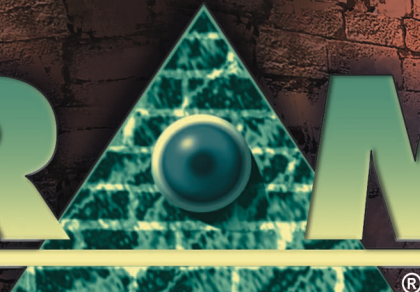


# PYRAMID<sup>®</sup>



Issue 3/108 October '17

## DUNGEON FANTASY<sup>™</sup>

POWERED BY GURPS<sup>®</sup>



### MONSTER MODDING

by Sean Punch

### THE HAND OF THE DEMON

by Christopher R. Rice

### HYDRA ISLAND

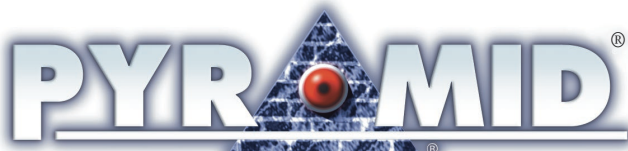
by David L. Pulver

### MORE MYTHIC & MAGICAL MONSTERS

by Peter V. Dell'Orto

# STEVE JACKSON GAMES

Stock #37-2708



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## 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**  
Brandon Moore

**INTERIOR ART**  
David L. Pulver  
with Nikola Vrtis

# IN THIS ISSUE

The rumors are true, the omens have come to pass, and the treasures are within your grasp; the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game* has arrived, and it's amazing! This issue of *Pyramid* is devoted to that boxed set, with new material you can use right away in your crypt-crawling campaigns.

When you're looking for a way to freshen up the battles of your creepy caverns, consider *Monster Modding!* *Dungeon Fantasy RPG* designer Sean Punch reveals 27 themes to inspire you, from spectral to energy draining to mutant and more. Each one includes recommendations for what type of monsters are suitable for these modifications and a list of game-changing ways to appropriately augment those creatures. You'll also get bonus tips for revising damage for these new critters and insight into creating hybrids of two or more creatures. Suddenly the monsters of the boxed set just got more monstrous . . .

Add nine new creatures to your repertoire with *More Mythic & Magical Monsters*. Peter V. Dell'Orto – author of *Dungeon Fantasy Magic Items* – describes unique beings of myth and legend, with complete *Dungeon Fantasy* stats that make them perfect adversaries for jaded dungeoneers.

Some of those new monsters from the previous article have already found themselves a new home . . . and it's bad news for any heroes who find themselves on *Hydra Island!* This installment of *Eidetic Memory* by David L. Pulver offers an adventure locale that's ready to tailor-fit to your campaign, complete with a trip through a swamp, stats for its typically atypical denizens, and a map of the destination. It's an island getaway you'll remember for a lifetime . . .

Discover the secrets of mysterious black structures that appear for a few days and then disappear – no doubt the work of *The Hand of the Demon*. Some rumors are recent, no older than the past few years, while others are decades old. Christopher R. Rice – co-author of *Dungeon Fantasy Traps* – presents an adventure outline that visits the ruins of a demon prince's castle, describing the monsters, hazards, and treasure that delvers can unearth.

In honor of the recent print release of *How to Be a GURPS GM*, check out the *Designer's Notes* from author Warren "Mook" Wilson. Learn about how that supplement came to be and some of the thoughts behind the design of each of the chapters.

Finally, this month's Random Thought Table ponders some in-game reasons why the heroes are *exactly* who's needed to handle any crises put in front of them. The *Dungeon Fantasy RPG* is a world of monsters, magic, and martial might. And now, its adventures can be yours . . . and better than ever, with this issue of *Pyramid!*

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# FROM THE EDITOR

## AT LAST, ALL DUNGEONS ARE OPEN FOR EXPLORATION!

Welcome to third issue of *Pyramid* devoted to the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game*. It's an exciting issue from my point of view, since – as I type this – it's the first time where the physical boxed set is well-and-truly in the hands of scads of our fans. Given the vagaries of international shipping, it could be a bit before the remainder of the first wave of fans receives their copies. However, already boxes are appearing on store shelves, and we've received many reviews and kind words for the project.

In a lot of ways, this issue marks the point where the *Dungeon Fantasy RPG* really becomes “your” game. It's when the game stops existing solely in the realm of our constructs and ideas, and becomes the incubator and catalyst for *your* imagination. We're excited to see what you come up with!

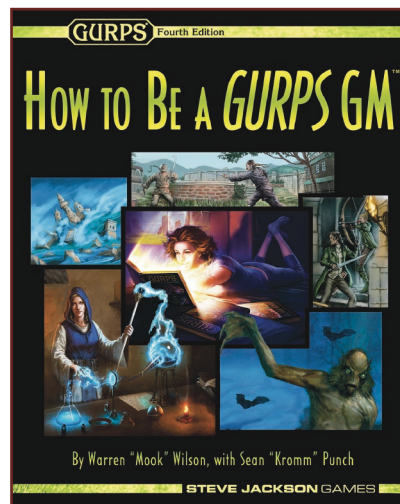
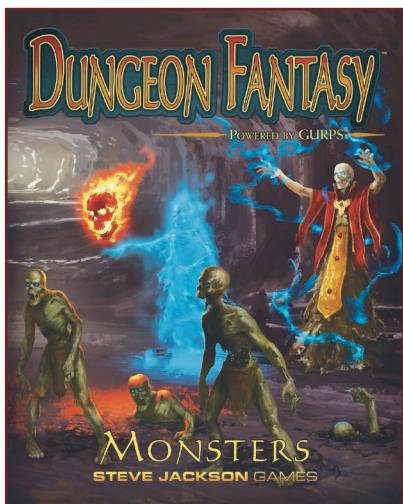
To help with that endeavor, this issue is devoted to giving you more of what you need to make your campaigns awesome: more monsters and monster augmentations, campaign hooks, and even a full adventure to challenge heroes.

Beyond that, the future is what you make it! If this game proves as popular as we hope it will, who knows what tomorrow holds? We know there have been folks clamoring for other add-ons, more options, additional possibilities for GMs and players alike . . . maybe even other boxed sets for different genres or campaigns. And all of those sound like great ideas we'd have a blast pursuing, if there's a market!

But, in the meantime, we have now: An island of monsters, rumors of treasures, and world of possibilities. Thank you for being with us on this journey!

## WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW

So, what do you think? Do you want to find more support for the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game* here in the pages of *Pyramid*? Is there some cool idea you'd like to see, or something you think we could do better with next time? Let us know, via private email to [pyramid@sjgames.com](mailto:pyramid@sjgames.com), or by joining the public crypt-crawling community at [forums.sjgames.com](http://forums.sjgames.com).



Additional Material: Sean Punch

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*Adaptations:* Extra DR vs. magic equal to creature's original DR score, minimum +1 DR vs. magic. • Optional changes are even higher DR (or Injury Reduction!) vs. magic, Detect (Magic), and levels of Magic Resistance if the monster doesn't cast spells or of Magery if it does.

## Poison

The monster exemplifies toxicity. Former acid monsters that trade acid for venom are common but not the only option. A sickly green shade usually betrays this modification.

*Applicability:* Any monster with a physical attack other than poison/toxic.

*Attack Modifications:* Change damage type to *toxic*. • This change is most logical for follow-ups and gases – but fantasy knows no logic, and the supernatural embodiment of poison might function like any other attack that's affected by DR! • Against attacks that allow resistance rolls, Resistant to Poison helps.

*Adaptations:* Nothing fixed, but optional changes are high levels of Resistant – up to Immunity – to Disease and Poison, plus “slimy” traits like Limited Camouflage (Swamp) and levels of Slippery.

## HYBRIDS

A time-tested way to turn monsters into more monsters is to combine two or more of them. This is less like modification and more like inventing a whole new creature.

The quick-and-dirty way to handle this is to add one monster's attacks and “definitive” traits (good and bad) to another. For conflicting traits, drop the ones you like least. For attributes, simply average unless a high score is one of the creatures' definitive traits – in that case, keep it.

When actually gluing together parts of different bodies, average only ST, DX, HT, HP, FP, and Speed. Use the IQ, Will, and Per of the head, and the Move of the part that provides the legs, wings, or whatever. Each body part has the DR of its monster of origin. Drop attacks and traits associated with body parts that are no longer present.

## Unholy

The entity is so evil that its mere touch, gaze, breath, etc. does harm. This is common among former poison creatures, things with modifiers from *Crank Up the Evil* (pp. 4-5), and Demon- and Undead-class monsters – but in all cases, the being qualifies as “truly evil.” Unholy fiends are typically grayish or blackish.

*Applicability:* Any monster with a physical attack other than direct unholy damage.

*Attack Modifications:* Attack has no damage type – it directly injures HP, bypassing all DR but the Protection from Evil spell (*Spells*, p. 64). Some creatures of Good have Vulnerability (Unholy), and this attack definitely counts. • Against attacks that allow resistance rolls, Resist Evil helps.

*Adaptations:* Levels of Resist Good equal to *twice* creature's DR score, minimum one level. • Optional changes are Detect

(Good), levels of Power Investiture (Unholy) if the monster casts evil clerical spells, and possibly Vulnerability (Holy x2).

## EXPERT MONSTERS

Not all modifications affect a monster's physical makeup or fundamental nature – some come closer to learned abilities. All these changes are possible only for sapient (IQ 6+) beings. Cannot Learn *doesn't* prevent them, as a creature could start out with such knowledge.

## Myrmidon

The creature is an expert fighter! Construct-class monsters are often built this way, Undead-class ones might have become masters while alive, and Faerie- and Mundane-class ones may have gained the knowledge the hard way. Those aren't the only options, but Animal-, Plant-, and Slime-class creatures just about never meet the criteria (IQ 6+ and weapon use).

*Applicability:* Any monster that wields a weapon.

*Modifications:* Raise weapon skill by two or to DX+2, whichever is better. • Add *one* of Combat Reflexes (for +1 to all active defenses) – or Enhanced Parry 1 (+1 to Parry), Extra Attack 1, or Weapon Master (+2 *per die* to damage) with its weapon. • Multiple applications are possible, each granting another +2 to skill and one additional trait. • In most cases, myrmidons have better-quality weapons and armor than their peers.

## Priest

Tribes of Mundane-class monsters often boast shamans, Undead-class entities might have been clerics in life (Evil ones *becoming* undead using their powers), and Demon-, Divine Servitor-, and Spirit-class beings may *be* the clerics of Hell, Heaven, the Spirit World, etc. Even Constructs could be temple guardians with priestly powers!

*Applicability:* Any IQ 6+ monster.

*Modifications:* Raise IQ to 10 or add +1 to IQ, whichever is better. • Add Power Investiture 1 (Elder) for Elder Things; Power Investiture 1 (Unholy) for *most* monsters, especially “truly evil” ones; and either Power Investiture 1 (Druidic) or ordinary clerical Power Investiture 1 for creatures that aren't irredeemably evil, depending on whether they're primitive wilderness-dwellers or sophisticated enough to have legions, if not empires. • If FP are given as “N/A,” add an Energy Reserve equal to the *higher* of HT or HP. • Multiple applications are possible, each adding another +1 to IQ and Power Investiture (maximum +6). • Remove any Magic Resistance! • Add spells at IQ + Power Investiture level. A number of spells equal to that total is fair. For Power Investiture (Elder) and (Unholy), see the lists below.

## Elder Spells

Not all of these are useful *against delvers* – but adventurers who somehow manage to control monsters might have spells cast *for* them. Sense Good and Protection from Good work like Sense Evil and Protection from Evil, but affect angels, clerics, holy warriors, etc.

*The Nest:* If the party examines the tree's upper branches, a successful Vision roll may spot a very large (several feet across) nest some 50' up in the branches. It is composed of large branches and twigs bound together. It's a **wyvern** (p. 25) nest. One is present with three wyvern eggs (1/2 lb., \$500 each). It will usually only attack if disturbed, but might swoop down on the heroes or lizard men if there's a fight on the island below! Reaching the nest requires Climbing rolls or capabilities such as flight. Inside are several bloody gobbets of fresh lizard man, the bones of a couple of swamp rats, and a shiny trinket a lizard man was wearing when snatched off his riding frog: a gold amulet shaped like a beetle (0.1 lb., \$500).

## THE SWAMP CAVES

There are three distinct factions on the island.

*Vooahek:* This band of lizard men (and some dinomen allies) have dwelt in the swamp for three generations, hunting frogs, rats, and alligators. Sometimes they trade with humans for weapons and trinkets in exchange for alligator and snake skins. Occasionally they kill travelers or raid merchant caravans for meat, loot, and sacrifices. Most lair in other parts of the swamp, but One Tree Island is a shrine to two local deities, Grandfather Hydra and Mother Frog. The lizard men sacrifice to the gods' sacred beasts, among them a multi-head serpent (p. 24) that they consider an avatar of Grandfather Hydra. They are ruled by their shaman, the Frog Mother (p. 23).

*Swamp Dryad's Grave:* Under the roots of a diseased swamp oak is a demonic spirit who is a corrupt shadow of a once-powerful dryad. Guarding her tomb is the twisted remnant of her lover, a mutant plant-thing known as Shamblethorn. He is served by a pack of ghouls who are the corrupt undead remnants of the druids. The Vooahek fear to enter this part of the complex.

*Sir Sacnoth and His Men:* These are visiting the Vooahek lizard men, not to raid the dungeon, but rather to win them over as mercenary allies for a planned slave raid.

The caves also shelter many growing, creeping, and crawling things . . .

## CAVE ENCOUNTERS

Each numbered chamber marked on the cavern map (p. 25) is described below. Unless noted, they are dark, damp limestone caves with dripping water, wet slimy surfaces, and plenty of stalagmites and stalactites. The caves are cool and clammy compared to the swamp.

Any room inhabited by lizard men, dinomen, or guests not noted as being lit can be assumed to have some phosphorescent fungus on the walls, providing moonlight-equivalent light (-4 to Vision and vision-related rolls). Other chambers are dark.

### 1. Guard Cave

Three **lizard men** (*Monsters*, p. 41) stand guard, halberds ready, partly concealed by a patch of three human-sized giant mushrooms.

They have a leashed trained **big frog** (p. 13) next to them, which they will release as a messenger in the event of the attack; it will hop off racing to alert the warriors at 5.

The mushrooms are a rare and delicious type. Roll vs. Naturalist to identify their value (10 lbs. each, \$150) to gourmet cooks.

## UNDERGROUND ENCOUNTER TABLE

Check normally for encounters when traveling underground (e.g., 9 or less on 3d each hour, or whenever the party make a lot of noise).

2d	Encounter
2	Crushroom ( <i>Monsters</i> , p. 19)
3	Big centipedes (1d; p. 13)
4	Big beetle (p. 12).
5	Swarm of snakes ( <i>Monsters</i> , p. 54)
6	Big frog (p. 13)
7	Lizard men (1d; <i>Monsters</i> , p. 41)
8	Giant swamp rats (1d)*
9	Swamp alligator (p. 20)
10	Swarm of rats ( <i>Monsters</i> , p. 54)
11	Ooze ( <i>Monsters</i> , p. 44)
12	Swarm of centipedes ( <i>Monsters</i> , p. 54)

\* Giant rat with webbed feet (as *Monsters*, p. 30, plus Amphibious and Swimming-15).

Animals usually attack intruders. Lizard men will fight unless outnumbered, otherwise retreat to alert other lizard men and prepare defenses against intruders.

### 2. Crushroom Garden

A garden of eight human-sized giant mushrooms (as in location 1). Two **crushrooms** (*Monsters*, p. 19) stand concealed amid the giant mushrooms. If the second crushroom is cut open, the squished remains of a recently swallowed victim are found in its stomach along with a bone whistle (neg., \$100) carved with images of frogs. The victim was an unfortunate dinoman who was given the whistle by Frog Mother. While exploring the complex, he took a wrong turn and was ambushed by a crushroom. If the whistle is blown in the presence of the giant frogs, they will not attack the blower for 2d rounds.

### 3. Dinomen's Cave

This cave is unusually smelly, with fish heads, bones, and rotted frog guts scattered on the floor. A mound of bug-infested moss makes a messy nest in one corner.

Grunting and hissing at each other are the denizens: five 4' or 5' small, scaly humanoids with short tails and reptilian heads with bigger jaws than ordinary lizard men, armed with hatchets and clubs, with a leader carrying a short sword. They are dinomen (*Monsters*, p. 20), one of which is an IQ 8 leader, S'tarak.

## RING OF SLOTH

This band of copper with a small black opal is etched with the runes for “sloth” and “apathy,” in both Ancient and Demonic on the outer surface. When worn by someone who is aware of its nature, the wearer can use it to cast any of the following spells: Awaken, Debility, Dull (Sense), Dullness, Flesh to Stone, Forgetfulness, Healing Slumber, Mass Sleep, Paralyze Limb, Relieve Paralysis, Sleep, Slow, Total Paralysis, Weaken Will, and Wither Limb.

If the user is not normally a magic-user, all such spells are cast as if the user had a skill of 20. For those who can cast spells, skill is the *better* of 20 or IQ plus 4 plus spell-casting talent (e.g., Magery). Those who had Laziness (*Adventurers*, p. 62) before wearing the ring gain +1 to their rolls.

While wearing the ring, the user receives a special aura and access to the martial-artist skill Immovable Stance (*Adventurers*, p. 32) at skill 20. Everyone within two yards

of the wearer must roll a Quick Contest of HT against the bearer’s Will+3. This aura works automatically, for as long as the ring is worn, but *known* allies can be excluded from its effects at any time, so long as the bearer is conscious. If the wearer wins, each point of victory reduces the victim’s Dodge score by -1 and Move by -2 (up to -4 to Dodge or -8 to Move). This effect lasts for a minute.

This comes at a cost. Every 1d+1 weeks, the wielder must make an HT roll at -3 (-6 if he’s used *any* of its spells). Failure means the person gains Laziness; those who already have this disadvantage reduce their Basic Move by 1 instead (to a minimum of one). Once the ring is removed, these disadvantages disappear at the same rate they appeared – unless the HT roll was failed by 5 or more or resulted in critical failure, in which case, it’s *permanent*.

The ring is worth \$100,000 to the right person, and weighs 0.1 lb. It holds 55 FP if used as a power item.

Should the PCs manage to make their way past the miasmist and the insidious magic of the Hall of Paintings (below), a ring of silver, set with a huge emerald, rests on a stone pedestal at the midpoint of the hallway (see the *Ring of Envy*, p. 30).

### Monsters

Miasmist (also called “mist monsters” by adventurers with simple tastes) use the stats for toxifiers (*Monsters*, p. 56). When someone takes damage from their attack, he gains the Jealousy disadvantage (*Adventurers*, p. 61) instead of the toxifier’s nausea side effect. Additionally, the target must make a Will roll at -1 per 2 points of damage rolled. Failure means the target gains Paranoia (*Adventurers*, p. 64) for *hours* equal to the margin of failure (minimum of 1 hour). Finally, miasmist may choose to do no *actual* damage with their attack; roll as if for damage and *double* the result for the purposes of side effects, such as gaining Jealousy or Paranoia.

### Hazard

Entering the gallery triggers the following trap.

#### Hall of Paintings

An innocuous 60’ stretch of hallway with numerous beautifully painted depictions of wilderness scenes, people, and animals. They are in fact bespelled to enthrall any who gaze upon them. Victims who fall prey to the trap will blissfully stare at whichever image caught their eye, losing track of time and where they are.

**Detect:** Per-based **Thaumatology**, or **Perception + Magery** for mages.

**Disarm:** **Dispel Magic** (a single portrait resists at skill 20).

**Avoid:** Don’t look at the pretty pictures! Requires a Will-4 every 20’ to not look; those with Curious must roll every 10’! Blindfolding a subject allows him to walk down the hallway unscathed (though this could lead to other problems if he’s being chased).

**Save:** No.

**Effects:** Resist *Fascinate* (*Spells*, p. 54) at level 20 or stand motionless until an outside force breaks your visual contact with the painting.

**Shots:** Infinite.

**Rearm, Steal:** No – the paintings are mystically bound to the wall.

### Treasure

Not all the paintings in the hallway are magical – should the PCs take the time to check, they can pry loose 3d pictures in their frames. Of course, trying to check each picture to see if it comes off *will* risk looking at the dangerous ones . . . Pilfered paintings will bring a profit of up to 400 silver pieces to a typical buyer. If the adventurers know of *arcane* art enthusiasts, who’ll believe the paintings came from a demon’s art gallery, they could get much, much more. Hopefully no one will be disappointed that these are the *mundane* images.

The Ring of Envy rests on a stone pedestal at the middle of the gallery.

## THE THIRD RUIN: THE WINE CELLAR

**Typical Location of Manifestation:** The entrance to this ruin always appears aboveground, typically in the open, with a cellar door. The door opens onto stone stairs, descending into the large underground room.

Malthas’ wine cellar was said to contain innumerable vintages from multiple dimensions, times, and places, along with rare potions and elixirs that he stashed for a rainy day. Entering the cellar is always done via stone stairs that lead down into the dark to a broad door. The huge square room beyond that door is over 100’ by 100’ and has 9’ ceilings. Breaking up the vastness are rows upon rows of wine racks, filled with dusty bottles. Here, *dolboki* (p. 32) make their home, guarding their long-absent master’s property.

## ABOUT *GURPS*

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