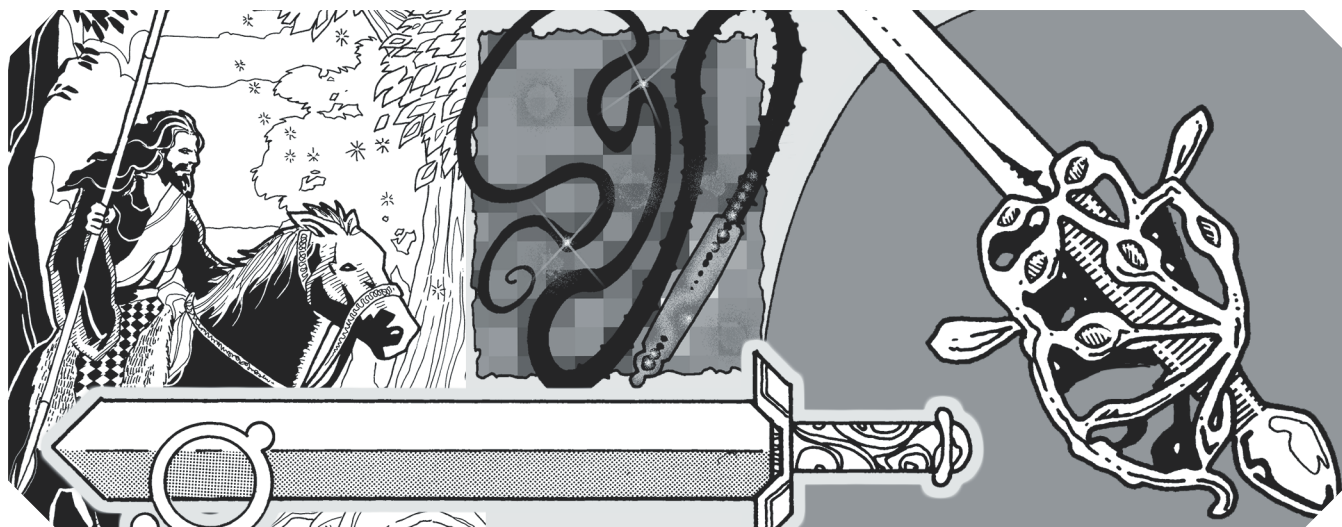


# GURPS®

Fourth Edition

# FANTASY-TECH™ 2

## WEAPONS OF FANTASY™



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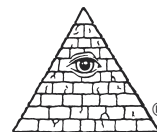
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## ABOUT GURPS

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

*Inigo Montoya: My father was slaughtered by a six-fingered man. He was a great swordmaker, my father. When the six-fingered man appeared and requested a special sword, my father took the job. He slaved a year before it was done.*

*Man in Black: I've never seen its equal.*

– *The Princess Bride* (1987)

# INTRODUCTION

The fantasy gamer's mind is often pulled in two directions at once: On the "fantasy" side is our imagination. We dream up *entire worlds* filled with magic and populated by make-believe people and creatures! Yet our "gamer" side is logical, rational, Cartesian. Beyond striving to follow the rules of the game, we expect things that exist in the real world to act like it, and we make exceptions only for the wholly fantastic, like dragons and sorcery.

Low-tech melee weapons offer a prime example. Fantasy versions can be utterly off-the-wall . . . *if they're magical*. Yet we expect nonmagical ones to behave like historical artifacts. Be honest: How many times have you been in a discussion (argument . . .) over something like how much a realistic sword should weigh or whether three-headed flails ever graced medieval battlefields?

*GURPS Fantasy-Tech 2: Weapons of Fantasy* is here to offer an "official" armory of muscle-powered madness. Don't worry about how realistic these weapons are! All that matters is that they're reasonably balanced for *fantasy* campaigns – particularly *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*.

Nothing here absolutely requires your campaign to include monsters and dungeons. Magic *might* preempt the laws of physics (or the principles of economics) to justify this stuff, but the explanation could as easily be on the "meta" level: The game world obeys the rules of heroic fiction, so anything that makes for a better story *just works*. And some of these creations may be entirely plausible in a world frozen at TL3-4 for centuries or even millennia, giving craftsmen and warriors time to perfect and master them.

## THERE'S FANTASY AND THEN THERE'S FANTASY

Several items in this collection – full-metal weapons, double-ended weapons, giant swords, absurd rapiers, serpent's fangs – could be made in the real world. In the hands of a determined warrior, they might even be effective. What's fantastic are users skilled or strong enough to fight with them, or just sufficiently wealthy to afford them. Introducing such hardware into the campaign doesn't push the limits of historical technology (much) but implies the existence of larger-than-life heroes.

Other weapons defy logic in their own right and qualify as superscience. This doesn't imply time-travelers or aliens! For quicksilver swords and diabolical whips, the "super" in "superscience" is the "super" in "supernatural": fantastic materials are required for the idea to work. For multi-blades, it's more a question of making a clunky weapon effective simply because it's cool. All of these have a "Λ" on their TL to alert the GM: introducing them declares that the laws of magic or dramatic necessity can preempt those of physics in the setting.

Technology aside, there's the question of whether these weapons suit the desired feel of the campaign. Full-metal weapons are unlikely to be more noteworthy than metal-clad

or -studded ones, and are significantly *less* impressive than the ornate side-arms of the wealthy; serpent's fangs and quicksilver weapons are no more remarkable, and might be carefully guarded craft secrets in non- or hidden-fantasy settings. Double-ended weapons and absurd rapiers are "louder" (harder to ignore), but could be explained by introducing elements that stop short of the fantastic; e.g., they may be the preferred armaments of an ethnic group or fighting art, no stranger than other "martial-arts weapons." At the far end of the scale are giant swords, diabolical whips, and multi-blades, all of which impart an epic, dialed-to-11 vibe: fantasy is at the forefront, about as subtle as a Viking metal album cover. At that point, why not throw *everything* into the mix?

## PUBLICATION HISTORY

This is the first edition of *GURPS Fantasy-Tech 2: Weapons of Fantasy*. Double-ended weapons started life in *Pyramid* #3/61: *Way of the Warrior*; absurd rapiers, in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Denizens: Swashbucklers*; and multi-blades, as double-swords in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 8: Treasure Tables*. All have been expanded and generalized considerably.

*What makes a weapon fantastic is as often the wielder as the weapon. Some weapons require implausible materials or economies, or centuries or millennia in which to perfect them. But just as many are useful only in the hands of someone skilled, strong, determined, and crazy enough to master them. Of course, many work simply because they're cool!*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sean Punch set out to become a particle physicist in 1985 and ended up as *GURPS* Line Editor in 1995. In that capacity, he has written, edited, or contributed to some 150 *GURPS* releases, revised the game into its fourth edition (2004), and been a regular contributor to *Pyramid* magazine. From 2008, he has served as lead creator of the *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* series, the origin of the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game*. Sean has been a gamer since 1979, but devotes most of his spare time to Argentine tango (and occasionally tending bar). He lives in Montréal with his wife, Bonnie, and their cat, Zephyra.

# GIANT SWORDS

Thanks to anime, mainly, many fantasy worlds feature *enormous* swords. These aren't merely the oversized two-handed swords occasionally used by real-world executioners or created as display pieces for shrines and museums. No, giant swords have massive blades – longer than the user is tall, often as wide as a slim wielder – mated to two-handed grips long and narrow enough to allow control with human-sized hands. Wielding such a weapon demands extraordinary skill and strength, and proclaims the owner to be a hero.

The “skill” aspect is reflected in the fact that all such weapons have a built-in penalty for unwieldiness. The resulting skill decrease *does* affect Parry. This can be “bought off” with the Giant Sword perk (below).

The “strength” element is a consequence of weight: Huge blades weigh a lot and have high minimum ST! This also has ramifications for skill, as Giant Sword *cannot* buy off the -1 to skill per level of missing ST (p. B270). Moreover, if the user's ST is less than 2/3 of that required, the weapon becomes unready after each attack. If it's less than 1/3 of that needed, attempts to use it (to attack, feint, parry, etc.) fail automatically and call for a DX roll to avoid falling over. At the GM's option, this last rule could apply to *any* swung melee weapon that has reach 2+ and requires more than three times the user's ST.

*Example:* A titanic sword requires ST 30. Between ST 29 and ST 20, a fighter could use it at -1 to -10 (on top of the basic -2 for size). At ST 19 or less, it would not only be used at -11 or worse, but also become unready after each attack. At ST 9 or less, any use would fail *and* mean a DX roll to avoid falling over.

See the *Giant Sword Table* (p. 9) for stats. The merely *gigantic* sword is almost 10' long from pommel to point, and at least 3-4 inches wide; the *titanic* sword is around 12' long all told,

and 7-8 inches wide; and the *godlike* sword is about 15' overall, and 11-12 inches wide. *Wide* and *double-wide* swords are “just” 6' or 7' long (greatsword-length), but well over 1' and 2' wide, respectively. None of these weapons is notably thicker than an ordinary blade – they taper to a keen edge, maintaining their integrity thanks to labor-intensive smithing (traditionally the secret of gods, demigods, or at least titans).

Gigantic, titanic, and godlike swords cannot be conveniently sheathed and therefore cannot be readied using Fast-Draw. They're customarily carried resting on one shoulder with hands on the grip, which counts as ready; if on a table or rack, carried by a flunky, on the ground, etc., see *Readying Weapons and Other Gear* (pp. B382-383). Wide and double-wide swords can be scabbarded on the back, allowing Fast-Draw (Two-Handed Sword) attempts at the sword's skill penalty for unwieldiness.

## Enchanted Giant Swords

Giant swords are often magical, though their high weight makes certain enchantments extremely expensive – notably Hide Object, which in fantasy that features such weapons is a common way to stash them when not in use. See *Enchanted Double-Ended Weapons* (p. 6) for a list of other weight-sensitive enchantments.

## Lighter Giant Swords

In some settings, giant swords aren't as heavy as they look. They're made from an incredible alloy – like the mythic *orichalcum* – that reduces weight to more manageable levels while somehow hitting no less hard, compensating for lack of mass with a faster swing, a keener edge, or the Power of Plot. And somehow, this doesn't make the sword any more fragile.

This is pure fantasy: add a “^” to the weapon's TL.

### Perk: Giant Sword

You've practiced with truly colossal swords. This perk comes in levels, with each level eliminating -1 to Two-Handed Sword and Fast-Draw (Two-Handed Sword) due to the size of such a sword. It does *not* offset penalties for insufficient ST!

### Other Giant Weapons?

Other giant weapons – like unnatural axes – are less common in fantasy, but the GM may want them. Start by applying *Scaling Weapons* (*GURPS Low-Tech Companion 2: Weapons and Warriors*, pp. 20-21) to a standard melee weapon for SM 0 users; scale to SM +1 if gigantic, +2 if titanic, or +3 if godlike, adjusting damage, reach, cost, weight, and ST. Multiply the resulting cost by 1.5 to reflect specialized grips and surprising thinness. Where a wide or double-wide version would make sense (GM's decision), use the titanic or godlike stats, respectively, but ignore the reach change. In all cases, the penalty to Melee Weapon and Fast-Draw skills is equal in size to the SM used for scaling (e.g., -2 for SM +2); the perk to offset this is specialized by Melee Weapon skill. If final reach is 3+, the weapon *cannot* benefit from Fast-Draw, even if normally possible for the type.

- Cutting weight to 2/3 reduces the required ST to 80% of the listed amount (drop fractions in both cases). For instance, reducing a titanic sword from 44 lbs. to 29 lbs. also whittles ST down from 30 to 24. The alloys required add +9 CF.

- Cutting weight to 1/2 reduces ST to 70% of the listed requirement. Lightening that titanic sword to 22 lbs. chops ST to 21. +19 CF.

- Cutting weight to 1/3 reduces ST to 60% of normal. Taking that titanic sword to 14 lbs. slashes ST to 18. At the GM's option, this may be the same as making the weapon from orichalcum in worlds where that exists. +29 CF.

In all cases, treat the weapon as having its *full* weight when calculating HP and checking for breakage, but use reduced weight for all other purposes: encumbrance, enchantment costs, etc. Lighter construction precludes applying modifiers for materials such as silver or meteoric iron.

The lightening process isn't effective for ordinary-sized weapons. An oversized blade is necessary to prevent loss of damage.



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