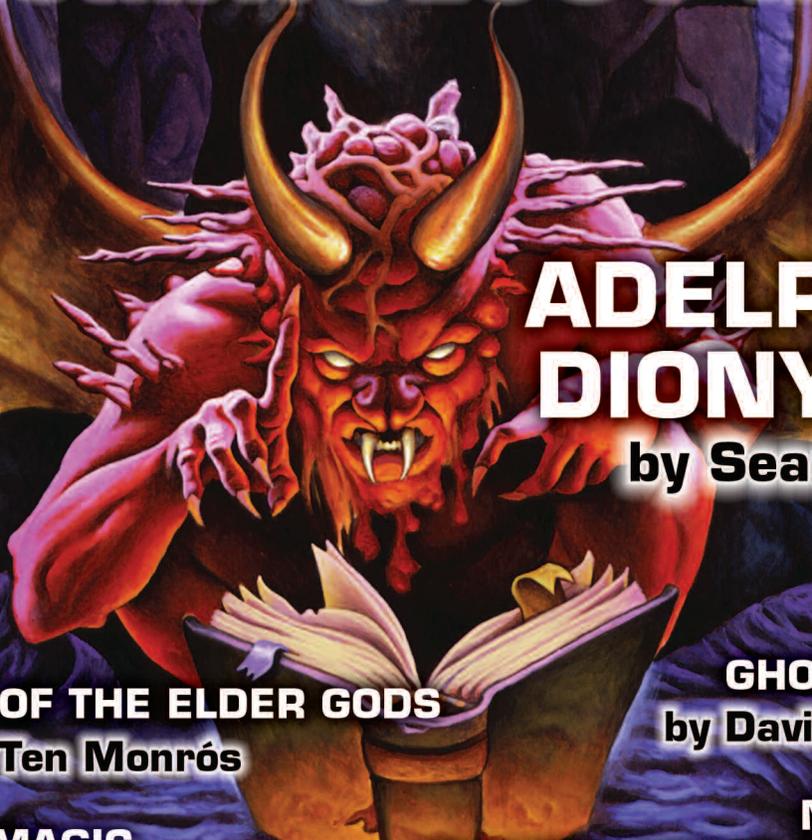


PYRAMID



Issue 3/43 May '12

THAUMATOLOGY III



ADELPHOS DIONYSOS

by Sean Punch

CULTISTS OF THE ELDER GODS

by Antoni Ten Monrós

BOTTLED MAGIC

by Christopher R. Rice

THE MISSIONERS

by J. Edward Tremlett

GHOUL MAGIC

by David L. Pulver

MAGIC AS TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS

by David Lichtenstein

REAL WEIRD BOOKS

by Rebecca Seidel

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

Stock #37-2643

CONTENTS

FROM THE EDITOR 3

ADELPHOS DIONYSOS..... 4
by Sean Punch

CULTISTS OF THE ELDER GODS 9
by Antoni Ten Monró

BOTTLED MAGIC 13
by Christopher R. Rice

EIDETIC MEMORY:
GHOUL MAGIC 17
by David L. Pulver

THE MISSIONERS..... 19
by J. Edward Tremlett

MAGIC AS
TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS 25
by David Lichtenstein

REAL WEIRD BOOKS 32
by Rebecca Seidel

RANDOM THOUGHT TABLE –
A BOX LABELED: TO PANDORA 34
by Steven Marsh, *Pyramid* Editor

ODDS AND ENDS 36
featuring *Murphy's Rules*

ABOUT *GURPS*..... 37

You've got that spell-casting feeling . . .

IN THIS ISSUE

The giant book-reading demon on the cover can only mean one thing: It's tax-audit time! No, wait . . . it's time for a new magic-themed *Pyramid*!

Wine connoisseurs know how magical their beverage of choice can be. Sean Punch, *GURPS* Line Editor and hands-on researcher, reveals the secrets of *Adelphos Dionysos*. To promote this magical brotherhood of vino devotees, he details their ways, means, spell lists, and secret spells, building off the foundation of *GURPS Thaumatology: Magical Styles*.

In *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*, psi-using delvers know well the risk of encounters with Things Man Was Not Meant To Know. Unlucky adventurers – or explorers looking to carve their own niche in the dungeon-crawling rat race – might leave these interactions as *Cultists of the Elder Gods*. Can your mind withstand the revelation of new *GURPS* lenses, an explanation of possible elder servitors, and a special list of psi-related spells?

Practitioners of Ritual Path magic from *GURPS Monster Hunters* might discover that what they need to beat the forces of darkness is a potent potable . . . thanks to alchemy! Magically inclined pursuers can learn how to create *Bottled Magic*, what equipment (with *GURPS* stats) is needed, and some sample rites.

At great risk to himself, David L. Pulver (author of *GURPS Banestorm: Abydos*) brings readers the secrets of *Ghoul Magic* in this issue's Eidetic Memory. Discover the enigmatic source of this information and four *GURPS* spells for those looking for the ghoul of their dreams.

In a world devoid of magic, those who seek to restore it look for like-minded companions to aid them. Your paths may cross with these mysterious magical trailblazers (suitable for any system) who call themselves *The Missioners*. Beware!

Are you looking for a way to radically alter your *GURPS* magical paradigm? Have you tried considering *Magic as Technological Progress*? This feature brings to magical spells what tech levels bring to mundane gear. Define the limits of sorcerous society – then invent, innovate, and experiment to push the envelope.

The Internet has nigh-infinite information. Who has time to read all that? Fortunately, one of our scholars has culled out some of the best *Real Weird Books* to consider (and why they're cool). Plus they're freely available!

Random Thought Table considers the lessons learned from a magically restricted campaign. *Odds and Ends* is downright quirky, and *Murphy's Rules* might magically make you think you know what you're doing. This month's *Pyramid* will make you curl up in an armoire with your favorite grimoire!

Article Colors

Each article is color-coded to help you find your favorite sections.

- Pale Blue*: In This Issue
- Brown*: In Every Issue (letters, humor, editorial, etc.)
- Dark Blue*: *GURPS* Features
- Purple*: Systemless Features
- Green*: Distinguished Columnists

COVER ART
Peter Scanlan

INTERIOR ART
Greg Hyland

Editor-in-Chief ■ STEVE JACKSON
Chief Operating Officer ■ PHILIP REED
Art Director ■ SAMUEL MITSCHKE
e23 Manager ■ STEVEN MARSH

GURPS Line Editor ■ SEAN PUNCH
Editorial Assistant ■ JASON "PK" LEVINE
Production Artist ■ NIKOLA VRTIS
Prepress Checker ■ MONICA STEPHENS

Page Design ■ PHIL REED and JUSTIN DE WITT
Marketing Director ■ MONICA VALENTINELLI
Director of Sales ■ ROSS JEPSON

FROM THE EDITOR

A WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES (JUST ADD MAGIC)

Let's envision a common occurrence: If ninjas were to crash in through the skylight and demand that you craft a new fantastic world (or radically revise an existing one), perhaps the most logical place to start would be how the world looks at and uses magic. Solidifying that one aspect can make the rest of the world fall into place; witness the example of the secrets of magic and its relationship with the Church in this month's *Random Thought Table* (pp. 34-35).

The world-forging spirit from *GURPS Thaumatology* is one of its (many) interesting takeaways – and it's that same spirit we tap in this month's issue. Whether you're looking to include something more "traditional" to an otherwise straightforward *GURPS Magic* campaign (such as Sean Punch's *GURPS Thaumatology: Magical Styles* contribution on pp. 4-8), a

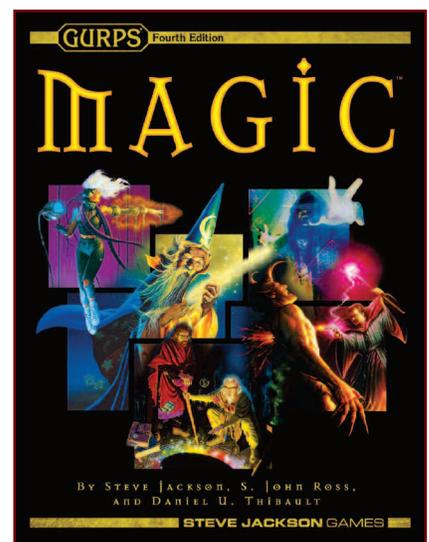
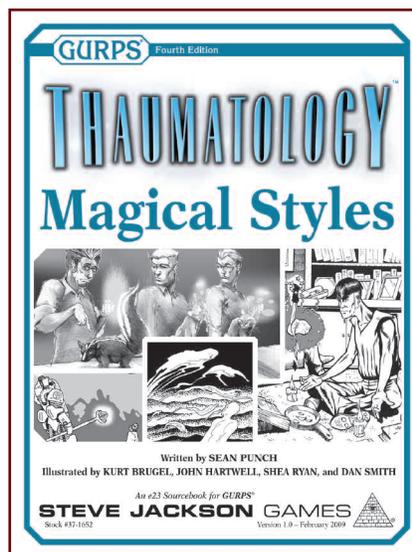
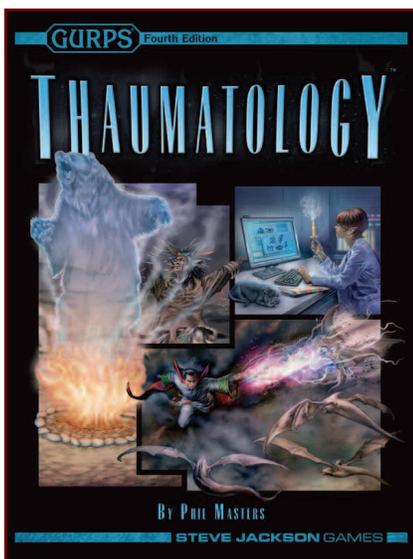
radical overhaul of the underlying *GURPS* principles (pp. 25-31), or even real-world info to add to your campaign (pp. 32-33), there's something here to form the cornerstone for a memorable encounter or even a full campaign.

Thinking about magic in a different way makes the whole thing seem more real, more crackling with possibilities . . . and more magical! Sometimes all it takes is that one creative spark to unleash your own power. Think of us as the lab of tools that provide inspiration and help make it possible.

The ninjas will be impressed.

WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW

Did something in this issue spark your gaming to new levels of amazement? Or did one of our grand experiments blow up in the lab? You can send congratulatory or contemptuous correspondence to pyramid@sjgames.com, or post your public points of contemplation online at forums.sjgames.com.



Pyramid, *GURPS*, Warehouse 23, and the all-seeing pyramid are registered trademarks of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated. e23 and the names of all products published by Steve Jackson Games Incorporated are registered trademarks or trademarks of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated, or used under license. *Pyramid* is copyright © 2012 by Steve Jackson Games Incorporated. All rights reserved.

Submission of your photos, letters, humor, captions, and marginalia constitutes permission to Steve Jackson Games Incorporated to use them in all media. All such submissions become the property of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated and will not be returned.

The scanning, uploading, and distribution of this material via the Internet or via any other means without the permission of the publisher is illegal, and punishable by law. Please purchase only authorized electronic editions, and do not participate in or encourage the electronic piracy of copyrighted materials. Your support of the authors' rights is appreciated.

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 Hideoust) [-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.

BOTTLED MAGIC

BY CHRISTOPHER R. RICE

Ritual Path magic is an amazingly flexible system, capable of nearly any feat that anyone could possibly imagine. One of the more interesting aspects of the *Monster Hunters* magic system (see *GURPS Monster Hunters 1: Champions*, pp. 32-39) is that of *charms*, breakable one-use objects that hold just enough magic to perform a single spell. These optional rules expand charms into a further category, that of *potions* – magic in a (mostly) drinkable form that allows champions another means of fighting The Enemy.

INTRODUCTION TO POTIONS

Potions are a form of conditional spell that affect the subject by drinking, applying, or throwing them. They are similar to but different from charms. Potion effects tend to revolve around altered traits, healing, or bestowing bonuses, but all effects are available. Additionally, potions have their own unique properties.

When making potions, substitute Alchemy skill for Thaumatology skill when determining the maximum Path skill level. Additionally, instead of rolling a Path skill to gather energy for the potion, you may roll your Alchemy skill instead if better, though this cannot exceed (12 + Magery level).

Like charms, the subject of the potion's effects doesn't have to be determined when the spell is cast. Rather, it effects whomever drinks it, rubs it on, etc. The potion contains the effects of a ritual that can then be triggered by simply using it.

Like charms, potions require a Lesser Magic effect – in this case, a Lesser Create Magic effect.

Because potions are already using “traditional trappings,” the final energy cost of any ritual is reduced by the quality of the ingredients, typically -10%, though this may be increased further if in the GM's opinion, the caster uses more ingredients than is necessary (see *Multiple Ingredients*, p. 14)

Potions come in multiple forms: *elixir* (a drinkable liquid form), *grenade* (which is thrown at a target), *ointment* (which must be rubbed onto the skin to take effect), *pastille* (a small thumb-sized pill that when lit affects all those who inhale the smoke from it), or *powder* (which must be blown at the target, or put in food or drink and consumed). See *Using Potions* (p. 15) for details on each form. Note that only grenades and pastilles can have an area of effect or damage that is visible, blatant, or considered an external attack.

For potions that cause the user damage from consuming them, use the cost for malediction-type damage. For “alchemical amulets,” make a standard charm instead! Finally, make sure the potion has a subject weight modifier large enough to affect its intended target; all the example potions (pp. 14-16) assume a “man-sized” imbiber (i.e., SM 0).

Potion Creation

Brewing a potion requires an alchemy lab (p. 14) – typically a converted chemistry set, with special glass beakers, eldritch measuring devices, etc. – and uses the normal equipment modifiers for nontechnological skills (p. B345). Thus, working in the field with nothing gives -5 to all skill rolls to make a potion, borrowing a friend's kitchen gives -2, a normal alchemy lab gives no modifier, a good quality one gives +1, and a fine-quality kit gives +2.

The actual creation requires one hour to brew the potion, using specific ingredients that are combined in a complex precise process. Each inherent modifier in the ritual needs a specific ingredient that represents it metaphorically. These ingredients need not be *actually* edible; the magic that creates the potion also makes it consumable (and destroys it in the process).

After the potion is brewed, the conditional ritual must *immediately* be cast onto it, making it a potion. Finally, traditional trappings can *never* be used for potions, the caster is already getting a large discount for brewing the potion to begin with. Particularly devoted alchemist-mages thus have large workspaces full of odd or rare ingredients.

Multiple Types of Alchemy

Campaigns that feature multiple forms of magic probably have multiple forms of Alchemy. If so, using these rules requires each caster to specialize by magic system. For instance, if the standard magic system and Ritual Path magic coexist in a setting, then Alchemy and Alchemy (Ritual Path Magic) are two different skills that allow the user to do two different things! Likewise, if the GM allows, Herb Lore may have its own version for Ritual Path magic. Use these alchemy rules but replace metaphorical ingredients with specific plants that are reputed to give or are linked to the effects desired in the potion. See *GURPS Thaumatology* (p. 105) and *GURPS Magic* (p. 222) for more details on herbs and their uses.

INVENTING NEW SPELLS

A game with a limited sorcery level will have a lot of parallels to games with a limited tech level. The TL and SL both help to define what the society is like – what their capabilities are, and what their interests may be. A TL2 society with advanced (TL3) weapons may also have achieved SL3 with advanced (SL4) Fire magic.

The parallels with technology also reach to the concept of new inventions and gadgeteering. For anyone attempting to invent spells that have not yet been discovered by their society, use the rules on pp. B473-474 with a few modifications. All invention attempts should require at least two skill rolls: Thaumatology and one other skill indicative of the new spell's college.

Example: Ariadne, a mage in Knossos (SL4), wants to develop the Flight spell (SL5). She already knows Levitation, Jump, and Winged Knife. The GM determines that the mage must roll against the lower of Levitation or Thaumatology in order to invent the new spell.

Remember that all of the prerequisites of the new spell must be possessed by the inventor. The complexity of the new spell should never be Simple, but it may be Average, depending on how different it is from its prerequisite spells and other spells that the inventor knows. Any spell that is more than one sorcery level above what the inventor has used is impossible for that mage to discover yet.

The GM determines that Flight is very similar to Levitation, though it is a Very Hard spell and requires Magery 2. The GM sets the complexity level for this invention as Average. If Ariadne did not know Winged Knife or any other SL4 Movement spells, the GM would be justified in ruling Flight to be a Complex invention for her. If she had never even seen

an SL4 Movement spell cast, the invention of Flight would have an Amazing complexity.

The modifiers to the concept roll are similar to those for technological inventions. The +5 for copying a working model equates to having witnessed the desired spell being cast by another wizard; use +2 for a mage who is aware that the spell exists, but has not seen it cast. Apply a -5 penalty if the spell does not yet exist anywhere on the inventor's world. A critical failure on the concept roll will seem to be a success, but any attempt to cast the resulting spell will automatically entail a magical critical failure!

The prototype roll is the inventor's attempt to cast the new spell. A critical failure here should be somewhat more impressive than a standard magical critical failure. A critical success on the prototype roll results in the new spell in its final form. A standard success means the spell is less than ideal, but still usable.

Minor bugs in the spell should be similar to nuisance or irritating effects: The caster's skin itches for a short time after the casting, or he suffers from Hard of Hearing during the effects of a spell. Major bugs are much more dangerous: The caster Frightens Animals for twice the duration of a maintainable spell, or he begins suffocating (p. B436) as long as the spell is maintained. See *Magical Bugs* (above) for more examples.

Example: Ariadne of Knossos has all of the prerequisites (Average complexity) and is aware that the Flight spell exists (+2) in a secret of a coven of witches. She has Thaumatology 19 and Levitation-18, so her concept roll is $18 - 10 + 2 = 10$. The GM rolls in secret and declares that the mage may proceed to the prototype stage. The mage must spend 2d days and \$100,000 to create an average complexity prototype spell formula; at the end of this time, the GM rolls for its success in secret. The GM reveals that the prototype is successful, but has two major bugs and three minor bugs.

Major bugs: The caster will take 1 HP of cold damage per second while the spell is in effect, and the caster suffers retching (p. B429) for 10 seconds after the spell ends. Minor bugs: The subject of the spell suffers nausea for the spell's duration, the caster's skin takes on a blue tint for the spell's duration and 6d hours afterward, and each subject must make a Fright check at -5 the first time the spell is cast on them. But other than those problems, the Flight spell works just fine.

Magical Bugs

Listed here are some magical bugs for the GM to choose from when incomplete success is determined in the invention of a new spell.

Examples of Minor Bugs

- Any of the irritating effects from p. B428 (euphoria, nausea, pain, etc.), which may last a few minutes beyond the spell duration.
- Any Supernatural Feature (p. B157) or other -5- to -10-point disadvantage that affects the caster for the duration of the spell and up to a few minutes afterward, or a new Quirk or Unnatural Feature (p. B22) that lasts for an extended time (hours to weeks).
- A larger than expected loss of Fatigue or Energy Reserve, which is replenished at normal rates (see p. B427).

Examples of Major Bugs

- Any of the incapacitating effects in pp. B428-429 (agony, daze, paralysis, etc.), which may last a few minutes beyond the spell duration.
- Any -5- to -15-point disadvantage that affects the caster for an extended duration (hours to weeks), or any more severe disadvantage that applies only for a few seconds or minutes.
- Any loss of Hit Points or attributes, which are regained at normal healing rates (see p. B424).

TECHNOMAGIC

Technological progress and sorcery levels will very likely have some influence on one another. For example, the discovery of radiation will allow for the discovery of radiation spells, while the development of Earth to Stone could spur the advancement of stoneworking and metalworking techniques. More significantly, in societies with both magic and technology, researchers may find ways to combine them to create impressive synergies.

ABOUT *GURPS*

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of *GURPS* players. Our address is SJ Games, P.O. Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! We can also be reached by e-mail: info@sjgames.com. Resources include:

New supplements and adventures. *GURPS* continues to grow – see what’s new at gurps.sjgames.com, or visit www.warehouse23.com.

e23. Our e-publishing division offers *GURPS* adventures, play aids, and support in PDF form . . . digital copies of our books, plus exclusive material available only on e23! Just head over to e23.sjgames.com.

Internet. Visit us on the World Wide Web at www.sjgames.com for errata, updates, Q&A, and much

more. To discuss *GURPS* with SJ Games staff and fellow gamers, come to our forums at forums.sjgames.com. The *Pyramid* web page is pyramid.sjgames.com.

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 are available on our website – see above.

GURPS rules and statistics in this magazine are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition*. Page references that begin with B refer to that book.

STUCK FOR AN ADVENTURE? NO PROBLEM.

**e23 sells high-quality game adventures
and supplements in PDF format.**

- Get complete sample adventures free for *GURPS, In Nomine*, and *Traveller*!
- PDFs from the major players in online publishing: Ronin Arts, Ken Hite, Atlas Games, and 01 Games.
- New gems from up-and-coming publishers, like Atomic Sock Monkey Press and Expeditious Retreat Press.
- Digital editions of out-of-print classics, from *Orcslayer* and the complete run of *ADQ* to *GURPS China* and *GURPS Ice Age*.
- Fully searchable files of *GURPS Fourth Edition* supplements.
- Original material for *Transhuman Space* and *In Nomine*, with new *GURPS* supplements from Phil Masters, David Pulver, Sean Punch, and William Stoddard!
- Buy it once; have it always. Download your purchases again whenever you need to.



Download ● Print ● Play
STEVE JACKSON GAMES

e23 is part of Warehouse 23, the online store at Steve Jackson Games.
Warehouse 23 is also the official Internet retailer for Atlas Games, Ninja Burger, and many other publishers.
Visit us today at www.warehouse23.com for all your game STUFF!