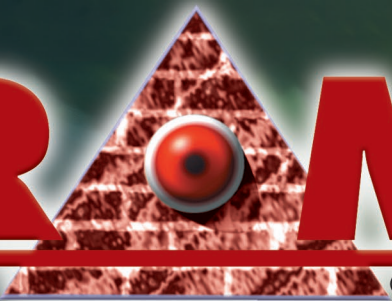


PYRAMID[®]



Issue 3/76 February '15

DUNGEON FANTASY IV



PSYCHIC SWORDS AGAINST ELDER EVIL

by Sean Punch

THE MAGIC TOUCH
by Matt Riggsby

LIVING ROOMS
by David L. Pulver

DIRE AND TERRIBLE MONSTERS
by Douglas H. Cole
and Peter V. Dell'Orto

HIDDEN KNOWLEDGE
by Christopher R. Rice

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

Stock #37-2676



IN THIS ISSUE

CONTENTS

FROM THE EDITOR 3

PSYCHIC SWORDS AGAINST ELDER EVIL 4
by Sean Punch

HIDDEN KNOWLEDGE 12
by Christopher R. Rice

EIDETIC MEMORY: LIVING ROOMS 20
by David L. Pulver

THE MAGIC TOUCH 25
by Matt Riggsby

DIRE AND TERRIBLE MONSTERS 28
by Douglas H. Cole and Peter V. Dell'Orto

RANDOM THOUGHT TABLE:
COMPLICATIONS MADE SIMPLE 34
by Steven Marsh, Pyramid Editor

ODDS AND ENDS 36
featuring Murphy's Rules

ABOUT GURPS 37

The stars have aligned and the auguries are clear: The time to return to the dungeon has arrived. This month's *Pyramid* journeys to crypt-clearing realms, with a focus on **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy**.

If using psionic abilities brings out Things, then what can you do to stop them? Take up your *Psychic Swords Against Elder Evil!* This featured add-on to **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 14: Psi** – by mental master Sean Punch – offers a new template, two Higher Purpose variations, two psi abilities, power-ups, and a handful of creatures to defeat (complete with **GURPS** stats).

New spells are exciting. New secret spells are awesome. Frequent *Pyramid* sage Christopher R. Rice reveals *Hidden Knowledge* to **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy** spellcasters. Learn how to turn an ordinary spell into something worth questing after, including examples and a name generator. You'll also find out how to access alternate magic systems and to copy spells into manuals.

Don't settle for stone and earth; put a *Living Room* in your next dungeon and make the heroes *really* squirm! In this month's Eidetic Memory, David L. Pulver – author of **GURPS Banestorm: Abydos** – explains the features, origins, and uses of areas made of oversized flesh and bone. You'll also get **GURPS** stats for a potentially deadly resident.

Low encumbrance and empty-handed attacks are key to martial artists' combat prowess, so they eschew most physical rewards. But Matt Riggsby – author of **GURPS Fantasy-Tech 1: The Edge of Reality** – has *The Magic Touch*. Discover 11 magical items that could be just the kind of treasure that a bare-fisted fighter would want.

Surprise adventurers with extreme versions of their favorite cuddly animals. Douglas H. Cole (of **GURPS Martial Arts: Technical Grappling** fame) and Peter V. Dell'Orto (co-conjurer of **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1**) team up to bring you two new monstrous prefixes that will help you create *Dire and Terrible Monsters*. As a bonus, you'll get tips for using them in other genres, plus a half-dozen deadly examples with **GURPS** stats – including the Terrible Dire Bunny!

This month's Random Thought Table makes it easy to add complications to your *Dungeon Fantasy* campaigns (including existing ones!). Odds and Ends welcomes the triumphant heroes home with a *Murphy's Rules* that will put your priorities in order, plus some tips for giving heroes more information than the players.

Whether you're a hero or hellbeast, martial artist or mentalist, conjurer or critter, you're sure to find amazing new loot in this month's *Pyramid*. Heed the call to adventure, and *turn the page!*

ARTICLE COLORS

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

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

COVER ART
Abrar Ajmal

INTERIOR ART
Greg Hyland

Editor-in-Chief ■ STEVE JACKSON
GURPS Line Editor ■ SEAN PUNCH
 Assistant **GURPS** Line Editor ■
 JASON "PK" LEVINE

GURPS Project Manager ■ STEVEN MARSH
 Production Artist & Prepress Checker ■
 NIKOLA VRTIS
 Page Design ■ PHIL REED & JUSTIN DE WITT

Chief Executive Officer ■ PHILIP REED
 Chief Operating Officer ■ SAMUEL MITSCHKE
 Managing Editor ■ MIRANDA HORNER
 Director of Sales ■ ROSS JEPSON

FROM THE EDITOR

CUTTING-EDGE OLD-SCHOOL ADVENTURE

Some bits of trivia about the adventure gaming hobby (as it relates to dungeon fantasy):

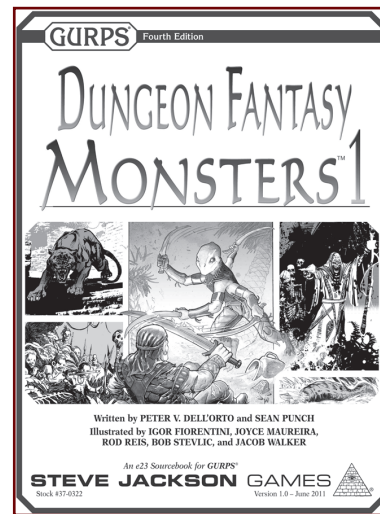
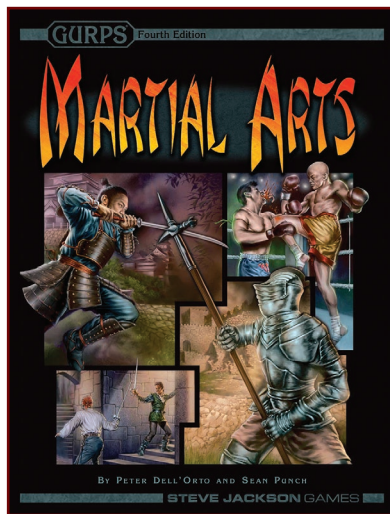
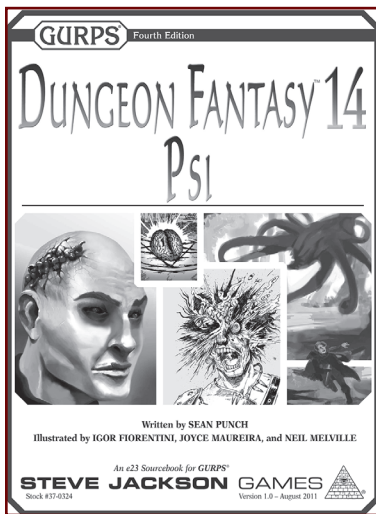
- When the first RPGs were being developed, 10-sided dice weren't assumed.
- Nor, for that matter, were 20-siders that were actually numbered 1-20; 0-9 (twice) was common, with owners expected to color their dice with crayons to indicate whether the digit should have +10 added. (The original *Dungeon Masters Guide* goes to some lengths to describe how to generate various results we take for granted nowadays.)
- Early gamers spent a fair bit of time trying to ensure that their dice were fair, with various articles and techniques used to determine their randomization prowess. (This was reasonable, since early hobby dice were made of the Worst Plastic Ever.)
- The grandfather of computer dungeon-crawl gaming – *Colossal Cave Adventure* – was less than 138,000 bytes. An early hack-and-slash computer game *Rogue* (from 1980) used

a source code of less than 366,000 bytes to generate its endless worlds. In comparison, the shareware dungeon-crawl adventure *Avadon 2* has a *system icon* that's 525,480 bytes. (The game itself is 171.2 meg.)

What's the point of this trip down memory lane? Only to briefly show how much the world has evolved while the core of dungeon-fantasy gaming has stayed the same. For those who have been part of the gaming hobby for a while, think of how much has changed since you started: downloadable character sheets, randomizing dice programs, online gaming, random-access digital music. The magazine you're reading now would have been impossible in 1980, as would the device you're using to read it (or the printing method you used to output it).

Now realize how much has stayed the same: The initial rumor that sends you to a dungeon. The first attack reminding your heroes that this is life and death. The terror of a new monster. The thrill of an unknown magic item.

We're living in magical times, and we use new and ever-evolving magic to transport ourselves to realms of imagination whose magic remains as timeless as when they were first envisioned last millennium.



Additional Material: Steve Jackson, S. John Ross, Sean Punch, and Daniel U. Thibault

Pyramid, *GURPS*, Warehouse 23, the all-seeing pyramid, and the names of all products published by Steve Jackson Games Incorporated are trademarks or registered trademarks of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated, or used under license. *Pyramid* is copyright © 2015 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.

Purchased damage can never exceed that of the attack form (impaling or cutting) replaced, but it can always be lower.

Pyrokinetic Blade: The Psychic Sword's *swing* can optionally deal *burning* damage instead of cutting damage. Declare this before attacking.

Advantages: Burning Attack (Affects Insubstantial, +20%; Melee Attack, Reach C, 1, -20%; Psionic Swordsmanship, -5%; Variable, +5%) [5/die].

Neurokinetic Blade: The Psychic Sword's *thrust* can optionally deal *fatigue* damage vs. full DR instead of impaling damage against half DR. Declare this before attacking.

Advantages: Fatigue Attack (Affects Insubstantial, +20%; Melee Attack, Reach C, 1, -20%; Psionic Swordsmanship, -5%; Variable, +5%) [10/die].

Psychic Shield

Variable

Prerequisites: Unusual Background (Psionic) and Psychic Sword (any level).

You can project a disc of psionic force that can block anything that a material buckler could block. This can also deliver a shield *bash* (though not a shield *rush*) at Reach 1; all mundane defenses work normally against this. Otherwise, treat it as a Psychic Sword that inflicts Will-based "thrust" crushing damage, uses the Shield (Force) skill at no penalty for the off hand, and enables a block instead of a parry. Thus, if you have Shield (Force)-16 and Psi Talent 2, you bash at skill 18 and have a Block of 12 before other modifiers.

Psychic Shield cannot be an alternative ability (*Psi*, p. 5). It can *always* coexist with the prerequisite Psychic Sword – it isn't a replacement in the sense of Pyrokinetic Blade or Neurokinetic Blade. Like Psychic Sword, it can't be an alternative to other Psionics abilities, either.

The main benefits of a Psychic Shield are a crushing attack that affects intangible foes and the convenience of an unbreakable shield that you cannot drop. It *doesn't* grant any Defense Bonus, though! In rules terms:

Advantages: Crushing Attack (Affects Insubstantial, +20%; Can Block, +5%*; Melee Attack, Reach 1, -25%; Psionic Swordsmanship, -5%; Variable, +5%) [5/die].

* Melee Attack normally allows a parry. Can Block changes this to a block, which is more useful against missiles (though it can't stop attacks that explicitly require a parry).

Additional Shield Modes

Like Psychic Sword, Psychic Shield can have extra options, which increase its point cost.

Psychic Shove: Double your bash's damage roll for *knockback purposes only*. For instance, if you roll 6 points of damage, treat it normally for wounding but as 12 points to assess knockback. This capability adds Double Knockback, +20%, for +1 point/die (round up).

Ringing Blow: A bash with the Psychic Shield disorients the victim! If *any* damage penetrates DR, the target must make a HT roll – at -1 per full two points of penetrating damage – or be physically stunned (roll vs. HT every second to recover).

This adds Side Effect, Stunning, +50%, for +2.5 points/die (round up).

Psychic Shield Table

Will: Minimum Will required to buy this level of damage.

Damage: Damage output of Psychic Shield.

Basic: Point cost for the basic Psychic Shield.

Shove: Point cost to add Psychic Shove to Psychic Shield.

Ringing: Point cost to add Ringing Blow to Psychic Shield.

All: Point cost to add Psychic Shove and Ringing Blow to Psychic Shield.

Will	Damage	Point Cost			
		Basic	Shove	Ringing	All
16	1d+1 cr	7	+2	+4	+5
17-18	1d+2 cr	8	+2	+4	+6
19-20	2d-1 cr	9	+2	+5	+7
21-22	2d cr	10	+2	+5	+7
23-24	2d+1 cr	12	+3	+6	+9
25	2d+2 cr	13	+3	+7	+10

The moment he appeared on a street, he wrapped a Black sight shield, a psychic shield, and protective shield around himself.

– Anne Bishop, Queen of the Darkness

THINGS TO SLAY

As their job title suggests, psychic slayers live to defeat monsters. At the top of the list are Elder Things; e.g., astral hounds (*Psi*, p. 42), Demons from Between the Stars (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1*, p. 9), eyes of death (*Monsters 1*, p. 14), flying squid monsters (*Psi*, p. 43), mindwarpers (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons*, p. 25), spheres of madness (*Monsters 1*, p. 28), and watchers at the edge of time (*Monsters 1*, p. 34). Other choice targets are largely or entirely immaterial entities that torment mortals with near-impunity, notably Astral Things (*Psi*, p. 42), ghosts (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 9: Summoners*, pp. 22-23), neuroids (*Psi*, p. 44), odifiers (*Psi*, p. 44), and the worst kinds of void elementals (*Summoners*, p. 30). Finally, there are entirely material threats that wield psionic capabilities, like aloakasa as-Sharak (*Psi*, p. 41), horrid skulls (*Monsters 1*, p. 19), evil mentalists, and fellow slayers gone bad.

But countless other horrors await . . .

- *Quick*: The spell is faster than normal. Reduce the casting time by half. If taken twice, a “double quick” spell *quarters* the base casting time. Casting time is always at least one second.

- *Rules-Breaker*: The spell breaks some of the rules of its “normal” counterpart. The GM will have to be careful about what he allows this to do. For example, permitting a spell to exceed a listed limit (an Accuracy spell that offers bonuses higher than +3) or simply be better in some small way (a Recover Energy spell that gives the bonuses for skill 15 at skill 10) is probably balanced.

- *Unique Effect*: The spell has another effect. Perhaps it adds a modifier or creates the effects of a closely related spell. This also increases the energy cost by 1 or 10% (whichever is greater) per +10% of modifiers added. Treat an added spell that is closely related as a +50% enhancement, or add 80% of its cost to the spell, whichever is *higher*. This is also used when an added effect doesn’t fit anywhere else (see the Dwarvish Reinforcement spell, below). Treat this as +50% for most effects, but some particularly powerful effects might be +100% or more.

GETTING SECRET SPELLS

The following new power-up is available to casters who want secret spells.

Secret Spell

1 or 5 points

You have a spell that is not common knowledge! Describe how you gained access to it. Perhaps you are a part of a guild or secret brotherhood, or you earned the trust of an entire magical race that disclosed to you one of their secrets. For a PC starting out with this ability, the player may offer input for what he wants the spell to do, but the GM designs the specifics. The GM may allow a version of this power-up for advanced secret spells (see p. 12).

Perk level: Secret Spell (Specific spell). 1 point.

Advantage level: Unusual Background (Specific advanced secret spell). 5 points.

*There are no secrets except
the secrets that keep themselves.*
– George Bernard Shaw

EXAMPLE SECRET SPELLS

The following new spells have been modified from those found in the *Basic Set* or *Magic* using the above rules. All of these spells require Secret Spell (above) or a Tome of Power (p. 17) that contains the spell.

Archmagi’s Recuperation (VH)

Special

Your ability to recover Fatigue Points is amazing. This spell is similar to Recover Energy (*Magic*, p. 89), but allows a mage to regain 1 FP per 2 minutes if he knows it at 15 or

higher. A mage that knows this spell at 20 or higher recovers 1 FP per *minute*, and one who knows it at 25 or higher recovers 1 FP per *second*.

Cost: None.

Prerequisites: IQ 14+, Magery 4, Lend Energy, and Secret Spell (Archmagi’s Recuperation).

Item

As per the Recover Energy spell (*Magic*, p. 89).

Designer’s Notes: This spell was built using Recover Energy with two optional drawbacks. These increase the prerequisites from Magery 1 to Magery 4 and require an IQ of 14 or higher. It allows the recovery of FP as fast as Recover Energy (albeit at lower skill levels) and adds a higher tier of recovery. These are both Rules-Breaker Effects that cost two option slots each.

Balor’s Eye Fire (VH)

Regular

Similar to the Breathe Fire spell (*Magic*, p. 76) except that the spell treats the flammability class (*Making Things Burn*, p. B433) of the subject as two steps higher than it actually is and the attack emanates from the user’s eyes instead of his mouth.

Duration: 1 second.

Cost: 8 per 1d+1 of burning damage (up to 4d+4). Cannot be maintained.

Time to cast: 2 seconds

Prerequisites: Magery 1, Flame Jet, Resist Fire, and either Secret Spell (Balor’s Eye Fire) or Tome of Power (Balor’s Treatise, p. 18).

Item

As per the Breathe Fire spell.

Designer’s Notes: This spell was built using Breathe Fire and adding the following enhancements: Cosmic, Higher Incendiary Level (+50%), and Incendiary 2 (+20%). Changing the point of emanation from the mouth to the eyes is a +0% effect.

Dwarvish Reinforcement (VH)

Enchantment

As per the Fortify spell (*Magic*, p. 66), but any enchanted armor or shield automatically repairs itself, healing 1 HP per day (it may also be repaired normally). Items that have been enchanted with this spell never need maintenance, don’t rust, remain sharp without being sharpened, etc. and receive a bonus to their HT equal to their bonus to DR. This spell is usually only cast on metal or stone items.

Cost: See the table below.

DR Bonus	HT Bonus	Cost
+1	+1	100
+2	+2	400
+3	+3	1,600
+4	+4	6,000
+5	+5	16,000

Prerequisites: Enchant and Secret Spell (Dwarvish Reinforcement)

Statistics: The creature gains Affliction 3 (HT-2; Disadvantage, Berserk (N/A); Only while grappling target); the victim must roll HT-2 every turn to avoid going Berserk with no self-control rating. To *break* the mind control, the victim must win a Quick Contest of the creature's Will vs. the defender's Will-4, and may attempt such each turn. A critical success causes the creature to leap off and find another victim. Critical *failure* means that the only way to end the effect is to remove the creature by breaking the head grapple.

Appropriate for: Terrible Zombies. Any specialized pouncing creature might qualify for this ability, and it's more appropriate for monsters and constructs than animals.

In Other Genres

The creatures described here also work with little modification in some kinds of science-fiction post-apocalypse games. Of course, no one calls them *Dire* whatever in the nuked wastelands; they call them *Mutant* whatever. Stats are unchanged, unless the GM chooses to add radioactive or super-science powers!

Nasty Pointy Teeth

This creature, after a bite, strike, or grapple of the neck, delivers a hilariously (er, we mean *hideously*) lethal cutting attack, capable of severing the neck of a strong man.

Statistics: On top of its normal biting damage (*after* adjustment for Terrible), the creature gains an additional +3d cutting. *All* of its biting damage also gains Armor Divisor (5). Damage is amplified as usual by Brawling or Karate damage bonuses. In addition, the bite counts as a weapon for purposes of being injured on a parry. Commonly combined with Slayer Training (Bite/Neck).

Appropriate for: Terrible Bunnies, Terrible Koala, Terrible Dire Shrubbery.

Not Cleaning That Up

The creature, in combat, will suddenly release . . . something . . . all over the place. It is nasty, slick, odoriferous and probably a sickly blend of all sorts of colors that shouldn't go together. The creature is, of course, immune to these effects, for maximum unfairness.

Statistics: The area affected is a two yard radius, or a radius in yards equal to the twice creature's Size Modifier (SM) + 1, whichever is *bigger*. For example, a SM+2 creature would affect a radius of 6 yards! Treat the ground as Bad Footing, per *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 16: Wilderness Adventures*, p. 38 (movement costs are +1 per yard, DX and attack rolls are at -2, defenses are at -1, etc.) Crampons or other spiky footwear will negate this effect. Additionally, the vapor released from the mess can cause victims to become Nauseated (see p. B428). Rolls to resist are made at HT-4. Casting Purify Air will give a brief respite (1d seconds), but the only way to truly avoid the effects is to remove the source of the vapor. Air spells can be used to direct the cloud elsewhere.

Appropriate for: Terrible Elephants, Terrible My Little Equines, Terrible Yip Dogs.

Now You See Me . . .

The creature is incredibly hard to perceive. When not moving, a monster with Now You See Me is nearly impossible to detect. It uses this ability to wait until likely prey is in range, and then relies on its stealth to execute a backstabbing attack (see *Dungeons*, pp. 11-12). A creature with this ability will often have Super Jump as a movement mode. It will remain invisible and still, until it can attack from total surprise. This is usually a Move and Attack (often with Heroic Charge, from p. 131 of *GURPS Martial Arts*), first attacking and then jumping away (and becoming motionless if it was unseen).

Statistics: Grants Invisibility and Stealth-20 (which includes +9 for being invisible) when not moving. In order to qualify for Invisibility, the monster must start and end the turn without moving; otherwise, noticing or attacking the creature is at -4.

Appropriate for: Terrible Bugbear, Terrible Ciuaclá, Terrible Demon, Terrible Undead. Pretty much any critter with IQ 8 or higher would make a nasty stalking threat.

Ridiculously Lethal

No matter what the creature's default attack mode is, it gets worse. A *lot* worse. For bite attacks, *Nasty Pointy Teeth* (above) is a more appropriate choice.

Statistics: Increase the damage of a chosen attack mode by +3d (or double it, if that's worse). Particularly malicious specimens would also add Armor Divisor (2), because you need to get through to the creamy center of those DR 14 knights.

Appropriate for: Any. All. Go ahead and combine this with any other Terrible ability as well, just to make things more challenging.

DIRE AND TERRIBLE CREATURES

This starter list describes some sample creatures that are Dire and some that are Terrible.

Dire Hart (With a Vengeance)

To all appearances, this is a normal mature male deer. Although a primary target for hunters, the Dire Hart does not exhibit normal prey behavior. If it succeeds in a Per roll against a stalking hunter – and it is fully capable of discriminating between hunters and travelers – it will attack instantly and with great ferocity. It will try to gore with horns and strike with hooves. The Dire Hart will leverage slams and unarmed Sweeps to knock down his foe and ram its horns into the fallen target, gaining the double-damage bonus for striking a hard target!

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 email: info@sjgames.com. Resources include:

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

Warehouse 23. Our online store offers *GURPS* adventures, play aids, and support in PDF form . . . digital copies of our books, plus exclusive material available only on Warehouse 23! Just head over to warehouse23.com.

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 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, 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.

STUCK FOR AN ADVENTURE? NO PROBLEM.

**Warehouse 23 sells high-quality
game adventures and supplements
in print and PDF formats.**

- Free downloadable adventures for *GURPS*, *In Nomine*, and *Traveller*!
- Fun gaming accessories – shot glasses, shirts, specialty six-siders, and more!
- PDFs from Atlas Games, Amarillo Design Bureau, Pelgrane Press, Goodman Games, and many others – plus gems from the up-and-comers.
- Original material for *Transhuman Space* and new *GURPS* supplements from Kenneth Hite, Phil Masters, David Pulver, Sean Punch, and William Stoddard!
- Fully searchable files of *GURPS Fourth Edition* supplements.
- Digital editions of out-of-print classics, from *Orcslayer* and the complete run of *ADQ* to *GURPS China* and *GURPS Ice Age*.
- Buy board games and roleplaying PDFs in the same order! Download digital purchases again whenever you need to.



STEVE JACKSON GAMES
warehouse23.com