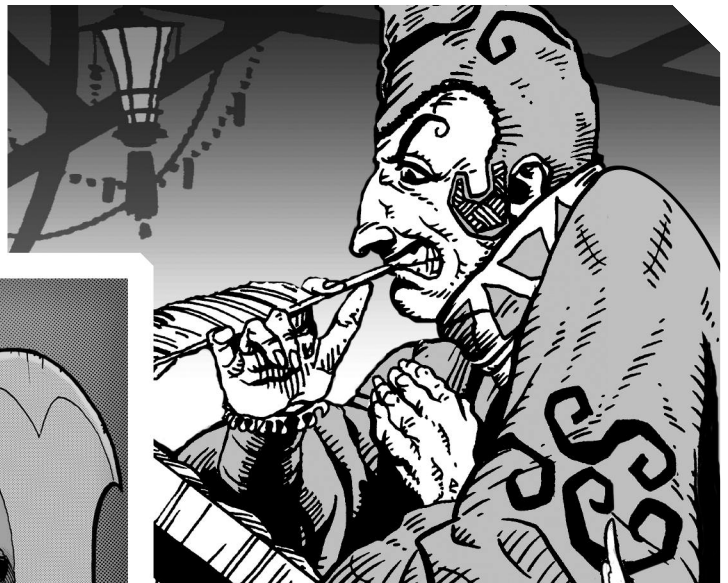


GURPS

Fourth Edition

DUNGEON FANTASY™ 15

HENCHMEN™



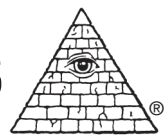
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A Sourcebook for GURPS®

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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About GURPS

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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.

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INTRODUCTION

Many fictional heroes have partners – loyal comrades, faithful sidekicks, trusted retainers, or lifelong friends – who accompany them on adventures.

– *GURPS Basic Set*

A venerable dungeon-crawling trope is the *henchman*: the mercenary or sidekick who ventures into the darkest holes alongside his master, despite being less capable than his patron and thus at considerably greater risk. Such figures have strong fictional precedent – where would Frodo be without Sam? But their *gaming* origins date to when war games spawned RPGs; commanders became PCs, while their aides and troops turned into NPC companions. Initially, only “high-level” warriors and priests, corresponding to historical lords capable of raising a levy, had followers. Eventually, any adventurer might acquire subordinates, although apprentices and bodyguards were more likely than armies.

GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 5: Allies and *Dungeon Fantasy 9: Summoners* describe bestial and supernatural allies for delvers who possess occult powers, but no *Dungeon Fantasy* volume covers *mundane* hirelings and companions who accompany heroes not thanks to a magical bond, but out of loyalty – or because the pay is good! Like a hired spear-carrier plugging a hole in the ranks, *Dungeon Fantasy 15: Henchmen* fills this gap. From lowly laborers to apprentice spellcasters, it offers flunkies, lackeys, and novices who are ready to follow the PCs into the field . . . for a price.

USING THE TEMPLATES

At the heart of *Henchmen* lies a set of character templates for low-powered delvers. There are several ways to use these, not all of them obvious from the title.

Allies

An obvious use for these templates is to create Allies for PCs to acquire with points. Such a sidekick is assumed to be unflinchingly loyal, provided that he isn’t mistreated. One of his master’s permanent assets, he is to mere hired help as Signature Gear is to found or bought items. The templates in *Henchmen* cost either 62 or 125 points, to match the 25% and 50% breakpoints for Allies in a 250-point campaign.

Hirelings

You don’t need points to hire help. Wealthy delvers can augment their numbers with paid assistants. These use the same templates as Allies, but cash – unlike points, which represent a perfect match, a karmic bond, or suchlike – can’t *guarantee* loyalty! On the other hand, hirelings need not be treated as well as Allies . . .

Low-Powered Delvers

Not every GM wants to start his campaign at 250 points. A lower power level is better for breaking in new *GURPS* players and evoking the nostalgia of peasant-hero and rags-to-riches

tales. The 125-point templates here offer as much detail as the 250-point ones in other *Dungeon Fantasy* volumes, and are suitable for PCs. They *aren’t* simply scaled-down versions of higher-powered templates, but their own thing – on half the points, not every high-end role is practical, and a few blur together.

Custom Delvers

Even at 250 points, the GM might want to give players the option of creating delvers who follow professions besides the stock ones without having to wade into freeform character design. To support this, *Henchmen* includes a spectrum of 125-point lenses for upgrading 125-point “henchman templates” into 250-point heroes.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

This supplement uses the character-creation guidelines in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 1: Adventurers*, which in turn draws on the *GURPS Basic Set* (and *GURPS Magic*, for spellcasters). Everything else is optional, but you can do more with *Henchmen* if you have access to the character templates in other *Dungeon Fantasy* works – particularly *The Next Level*, but also *Sages*, *Summoners*, *Ninja*, *Psi*, and even *Taverns*.

ABOUT THE HIRELINGS

Peter V. Dell’Orto of New Jersey was first hired by adventurers – as an assistant potion-taster – in 1981. He started delving with *Dungeons & Dragons*, and has played *GURPS* since *Man to Man*. A triple-classed *GURPS* playtester/editor/writer since 1996, he’s the author of numerous *GURPS* articles for *Pyramid* magazine; author or co-author of several e23 items (including *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 12: Ninja*; *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1*, with Sean Punch; and *GURPS Martial Arts: Gladiators*, with Volker Bach); and co-author of *GURPS Martial Arts* and *GURPS Low-Tech*. Peter added the monk lens early in his career, and has fought amateur MMA in the SHOOTO organization in Japan and in submission grappling in the U.S. He currently trains Kachin Bando and holds a *shodan* rank in Kendo.

Sean “Dr. Kromm” Punch de Montréal started working toward the sage template, specializing in particle physics, in 1985. He added the editor lens in 1995, when some delvers hired him to be the *GURPS* Line Editor. He has engineered rules for almost every *GURPS* product since. He developed, edited, or wrote dozens of *GURPS Third Edition* projects between 1995 and 2002. In 2004, he produced the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition* with David Pulver. Since then, he has created *GURPS Powers* (with Phil Masters), *GURPS Martial Arts* (with Peter Dell’Orto), and the *GURPS Action*, *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*, and *GURPS Power-Ups* series . . . and the list keeps growing. Sean has been a gamer since 1979. He lives with his Ally, Bonnie, and their two animal companions, Banshee and Zephyra.

Torturer: Although you prefer “interrogator.” Pick Professional Skill (Torturer) and Interrogation, and become skilled at both. Loner, No Sense of Humor, and Sadism are especially common disadvantages, but they aren’t *required*. Any choice of weapons is fine – but Broadsword (to swing a hot poker) is especially appropriate. So is Whip!

SAGE

125 points

Delvers are perpetually questing after lost lore and items. Some parties have a wizard or, better, a scholar for guidance – but many an adventurer isn’t even *literate*. To these, you offer knowledge and scribal services at competitive rates. Unlike most bookworms, though, you’re willing to go into the field, provided that your patrons are tough enough to protect you. In this capacity, you’ve taken up mapmaking, and may well have a solid knowledge of artifacts.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 14 [80]; HT 11 [10].

Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 14 [0]; Per 14 [0]; FP 11 [0]; Basic Speed 5.00 [-5]; Basic Move 5 [0].

Advantages: 45 points chosen from among ST +1 [10], DX +1 [20], IQ +1 or +2 [20/level], HT +1 or +2 [10/level], Will +1 to +6 [5/level], Per +1 to +6 [5/level], Absolute Direction [5], Acute Senses (any) [2/level], Book-Learned Wisdom (*Sages*, p. 8) [5/slot + 2/point in slot], Cultural Adaptability [10], Dungeon Artificer 1-4 (*Sages*, p. 4) [5/level], Eidetic Memory [5] or Photographic Memory [10], Equipment Bond (*Sages*, p. 4) [1/item], Fearlessness [2/level] or Unfazeable [15], Gizmos 1-3 [5/level], High Manual Dexterity 1-4 [5/level], Intuition [15], Language Talent [10], Languages (any) [2-6/language], Luck [15] or Extraordinary Luck [30], Serendipity 1-3 [15/level], Signature Gear [Varies], Speak With Animals [25], Versatile [5], Wealth (Comfortable or Wealthy) [10 or 20], or Wild Talent 1 (No Advantage Requirements, +50%) [30].

Disadvantages: -20 points chosen from among Absent-Mindedness [-15], Bad Sight (Mitigator, Corrective Spectacles, -60%) [-10], Curious [-5*], Hard of Hearing [-10], Intolerance (Stupid people – IQ 10 or less) [-5], Obsession (Learn one specific, *dangerous* thing) [-5*], Overconfidence [-5*], Truthfulness [-5*], or Xenophilia [-10*]. • Another -25 points chosen from among the previous traits or ST -1 or -2 [-10/level], DX -1 [-20], Per -1 to -4 [-5/level], Bad Temper [-10*], Clueless [-10], Greed [-15*], Impulsiveness [-10*], Jealousy [-10], No Sense of Humor [-10], Oblivious [-5], Odious Personal Habits [-5 to -15], Post-Combat Shakes [-5*], Sense of Duty (Adventuring companions) [-5], Skinny [-5], or Stubbornness [-5].

Primary Skills: Cartography (A) IQ [2]-14; Research (A) IQ [2]-14; Speed-Reading (A) IQ [2]-14; Teaching (A) IQ [2]-14; and Writing (A) IQ [2]-14. • Six of Architecture, Connoisseur (any), Heraldry, Hidden Lore (Demons, Elementals, Faeries, Lost Civilizations, Magic Items, Magical Writings, Secret Writings, Spirits, or Undead), or Occultism, all (A) IQ [2]-14; Diagnosis, Engineer (Gadgets), Expert Skill (Natural Philosophy), Naturalist, Pharmacy (Herbal), Philosophy

(any), Physiology (any), Psychology (any), Theology (any), or Veterinary, all (H) IQ-1 [2]-13; Alchemy, Surgery, or Thaumatology, all (VH) IQ-2 [2]-12; or 2 points to raise any primary skill by one level.

Secondary Skills: Five of First Aid (E) IQ [1]-14; Armoury (Body Armor, Melee Weapons, or Missile Weapons), Hazardous Materials (Magical), Navigation (any), Public Speaking, or Prospecting, all (A) IQ-1 [1]-13; Diplomacy, Jeweler, or Poisons, all (H) IQ-2 [1]-12; 1 point to raise one of those skills by a level; or 1 point for an additional primary skill choice at one level lower. • One of Broadsword, Rapier, Saber, Shortsword, Smallsword, or Staff, all (A) DX+1 [4]-11. • Either spend 4 points to improve the previous skill to 12, or select two of Crossbow, Fast-Draw (Gadget), Knife, or Shield (Buckler), all (E) DX+1 [2]-11; Cloak, Lasso, Main-Gauche, Throwing, or Whip, all (A) DX [2]-10; Sling (H) DX-1 [2]-9; or 2 points to raise one of those skills by a level.

Background Skills: Five of Knot-Tying or Leatherworking, both (E) DX [1]-10; Climbing, Riding (any), or Stealth, all (A) DX-1 [1]-9; Savoir-Faire (High Society) (E) IQ [1]-14; Lockpicking, Merchant, Smith (any), or Traps, all (A) IQ-1 [1]-13; Hiking (A) HT-1 [1]-10; Meditation (H) Will-2 [1]-12; Scrounging (E) Per [1]-14; or Observation, Search, or Survival (any), all (A) Per-1 [1]-13.

* Multiplied for self-control number; see p. B120.



Customization Notes

Heroes seeking sage henchmen may specify a general field of expertise, which will determine advantages and skills. Some common choices:

Elder: This classic wise man is often found in barbarian hamlets and monasteries full of martial artists. Higher IQ, Eidetic Memory, and Intuition reflect long experience and informed insight. Customary knowledge includes enhanced Teaching, for educating the young; Diagnosis, First Aid, Pharmacy (Herbal), Surgery, and Veterinary, for aiding villagers and their beasts; and an abstract grasp of natural order in the form of Expert Skill (Natural Philosophy) and/or Naturalist.

AS HIRELINGS

Another way to acquire NPC helpers is with cash instead of points: find the hireling (see *Where Did You Find This Guy?*, p. 29) and pay him to serve. Such henchmen don't advance in point value, nor are they as loyal as Allies, but they lack the attached strings of the Ally advantage. They can be hired and fired as needed, without moral obligation, making them excellent short-term help and makeweights for an adventuring party.

Still, hirelings are *people*, with lives and goals of their own. They aren't mindless, zombie-like servitors. Signing up for the expedition was a personal decision. Following their bosses' (the PCs') directions might be how they earn their money, but they won't throw away their lives needlessly.

Like Allies, hirelings have their own money, although they're far less likely to loan this to their employers. Follow the guidelines under *Money* (p. 29) in these matters, but *halve* the amount of all loans to 2.5% times the reaction roll. Hirelings are likely to be suspicious of hirers who need to borrow money – it suggests that they're unlikely to get paid! Bosses who ask more than once suffer a cumulative -2 to this reaction roll and a cumulative -1 to all rolls to seek hirelings as word gets around. If a hireling isn't paid back such a loan in full come his next payday, he'll leave; this adds -1 to the penalty on future hiring rolls!

LOYALTY

Hirelings *aren't* guaranteed to have their employers' best interests at heart; they're mercenaries who lack an Ally's intrinsic loyalty. Thus, their reliability under pressure varies. Below are rules for this. These *never* apply to Allies, whose devotion is assured – subject to disadvantages and treatment, of course!

Make a reaction roll when a hireling first signs up. Apply the usual reaction modifiers of the hirer, who may be a PC or an NPC companion, and record the result. This number is effectively a new stat for hirelings: *Loyalty*.

Roll against Loyalty whenever the hireling is in *exceptional* danger with his master at his side. "Normal" danger doesn't call for a roll. The GM should be generous about this, as any hireling willing to risk a dungeon expects combat, traps, and "ordinary" monsters. However, extreme danger warrants from -1 to -4, and certain death gives *at least* -5! See below for other modifiers. Failure means the hireling is unwilling to risk the danger, and flees, shirks his duties, or otherwise fails to perform.

A hireling with high Loyalty might stand beside his boss against danger from which he would flee were he alone, or resist temptation to which he would succumb were he unemployed. The GM uses the NPC's Loyalty *instead* of Will for Fright Checks *when his employer is present*, resisting Fast-Talk and other social influence *if his master has kept up his agreed pay and benefits*, and similar mundane tests of steadfastness.

Loyalty can go up or down temporarily or permanently. For a brand-new hire, only the temporary effects of higher or lower pay matter.

Higher Pay: +1 per 10% over the normal pay scale for the hireling in that pay period (see *Pay Scales*, pp. 31-32), to a maximum of +10 for +100% pay. This increase is temporary, but part

of it might persist. Raise the hireling's Loyalty by the full amount for the pay period and make a reaction roll with the Loyalty bonus in effect. On a "Very Good" or better reaction (16+), add a *permanent* +1 to Loyalty.

Lower Pay: -1 per 10% shortfall, down to -10 for not being paid at all. If pay is late, the penalty is temporary and lasts only until the employer pays arrears. If this goes on for three or more pay periods, the reduction is *permanent*, even if the shortfall is remedied later (which only prevents further Loyalty losses). Make a reaction roll *before* applying penalties for reduced pay, though. An "Excellent" or better reaction (19+) means that the hireling feels morally, personally, or ethically compelled to serve even at reduced rates – ignore the Loyalty penalty!

Poor Treatment: -1 to -5, *permanently*. Something as mild as verbal abuse is worth just -1. Extreme mistreatment worthy of -5 includes things like forcing the hireling to open trapped doors, *physical* abuse, not healing or otherwise caring for him, and treating him as disposable cannon fodder to be spent to buy a victory.

Rescue: If the master risks his life or the mission to rescue the hireling, or expends resources in excess of the hireling's pay to provide healing or other aid, make a reaction roll at +3 or more, depending on how risky or extraordinary the rescue was. Resurrection is worth *at least* +5! On a "Good" or better reaction (13+), the hireling is grateful and his Loyalty increases permanently to the *higher* of this reaction roll or his old score +1.

Success: Hirelings love working for winners and hate serving losers. A successful expedition in the face of great danger, or *consistent* competence, results in a permanent +1. A failed dungeon crawl or other disaster gives a permanent -1. Such matters are necessarily left to the GM's judgment.

Long Service: +1 per year, permanently, assuming that the hireling lives that long!

If a hireling's permanent Loyalty reaches 19+, the PC who hired him – or who hired his hirer – may opt to pay points to have him as an Ally (see *Point Cost*, pp. 26-28). If several PCs claim this right, the hireling favors the one toward whom he has the best reaction. Otherwise, the transition from hireling to Ally calls for no roll, as the hireling is *already* loyal and willing.

RANDOM TRAITS

Not all hirelings are exactly as they seem. Some have hidden traits or secret agendas, or are less capable than advertised. Roll 3d for this on the *Random Hireling Traits Table* (p. 31). Never roll for Allies – you risk questionable henchmen only when you pay cash instead of points.

Lower rolls correspond to less-desirable results. Delvers who try to cut corners when hiring – either through cheap recruiting tactics or poor pay – take penalties that increase the odds of a dodgy hireling. Apply -1 per 10% below going rates the master offers (see *Pay Scales*, pp. 31-32), to a maximum of -10 for seeking a volunteer. Increased pay gives no corresponding bonus, as any benefits are erased by the horde of substandard applicants this attracts!

Power-Ups Revisited

Everything in *Power-Ups for Henchmen* (p. 11) remains true for 250-point characters built using the “template plus lens” approach, with two new wrinkles:

1. Power-ups for such delvers include “further abilities from my template” and “further abilities from my lens.” For example, an archer who takes the gadgeteer lens can use earned points to expand his repertoire of archer advantages, skills, etc. and to develop as a gadgeteer. This is just the *Adding New Abilities* rule on pp. 42-43 of *The Next Level* expanded to cover heroes created using 125-point templates with 125-point lenses as well as adventurers who start with 250-point templates and acquire 50-point lenses in play. (In theory, either could purchase the other kind of lens in play, given sufficient points!)

2. If the GM is using an approach that allows the player to select one class of “post-template” power-ups but that restricts options to those that agree with *Niche Substitution* (p. 5) or befit a role that “makes sense,” then this choice

can align with *either* the template *or* the lens. For instance, our archer-gadgeteer would note that archers are most like scouts or bow-using knights, while gadgeteers are comparable to artificers, and pick *one* of artificer, knight, *or* scout power-ups. As usual, this is a career decision, made at character creation.

The GM may feel that ongoing access to further abilities from both a 125-point template (which typically offers as many choices as a 250-point one) and a 125-point lens (which is broader and more liberal than a 50-point cross-profession lens for 250-point delvers) is so generous that tossing in “post-template” power-ups would be somewhat unfair to PCs built in other ways. If so, then he might wish to consider the “no power-ups” model under *Power-Ups for Henchmen*. However, given that standard 250-point adventurers are allowed to buy any number of 50-point lenses and have access to their base occupation’s power-ups, this isn’t necessary for game balance – it’s an aesthetic preference.

Skills: Acting (A) IQ [2]; Carousing (E) HT [1]; Current Affairs (any) (E) IQ [1]; Diplomacy (H) IQ [1]*; Fast-Talk (A) IQ+1 [1]*; Heraldry (A) IQ-1 [1]; Musical Composition (H) IQ [1]†; Musical Instrument (any) (H) IQ+1 [2]‡; Performance (A) IQ+1 [1]*; Poetry (A) IQ-1 [1]; Public Speaking (A) IQ+2 [1]*‡; Savoir-Faire (High Society) (E) IQ [1]; and Singing (E) HT+4 [1]*†. • Spend another 4 points on those skills or Dancing (A) DX-1 [1]; Acrobatics or Sleight of Hand, both (H) DX-2 [1]; Gesture (E) IQ [1]; Connoisseur (any), Disguise, Interrogation, Merchant, Propaganda, Streetwise, Teaching, or Writing, all (A) IQ-1 [1]; Mimicry (Speech) (H) IQ [1]*; Ventriloquism (H) IQ-2 [1]; Sex Appeal (A) HT+1 [1]*; Intimidation (A) Will-1 [1]; or Detect Lies (H) Per-2 [1]. • If you already know some of these skills from your template, you may spend some or all of these points to improve them.

Special Skills and Spells: Spend 20 points on Hypnotism (H) IQ-2 [1]; Musical Influence (VH) IQ-1 [1]†; Persuade (H) Will-2 [1]; Suggest or Sway Emotions, both (H) Will-2 [1] (require Persuade); Captivate (H) Will-2 [1] (requires Suggest); or wizardly spells from the Communication and Empathy and/or Mind Control colleges, which will be either (H) IQ [1] or (VH) IQ-1 [1] with the +2 for Bardic Talent.

* Includes +2 for Voice.

† Includes +2 for Musical Ability.

‡ Includes +1 for Charisma.

VETERAN

+125 points

You’re a hardened, grizzled hand at dungeon warfare. Where other delvers have gone for supernatural powers or spells, you’ve grown *tougher*. What you lack in uncanny gifts, you make up in grit and fighting experience – although you may have suffered physical or psychological scars along the way. As this lens adds pure combat power, versatility, and survivability, it best suits the more physical templates: archer (pp. 8-9), brute (pp. 9-10),

killer (pp. 14-15), skirmisher (pp. 16-17), and squire (pp. 17-18). However, a veteran agent (pp. 4-6) or cutpurse (pp. 10-12) would enjoy an interesting combination of utility and fighting ability. Apprentices (pp. 6-8) and initiates (pp. 12-14) who switch to more combat-oriented careers might also pick this option.

Attributes: ST +1 [10]; DX +1 [20]; HT +1 [10].

Advantages: Combat Reflexes [15]. • 30 points chosen from among ST +1 to +3 [10/level], DX +1 [20], IQ +1 [20], HT +1 to +3 [10/level], HP +1 to +5 [2/level], Will +1 to +6 [5/level], Per +1 to +6 [5/level], Basic Speed +1.00 [20], or Basic Move +1 to +3 [5/level]. • Another 20 points chosen from among those traits or Alcohol Tolerance [1], Born War Leader 1-4 [5/level], Enhanced Block 1 [5], Enhanced Parry 1 (One Melee Weapon skill) [5], Fearlessness [2/level], Fit [5] or Very Fit [15], Hard to Kill [2/level], Hard to Subdue [2/level], Luck [15] or Extraordinary Luck [30], Magic Resistance [2/level], Penetrating Voice [1], Rapid Healing [5] or Very Rapid Healing [15], Recovery [10], Resistant to Disease (+3) or (+8) [3 or 5], Resistant to Poison (+3) [5], Signature Gear [Varies], Striking ST 1 or 2 [5 or 10], Weapon Bond [1], or Weapon Master [20 to 45] (if you already have this, you may expand the class it covers). • If you already have Combat Reflexes, chose another 15 points in traits from the above lists or from your template’s advantage options.

Disadvantages: Optionally, change (don’t *add*) up to -15 points of existing disadvantages of any kind to Appearance (Unattractive or Ugly) [-4 or -8], Berserk [-10*], Bloodlust [-10*], Callous [-5], Obsession (Slay some specific type of monster) [-5*], One Eye [-15], Overconfidence [-5*], Wealth (Struggling) [-10], or Wounded [-5].

Skills: 20 points in any combat skills from your template, or in any of Crossbow, Knife, or Thrown Weapon (any), all (E) DX; Axe/Mace, Bow, Broadsword, Polearm, Shortsword, Spear, Two-Handed Axe/Mace, or Two-Handed Sword, all (A) DX; or Flail or Two-Handed Flail, both (H) DX.

* Multiplied for self-control number; see p. B120.

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