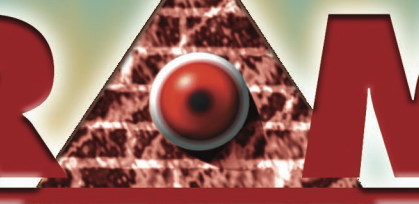


PYRAMID[®]



Issue 3/102 April '17

EPIC



CRAFTING IMBUEMENTS
by Christopher R. Rice

**DUNGEON FANTASY
GOES TO WAR**
by Matt Riggsby

THE HARVEST
by David L. Pulver

GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG
by William H. Stoddard

MANY LIVES, ONE ADVENTURE
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STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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There's something awesome about those times in gaming where all the players take a moment to lean back, smile, and say, "Wow; that's *amazing!*" This issue of *Pyramid* is devoted to epic gaming: ideas, additions, and expansions that provide fuel to the fire of fun.

We all have stuff . . . but now our belongings can serve double-duty by doing the impossible, thanks to *Crafting Imbuements*. Building on the foundation of **GURPS Power-Ups 1: Imbuements**, this article by Christopher R. Rice – co-author of **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 19: Incantation Magic** – lets you add special powers or abilities to items. The impossible has never been easier!

Usually, crypt-crawling heroes solve their problems one-on-one . . . and other times, *Dungeon Fantasy Goes to War*. **GURPS Low-Tech** co-author Matt Riggsby shows how you can add **GURPS Mass Combat** to **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy**, allowing for even more epic struggles against the forces of evil.

The whole world is in danger, and only stalwart heroes can stop *The Harvest: Invasion Earth*. This month's Eidetic Memory offering from David L. Pulver – author of **GURPS Spaceships** – presents an epic modern-day campaign that pits incredibly powerful human vessels against an alien conquest. With six new vehicle designs detailing both sides of the conflict, it's a perfect time to take advantage of the fact that **Spaceships** is now available as a CreateSpace print-on-demand release!

The future's not what it used to be, and that's never been truer than in the world of *Götterdämmerung*. William H. Stoddard – author of **GURPS Powers: The Weird** – presents an alternate timeline where reality can shift underfoot like sand, bringing in a super-powered setting the likes of which you've never seen. It's the perfect reason to use *The Weird*, **GURPS Horror: The Madness Dossier**, **GURPS Thaumatology: Chinese Elemental Powers**, and **GURPS Powers** in a **GURPS** setting that's super-powered but decidedly different.

Most adventurers have but one life to give for their feats of derring-do . . . but others live by the mantra of *Many Lives, One Adventure*. This systemless article takes a detailed look at how reincarnation might radically change a fantasy campaign, with insight into society, campaign ideas, and new ways to shake up the world. When death is just a setback, it's sure to be epic!

This issue of *Pyramid* also includes a Random Thought Table that shows how to keep over-the-top elements relatable while still maintaining that sense of wonder. Let's face it: This issue of *Pyramid* is . . . well . . . *epic!*

ARTICLE COLORS

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

Pale Blue: In This Issue

Brown: In Every Issue

Green: Columnist

Dark Blue: **GURPS** Features

Purple: Systemless Features

COVER ART
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FROM THE EDITOR

“SUDDENLY,” IN ALL CAPS

The very idea of “epic” is something that can find a home in so many campaigns. I was reminded of this fact as I reflected on (curiously enough) *Mystery Science Theater 3000*, the film-mocking cult TV series currently enjoying a Netflix-airing revival. The original premise of the show was about as low-stakes as it could get (“a guy and two robots make fun of cheesy movies”). But – during the original series’ run of 10-ish seasons – they managed to embrace the epic a surprising number of times: skirting to the edge of the galaxy, blowing up planets, saving the universe from pod people, traveling through time and space . . . and that was all within the context of several-minute “buffer” segments that *weren’t* part of the mandate to quip over films. So I find myself thinking, “Y’know, if a show like *Mystery Science Theater 3000* can be epic, then so can just about any gaming campaign.”

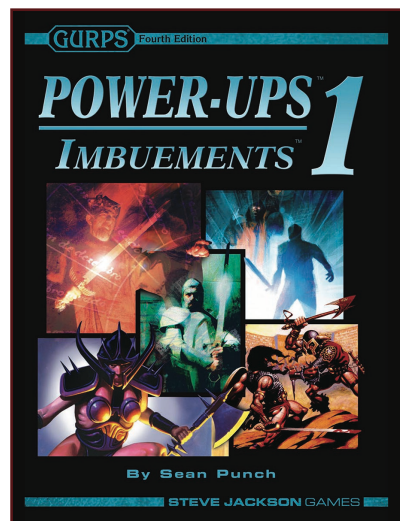
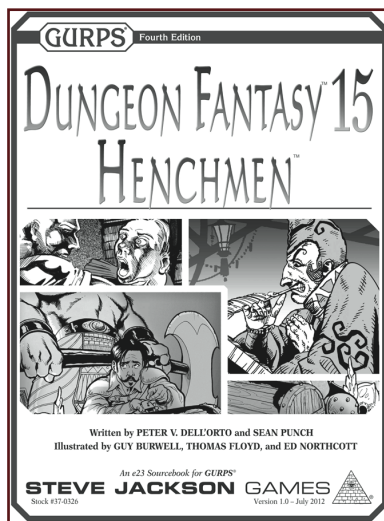
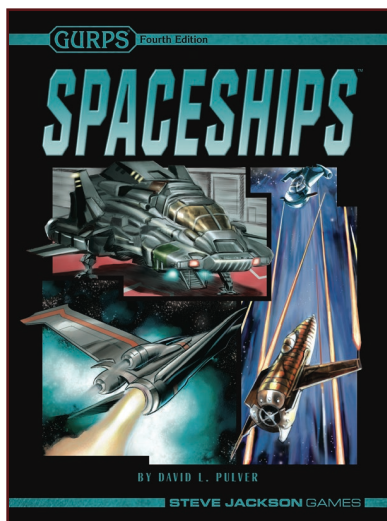
Fortunately, **GURPS** is a system that’s particularly well suited to epic gaming. Unlike systems that (say) use a single die to resolve most actions, **GURPS**’ bell curve does a good job of ensuring that skills and abilities can be ramped up to high-power levels without leaving the sliver of a possibility of

failure or setbacks. (Heroes in high-octane films always seem to rely on those one-in-a-million possibilities to save they day; maybe they have **GURPS Power-Ups 5: Impulse Buys** . . .) Plus, ironically, **GURPS**’ reputation for lethality helps it here; when the best defense is “don’t get hit,” that advice applies equally well to a mook’s handgun bullet or the Everburning Flame of Ra Incarnate.

Of course, **GURPS** has enough tweaks and knobs to enable it to work great for standalone epic campaigns (of which we proudly present a couple here in this issue), as well as elements that might only be touched upon briefly in an otherwise more down-to-earth campaign. Whether you’re looking to craft a long-running epic campaign or just want to shake things up in the heroes’ neighborhood for a bit, hopefully this issue will give you inspiration to embrace the epic!

WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW

Whether this issue stoked your inner awesome or you think we shouldn’t have tried to turn the knob past 11, we love to hear from you! Write to us privately at pyramid@sjgames.com, or join our epic community at forums.sjgames.com.



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Ostentatious Gear

General; IQ/VH

Default: Specialty for related skill at same penalty as skill default.

Prerequisite: Imbue 1.

This skill gives the crafted item +1 to reaction rolls from collectors and potential buyers, and to Merchant skill rolls made as Influence rolls (p. B359) on such people. This adds +1 CF.

Modifiers: -2 per additional +1 reaction bonus. The GM may choose to limit the reaction bonus to no higher than your best crafting Talent (e.g., Artificer) plus Imbue level.

Penetrating Weapon

Weapon; IQ/VH

Default: Specialty for related skill at same penalty as skill default.

Prerequisite: Imbue 3.

This skill gives the crafted weapon armor divisor (2), allowing it to better penetrate armor. This adds +19 CF.

Modifiers: -4 for (3), -8 for (5), -12 for (10), -16 for (100), and -20 to bypass DR completely.

Precise Gear

Equipment or Weapon; IQ/VH

Default: Specialty for related skill at same penalty as skill default.

Prerequisite: Imbue 3.

This skill gives the crafted item +1 to operation rolls (for most types of gear), +1 to skill rolls to hit (for melee weapons, thrown weapons, and projectiles), or +1 to Accuracy (for muscle-powered weapons or firearms). This adds +4 CF. It is recommended that the GM allow at most a bonus equal to [(setting's TL)/2 + 1] for bonuses to skill rolls or (setting's TL + 1) for Accuracy.

Modifiers: -2 per additional +1.

Resilient Gear

General; IQ/VH

Default: Specialty for related skill at same penalty as skill default.

Prerequisite: Imbue 2.

This skill gives +1 or +10% to HP (whichever is better), allowing it to take more damage before it needs to be repaired. This adds +2 CF.

Modifiers: -1 per +1 or +10% to HP, up to +30 HP or +300% HP.

Self-Healing Gear

General; IQ/VH

Default: Specialty for related skill at same penalty as skill default.

Prerequisite: Imbue 1.

This gives the crafted item the ability to repair itself slowly over time, thus negating the need for repairs. This adds +2 CF. On an unmodified roll, the object regains 1 HP every day (modified by *High HP and Healing*, p. B424).

Modifiers: -4 allows the object to regain 1 HP per hour, -6 for 1 HP per minute, -8 for 1 HP per second, or -10 for 10 HP per second. For an additional -4 penalty, it can also regrow quillons, straps, braces, and other small bits. For an additional -8, the entire thing can regrow from even the smallest piece!

Strong Weapon

Weapon or Armor; IQ/VH

Default: Specialty for related skill at same penalty as skill default.

Prerequisite: Imbue 2.

This skill adds +1 to the base damage of the weapon or shield (not armor or clothing). This also gives -1 to the odds of breakage (p. B375). Alternatively, *just* breakage may be modified, in which case it gives -2 to odds. This adds +2 CF for projectiles, and crushing- or impaling-only melee or thrown weapons; +3 CF for Fencing weapons, knives, or swords; or +9 CF for other cutting melee or thrown weapons. Halve the CF if just the breakage rolls are modified.

Modifiers: -3 per additional +1 to damage and -1 to odds of breakage or -1 per additional -1 to odds of breakage; -5 if the weapon or shield is indestructible except under rare circumstances, -10 if it's completely indestructible,

PUTTING YOUR SOUL INTO THE STEEL

Crafting Imbuements can be *very* powerful. This is why the imbuer must make (or assist in the making) of an item to imbue it in the first place as well as spend FP. The GM who thinks this is too easy can opt to *require* HT rolls (or HT-based Crafting Imbuement if better) during the imbue process in addition to the skill roll. Make the HT roll with the following modifiers at the start of the imbue process.

- -0 for an item with CF +1 to +9, -1 for +10 to +19, -2 for +20 to +29, etc.
- -0 for an item with Imbue 1 as a requirement, -1 for Imbue 2, and -2 for Imbue 3.
- Add *half* the modifier you took for decreasing or increasing time to use your Crafting Imbuement (p. 5) as a modifier to this roll.

Critical success on this roll gives you +2 to your imbue skill roll *and* reduces required FP by 1 (or -5%). Success means you spend the FP normally for your skill. Failure means you must spend 1 HP per 10 required FP (in addition to the FP cost). Critical failure means you must spend 1 HP per 3 required FP! If this inflicts a full multiple of your HP (p. B420), make an unmodified HT roll; failure by 1 or 2 leaves you mortally wounded, while failure by 3 or more means you *die*.

Lance: The medieval equivalent of a modern squad was the lance, a semi-standard group of fighters who would accompany a knight into battle. A lance consists of one mounted man-at-arms (treat as a squire), two less-armored mounted serjeants (treat as brutes, *Henchmen*, p. 9), two bowmen (guards with Bow skill), three pikemen (guards with Polearm skill), and two shield bearers. The squire and brutes have five fewer points to spend on advantages; those are spent on equipment. Despite its disparate capabilities, the lance counts as an element of heavy cavalry in mass combat. A lance is worth 13 points as a set of Allies.

Company: This is something closer to an actual army, consisting of 50 lances, or about 400 soldiers plus a number of noncombatant supporters. This is enough people to arrange into units of different types, offering a range of capabilities. The company can be divided into 10 elements of bowmen (TS 20, class F), five elements of good-quality heavy cavalry (TS 37, class Cv), 10 elements of good-quality medium cavalry (TS 60, class Cv, F), and 15 elements of pikemen (TS 60, class Cv). A company costs 82 points as an Ally group.

BARBARIAN HORDES

These bodies of troops are certainly suitable for barbarians as well as other outdoorsy types like scouts and druids.

Arvat: This is a small body of fast but lightly armored horsemen from the wild steppe. It consists of two archers and eight guards, all with Bow and Riding (Horse) skills; the guards have Riding instead of one of their other background skills. Each member also has two fewer points to spend on advantages; those go toward equipment and a horse. An arvat is worth 12 points as a set of Allies.

Minghan: It's not quite a barbarian horde, but a minghan consist of 100 arvats, or 1,000 members in total. It counts as 20 elements of good-quality horse archers (TS 60, class Cv, F, Rec) and 80 elements of average-quality horse archers (TS 160, class Cv, F, Rec). A minghan is worth 46 points as an Ally group.

War Party: A small group of barbarian warriors, wearing little if any armor and carrying shields and spears; all have Stealth as well. It includes three skirmishers, six guards, and a shield bearer. It acts as an element of light infantry and is worth 13 points as a batch of Allies.

Impi: A disciplined low-tech army, an impi is composed of the equivalent of 40 war parties. It constitutes 12 elements of good-quality light infantry (TS 36, class Rec) and 24 elements of average-quality light infantry (TS 48, class Rec). It is worth 54 points as an Ally group.

EXOTICS

These allies are more fantasy-themed than pseudo-historical. They are most suitable as allies for magic users such as clerics, druids, summoners, shamans, and wizards, but should not be limited to them. Holy warriors are just as likely as clerics to be backed up by angelic hosts, and bards are known for their ability to call up impromptu batches of allies (such as the Pied Piper of Hamelin or several Disney princesses).

Angelic Host: Some clerics (along with some druids, wizards, summoners, and so on) get a lot of support in the form

of angelic hosts. These are batches of minor divine servants; use the divine servitor template from *Allies* (p. 12), but with the angelic host lens (below). Exactly what angelic hosts do in *Mass Combat* depends on what divine-servitor element lenses they use. For any given *Mass Combat* element of hosts, combine the effects of their divine servitor elements indicated here:

Armor: Earth

TS 2: Air, Chaos, Disease, Evil, Good, Nature, War

TS 2, class F: Fire, Water

Neutralize Recon: Beauty, Darkness, Deception, Fear, Peace

Recon: Order, Wisdom

T1: Travel

Nav: Water

For example, an angelic host of avenging spirits with Good and War elements would have TS 4, while a host of demonic oxen with Evil and Travel would have TS 2, class T1. The Life element provides no battlefield abilities, but each element offers benefits indicated under *Super-Healing and Force Replacement, Mass Combat*, p. 14. Do not use the Death lens for angelic hosts; see zombie horde (below) to gain zombie followers.

A host of 10 spirits makes a single *Mass Combat* element and costs 12 points as an Ally group, a host of 100 makes 10 elements and costs 24 points, and a host of 1,000 spirits makes 100 elements and costs 36 points.

Angelic Host Lens

This lens, at -125 points, brings the divine servitor template down to a cost low enough to buy in bulk. Members of an angelic host are swarms of very minor divine servants, capable of taking corporeal form and fighting, but they're still the divine equivalent of cannon fodder. -1 ST [-10], -1 DX [-20], -1 IQ [-20], -1 HT [-10]. Remove one element slot [-50], Blessed [-10], and Hidden Lore [-2]. Adjust skills to Theology-9 [1]. Remember to reduce skills in element lenses appropriately.

Plague of Locusts: A sky-darkening cloud of stinging insects. Treat as the insect swarm on *Allies*, p. 9, but much, much larger. A 10-hex swarm costs 18 point as an Ally, while a 100-hex swarm costs 36 points, and a 1,000-hex swarm costs 54 points. They count as one, 10, and 100 elements of flying beasts respectively, but they lack the T1 class.

Wolf Pack: A pack consists of nine wolves (use the hound template from *Allies*, p. 8) led by one alpha wolf (the hound template plus the timber wolf lens from *Allies*, p. 9). They act as one beast element and cost 15 points as a set of Allies.

Zombie Horde: The dead have risen from their graves, and they're following your orders. Treat as horde zombies (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons*, p. 24), but without the Infectious Attack or Uncontrollable Appetite. Since they don't need to breathe, they can act as amphibious warriors, but they're inferior quality. A group of 10 counts as a single element and costs 6 points as an Ally group. A group of 100 (TS 100, class Nav) costs 12 points, and a group of 1,000 (TS 1,000, class Nav) costs 18 points.

SUPER VIRGINIA SSN (TL8/11^)

In order to quickly build covert space warships, Vector Valentine used an existing source of pressurized nuclear-powered vessels and crews: the U.S. Navy's submarine fleet. Under the guise of refitting them for special underwater operations, six *Sea Wolf*, *Ohio*, and *Virginia*-class nuclear boats that were undergoing refits were covertly modified with Vector Valentine technology.

The *Super Virginia* class uses a 377' (SM+10) nautical hull. It is crewed by 140 sailors, plus 20 passengers (typically a SEAL team, several telepaths, and some CIA or naval intelligence "Men In Black" with alien-contact experience). A contragravity generator was installed in place of ballast trim tanks, and its torpedo and missile tubes were modified to fire the new King Cobra anti-spaceship missiles (TL10 **GURPS Spaceships** missiles provided by the Greys). The lockout trunk for divers was modified into a space airlock. The powerful active sonar suite in the bow was modified into a phased array laser battery. The side-mounted sonar arrays were removed and replaced with a force screen generator. The power and drive systems were gutted, with reactionless thrusters replacing the pump jet propulsion system and the fission reactor replaced by a psychotronic psi-powered stardrive. A team of latent telepaths – many of them civilians "recruited" through covert Men In Black agencies – were assembled to operate the power source for the psi-drive, which used 10 Draden coils paired with 10 telepathic translators.

Variant

To approximate the original *Virginia*-class submarine, replace the main battery with a tactical sonar array; replace the fusion reactor and psychotronic power plant with a two-system fission reactor; replace the light force screen with another passive tactical sonar array; replace the contragravity lifters with a submarine ballast tank; replace the standard reactionless thrusters with screw propellers. Remove the

artificial gravity. Mass of the original sub was 7,800 tons submerged; the alien tech added additional mass.

Front Hull System

[1-2]	Steel Armor (total dDR 14).
[3!]	Major Battery (3 GJ phased array laser turret).*
[4]	Secondary Battery (10 fixed 32cm missile launchers).*
[5]	Medium Battery (three fixed 40cm torpedo tubes).*
[6]	Tactical Comm/Sensor Array (comm/sensor 12).*
[core]	Control Room (C5, comm/sensor 10, 10 control stations).

Central Hull System

[1-2]	Steel Armor (total dDR 14).
[3]	External Clamp (can haul one M1A5 or F-35D).
[4]	Habitat (40 bunkrooms, two cabins, sickbay, 85 tons steerage cargo).*
[5!]	Light Force Screen (dDR 150, adjustable, velocity).*
[6]	Psychotronic Power Plant (two Power Points, 10 psis).*
[core]	Fission Reactor (one Power Point).*

Rear Hull System

[1-2]	Steel Armor (total dDR 14).
[3!]	Contragravity Lifter.*
[4]	Stardrive Engine (Psi-Powered, FTL-1).*
[5-6]	TL11 Standard Reactionless Thruster (1G acceleration each).*

* 10 workspaces per system.

Design features and options are artificial gravity, lacks automation, nautical hull, psi shielding, and underwater stealth hull (gives -4 to be detected by sonar).

TL Spacecraft dST/HP Hnd/SR HT Move Lwt. Load SM Occ dDR Range Cost Crush Depth

SHIPHANDLING/TL8 (SUBMARINE)

8/11^ Super Virginia-class SSN	150	-2/5	11	2G/c	10,000	101.4	+10	164ASV	14*	1x	\$978M	370 yd.
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* Plus dDR 150 adjustable force screen.

Top air speed is only 700 mph (due to the poorly streamlined nautical hull) but Hnd/SR is 0/5 due to contragravity lifters. Top underwater speed underwater is 70 mph.

The boat's HT has been arbitrarily reduced from HT 14 (thanks to Lack of Automation) to a mere HT 11 due to maintenance difficulties from operating systems that are three TLs more advanced and the hurried conversion from sub to starship.

F-35D DARK LIGHTNING II (TL8/11^)

"Now you know the real reason the F-35 really went over budget."

The three variants of the F-35 (A for the Air Force, B for the Marines, C for the Navy) are publicly known. The fourth

is the F-35D Dark Lightning, a radical ultra-tech variant of the Marines' F-35B. Augmentations included the removal of some jet fuel tank capacity in favor of a Grey-designed vectored thrust system that replaced the original lift fan (there weren't enough ready to fully replace the jet engine) and the installation of an adjustable force screen grid generator, both powered by a vacuum energy power plant, and modifications to the life support system to allow vacuum operations.

ABOUT GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of **GURPS** players. We can be reached by e-mail: info@sjgames.com. Our address is SJ Games, P.O. Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Resources include:

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Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Errata pages for **GURPS** releases are available at sjgames.com/errata/gurps.

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.

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