the region, not the first 1%! Per-based rolls against Hiking, Navigation, and so on – again, at a penalty for subtlety – will reveal that something isn't right, and if nobody succeeds before traveling the expected distance, they'll clue in after they go that far and are *still* trudging along.

Supernatural Pathways: Some places might be accessible only by following a special route *to the letter*.

This isn't like a treasure hunt, where luck or aggressive searching will do. Maybe walking the path is part of a spell, or perhaps there are strange, subtle portals along the way. The destination might not be anywhere in the real world, even if one can look out from it and see that world (supernatural mountaintops are particularly prone to this). Naturally, there's something weird and dangerous at the end.

These things can lead adventurers to strange places that don't appear on any map, or take them far away without warning. Since it's easy to overuse such devices – and not a lot of fun for jungle-ready travelers to find themselves stranded in arctic terrain 1,000 miles from home – it's important to go light on this. That is, unless someone is getting 15 points for Weirdness Magnet, or the heroes were warned that something Isn't Right. In those situations, all bets are off! To make matters a little more challenging for explorers who *are* forewarned, add a *time* component so that the weirdness is only evident if they set out or arrive on a particular day, or travel at a specific speed.

Not all weirdness needs to be on such a grand scale. Plenty of strange stuff is simply too big to fit into a dungeon and too crazy to be believable in town. For instance, ghost ships, sinister traveling circuses that vanish at daybreak, and sudden space-warping fogs might whisk the heroes far away. Almost anything to do with Elder Things rates as weird, too – perhaps in ways as unobvious as inflicting Fright Checks on people who visit or gaze upon a landmark. The GM should strive to build an atmosphere of apprehension around places with bizarre rock formations, creepy echoes, or oddly colored skies. Or squid.

Outdoors, Indoors

Wilderness Adventures assumes that the delvers are under the open sky, but a lot of its rules and advice could be of value in the dungeon. Some ideas:

Old Dangers, New Surrounds: The GM might simply drag wilderness threats underground. *Obstacles* (pp. 31-32) such as abysses and rivers are as likely there as above ground. Near these, combat often involves *Tricky Environments* (pp. 38-39). A dungeon can never have enough *Traps* (pp. 36-37) – but *Disasters* (pp. 32-35) may come as a bigger surprise to groups who expect concealed crossbows and Evil Runes, but not quicksand or sinkholes.

Mega-Dungeons: A dungeon could be so big that clearing or exploring it may take the heroes weeks, months, or a lifetime. In that case, the GM may prefer to use the more-detailed rules in *Travel* (pp. 20-24) and *Camping* (pp. 24-25) – and the delvers might opt to bring mounts and vehicles (*Transportation*, pp. 18-19). *I Wasn't Trained for This* (p. 31) is likely to apply, pushing the adventurers to learn Survival (Subterranean), uses for which include exploiting *Mother Nature's Bounty* (pp. 42-45) in the form of fungi, sightless fish, and stalactites.

Underworlds: Plenty of real-world cultures believed in subterranean realms as vast as the lands above – and countless fantasy tales borrow this notion. *Every rule in this supplement* could apply in such a place, which might be home to the full range of terrain types and weather found topside. Of course, this is liable to coexist with stranger stuff that requires special Survival skills!

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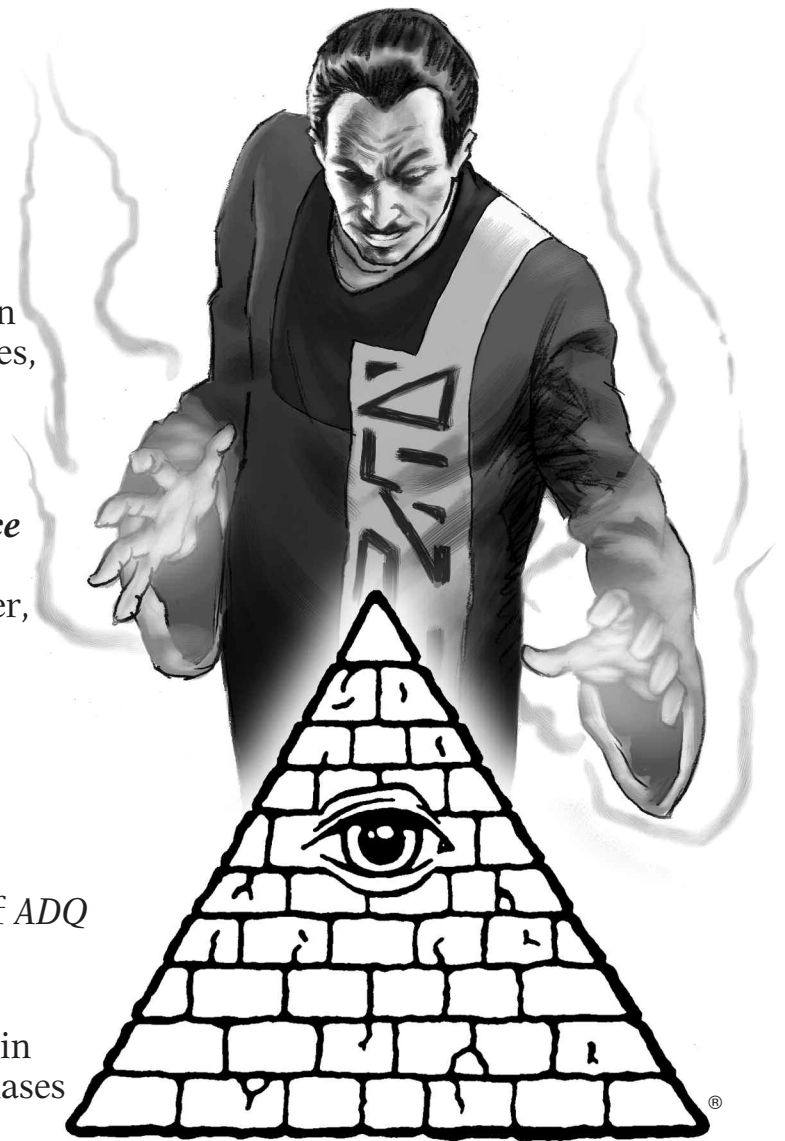
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