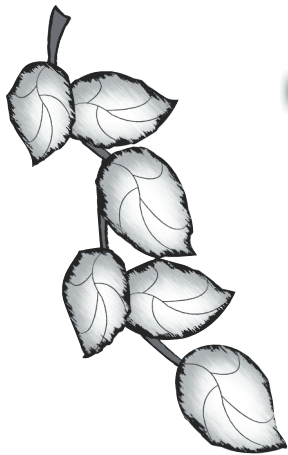


**GURPS**<sup>®</sup>

Fourth Edition

# FANTASY FOLK<sup>™</sup> ELVES



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*Dedicated in memory of Michael Lee Viviano, a.k.a. Kilmore – creator and head GM of the world of Edyleine, where several things in this supplement appeared for the first time.*

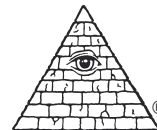
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## ABOUT GURPS

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*Store Finder* ([storefinder.sjgames.com](http://storefinder.sjgames.com)): Discover nearby places to buy **GURPS** items and other Steve Jackson Games products. Local shops are great places to play our games and meet fellow gamers!

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.

# INTRODUCTION

*It was not the largest dragon Sir Jacques had heard of, but it was the biggest he'd ever seen. The wounded Sir Jacques de la Croix knew that even an adolescent dragon could take off his head with one bite – and this was no adolescent.*

*The dragon started to rear up its dark, long-necked head like an enormous venomous snake, but that was its last mistake. Seeing the white throat exposed, the bleeding knight thrust his sword with all his remaining might. Impaled from throat to brain, the dragon froze. Then, suddenly, it fell – on top of the badly wounded Sir Jacques.*

*A moment passed, then another. Then a very young girl crawled out from her hiding place in the shadowy bushes on the edge of the ancient forest. Her flowing blonde hair blew in the warm summer breeze. She blinked several times with eyes the color of a clear morning sky. The little elf girl knew the human had saved her life, but did not see where he had gone.*

*Milasiel stood and squinted in the bright sunlight, and spoke as bravely as she could manage: "Please, kind man," she said in her native elven tongue, with the accent of the Maluviel clan, "Please, tell me, where are you?"*

*The frightened child brushed her hair back from her pointed right ear, and listened carefully. But the only answer was a noisy puff of smoke from the dragon's mouth as the creature exhaled and expired.*

Elves are among the most popular races in roleplaying, and they are much more than skinny, pointy-eared humans. Not only do their form and function vary greatly in fantasy, but they also dwell in the realms of science fantasy, science fiction, steampunk, horror, and more. The wood elves, sea elves, mountain elves, half-elves, dark elves, sky elves, and other elves in this supplement can be heroes, victims, Patrons, Allies, Dependents, and even Enemies in almost any genre.

**GURPS Fantasy Folk: Elves** is for gamers who want the depth of mythic adventures in exotic lands – and also for those who prefer the hack-and-slash, kill-the-monsters-and-take-their-stuff approach of **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy**. It collects all things elven from a number of **GURPS** books and beyond. It also gives suggestions for featuring elves in **GURPS Infinite Worlds**, **GURPS Space**, and other campaigns, including the GM's original creations.

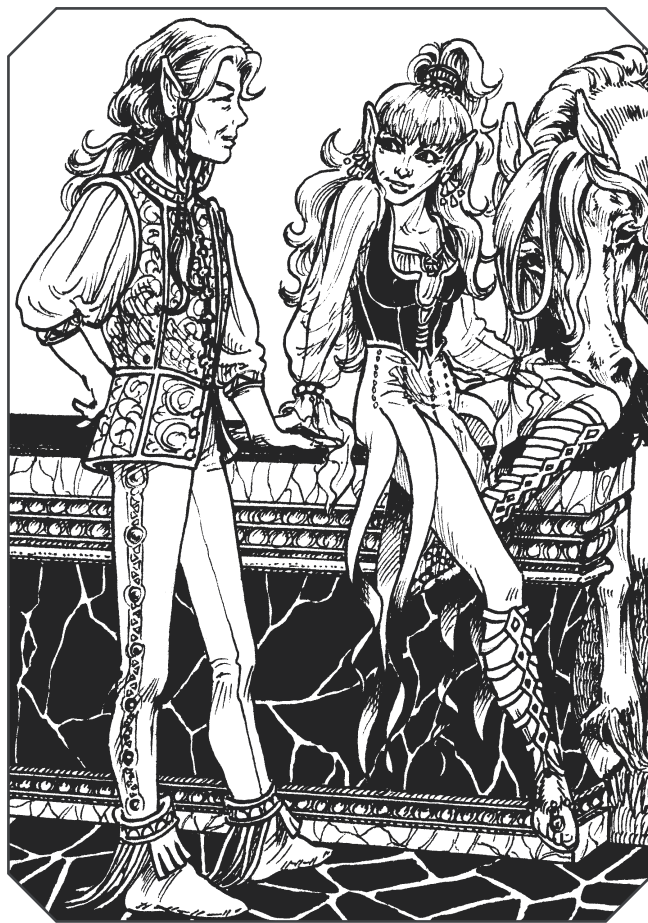
This work introduces new elven races, advantages, disadvantages, perks, quirks, and more. These are intended for **GURPS**, but the discussions of history, culture, and so on could prove useful in *any* game featuring elves.

This is a guide to the elf – but, like an elven tree house, nothing is set in stone. The GM, or the player with the GM's permission, is free to adapt and change *anything*.

## PUBLICATION HISTORY

This is the first edition of **GURPS Fantasy Folk: Elves**. It sprouted from the material on elves in Third Edition's **GURPS Fantasy Folk**, but grew well beyond that. It transplants things elven from the **GURPS Basic Set**, **GURPS Banestorm**, **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 3: The Next Level**,

**GURPS Fantasy**, and **Dungeon Fantasy Companion 2**. It also borrows from **GURPS Bio-Tech**, **GURPS Power-Ups 2: Perks**, **GURPS Thaumatology: Magical Styles**, and "GURPS Fathom Five" in *Pyramid* #3/26: *Underwater Adventures*.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

This is Alden Loveshade's first supplement for Steve Jackson Games. A self-proclaimed "keybard," he wrote his first professionally published piece (a poem) when he was 16; it mentions an elf. He considers himself lucky to have been paid as a journalist, columnist, reviewer, playwright, and fiction author, including publishing stories set in his **GURPS** campaign worlds. One of his **GURPS** elf PCs recently celebrated her 700th birthday. Alden's not quite that old. He lives offline in the woods where he practices elven garden agriculture, and lives online at [AldenLoveshade.com](http://AldenLoveshade.com).

He thanks the Lords of Ozona for sparking his love of roleplaying, the Ek-sen-trik Mountain SCAdians for fanning the flame, the Strategicon Denizens of Davenford for spreading the blaze, and the Elves of Edyleine for keeping the home fires burning.

## Elven Communities

Elven communities are often small: 20 to 100 individuals. However, in high-tech and ultra-tech societies, they can be substantially larger. Roles within a colony may be vague and fluid.

Some communities are also clans. These could have an actual, perceived, or symbolic ancestor, or follow a set of ideals. In other cases, members of more than one clan may live in the same colony, with clans having members in many settlements.

## Military Matters

Elves typically do not have standing armies, but form warbands when needed. These are usually small groups that use guerrilla tactics for fighting in forests (or, in the case of sea elves, at sea). Some elves have mastered shooting bows while in trees; Brachiator, Perfect Balance, Tree Walking (p. 18), Acrobatics, and Climbing can all help with this. In a **GURPS Space** campaign, elves may fire ultra-tech weapons from great heights indeed!

Similarly, sea elves rarely form navies, but organize when needed. As with their spacefaring cousins (*Elves in Space*,

below), they might travel, live, and go to war in living ships – or fight while riding orcas (p. 25).

Elves trapped in an oppressive human or other society could practice nonviolent resistance. Good real-life inspirations are Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Alice Paul, Te Whiti o Rongomai, and Henry David Thoreau. For a fantasy example, Deby Fredericks's ongoing *Minstrels of Skaythe* series follows mages and minstrels who battle an oppressive regime through artistic and nonaggressive means.

## EVERYDAY LIFE OF THE ELVES

Because elves are raised by not only their parents but also the community, they grow up with both shared ideals and individualism. They may choose to associate closely with a particular group or clan, or even an extended household, whether or not they're related by blood.

As elves typically live in forests, oceans, or other environments they carefully cultivate, they usually have plenty of food and water readily available. Thus, most do not need to spend much time "at work." What many human societies see as a job, elves consider a craft.

## ELVES IN SPACE

At first glance, nature-loving elves exploring space's endless vacuum sounds like a contradiction. Elves don't seem to fit **GURPS Space** or *Transhuman Space*, so they couldn't be used there – or could they? Elves might be genetically engineered humans, and several well-known alien species seem suspiciously elven. In addition, science fiction features starships and other options that make elves in space quite reasonable.

The film *Silent Running* follows a spaceship carrying several enormous, geodesic domes filled with plant life, and television's space station *Babylon 5* has its own gardens. Robert A. Heinlein's novel *Orphans of the Sky*, Kim Stanley Robinson's *Red Mars*, and Harry Harrison's *Captive Universe* also present useable options. For a twist, the miles-long trees of Larry Niven's novel *The Integral Trees* thrive with other life in a thick cloud of gas orbiting a planet. In a campaign, such ships, stations, or trees could be home to elves.

The ultimate elven spacecraft would be a bioship. A living ship could be composed of one huge, non-self-aware plant, or a number of plants, or sentient (self-aware) but not sapient life, or a fully sapient being that's its own person – who might not always agree with the crew. Aboard it, elves would be surrounded by nature. The vessel could have an exterior composed of modified wood, bone, or chitin, be self-healing/self-repairing, and perhaps even boast a "living force field" generated by its life force and/or that of its crew.

Bioships and variations appear in Robert Sheckley's short story "Specialist," Peter F. Hamilton's *The Night's Dawn Trilogy*, Julian May's *The Many-Colored Land*, and television's *Babylon 5*. The **GURPS Spaceships** series provides rules for organic hulls, living ships, and bioships.

As an alternative, elves might view the things of space as nature. Space elves could value pristine asteroids, comets, moons, and uninhabited planets. Their "prime directive" might be to protect these from exploitative spacefarers who mine and colonize.

And several science-fiction species have many of the characteristics of the traditional fairy folk. These include the Na'vi from the film *Avatar*, the Asgard of television's *Stargate SG-1*, the Loroï of the web comic *Outsider*, and the Abh from the anime series *Crest of the Stars*. For a surprising twist, there are the "elves" of **GURPS Aliens: Sparrials**. Even actual elves can be found in science fiction, although rarely, which can give a fresh sense to the race in space.

Back on Earth, elves could be "steampunks." Victorian England had a fascination with the otherworldly and supernatural, including fairies and elves. In the real American "Wild West," stories, myths, and legends of settlers from the east met with those of American Indians. In a game, elves could visit an eastern steampunk city, or might have their own tribes living in the 19th-century West. Or they could dwell in a forest anywhere, facing encroachment by a steampunk society.

And elves – or something like them – could even be visitors to Earth. The gray aliens (Greys) of modern ufology bear some similarity to elves as an ancient precursor race known for human abductions (as were the elves in many early stories). Less sinister are the wise, long-lived, harmonious, music-appreciating, vegetarian, mystically powerful, pointy-eared Vulcans from a certain well-known space-opera setting, which of course have nothing to do with elves. Or do they? A **GURPS Prime Directive** or **GURPS Federation** campaign could search for the truth.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# RACIAL

# TEMPLATES

*"Hey nonny nonny nonny, hey nenny nee,  
We're free to dance and dance for free.  
Hey nonny nonny nonny, hey nanny nay,  
We'll dance until the light of day."*

*Seeing and hearing the dancing and singing of the cavorting elves, Elder Ariedor Thaeshadimi scowled. It was just enough to convey his disapproval without looking undignified. "Young wood elves," muttered the high elf elder.*

*"Ah, now, Elder Ariedor," said sister Elder Persilemiya quietly. "As you said, these wood elves are young and inexperienced. Why not let them have their fun?" The elf woman smiled. "I recall that in our youth, even you were not always quite so dignified as you are now."*

*"Maybe not quite," Ariedor admitted with regret. "But I knew how to behave," he asserted, "even when I was young and in my 90s."*

## ELVES (STANDARD)

As elves are among the most popular of races in all of fantasy, they have a number of fascinating variations. The GM – or the player, with the GM's permission – has a wide variety from which to choose.

Here are three templates for the "standard" elf, one apiece from the *Basic Set*, *GURPS Fantasy*, and *GURPS Banestorm*. Each can fill a different need: genre-nonspecific elf, generic *fantasy* elf, and setting-specific fantasy elf, respectively. For a hack 'n' slash fantasy elf template, use one or more of the *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* variants, borrow from the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game*, or adapt one of the others. For variant elf templates – including the dark elf, deep elf, half-elf, sea elf, winged elf, and more – see pp. 13-16.

### Generic Elf

**55 points (70 points if Unaging)**

This is the elf template used for the character Iotha (p. B316). These elves find it much easier to learn languages, which well suits a world-traveling elf such as Iotha – or any elf in a *GURPS Infinite Worlds* campaign. Their voice adds to their attraction, and their balance and vision make them well suited to climbing trees, buildings, and other high places.

While the *Basic Set* doesn't describe the appearance of elves in general, it does say that Iotha's ash-blond hair is highlighted with green.

**Attribute Modifiers:** ST-1 [-10]; HT+1 [10].

**Secondary Characteristic Modifiers:** Per+1 [5].

**Advantages:** Appearance (Attractive) [4]; Language Talent [10]; Magery 0 [5]; Perfect Balance [15]; Telescopic Vision 1 [5]; Voice [10].

**Racially Learned Skills:** Connoisseur (Natural Environments) (A) IQ-1 [1]-9.

**Source:** *Basic Set*.

## UNAGING?

Elves are Unaging (p. B95), but aging-related traits are irrelevant in some games – notably *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*. Thus, each elven template lists a cost *without* this trait, plus a reminder that you can add it if it matters. In campaigns where Unaging is almost but not entirely irrelevant, make it a perk, raising cost by 1 point instead of 15.

However this is handled, elves may live hundreds of years or longer, although active ones who are 700+ years old are rare. The GM who doesn't want them accumulating hundreds, even thousands of points in usable skills might enforce *Maintaining Skills* (p. B294) or *Learning and Realism (GURPS Social Engineering: Back to School*, p. 6).

### Generic Fantasy Elf

**55 points (70 points if Unaging)**

Similar to those in the *Basic Set*, these elves can fit almost any fantasy game. With both an attractive appearance and a pleasant voice, they're among the most likeable of elves – although individuals can vary.

Skin, eye, and hair colors are up to the GM (or the player, with the GM's permission).

**Attribute Modifiers:** ST-1 [-10]; DX+1 [20].

**Secondary Characteristic Modifiers:** Per+1 [5].

**Advantages:** Appearance (Attractive) [4]; Magery 0 [5]; Perfect Balance [15]; Telescopic Vision 1 [5]; Voice [10].

**Racially Learned Skills:** Connoisseur (Natural Environments) (A) IQ-1 [1]-9.

**Source:** *GURPS Fantasy*.

## UNDERWATER BATTLES

Melee-weapon attacks underwater are made at -4 per yard of *maximum* reach; e.g., a spear is at -8, even if used to attack someone within one yard. Unarmed attacks and Reach C weapons suffer *no* penalty.

Water drag also affects damage underwater. Thrusting weapons do -1 damage per yard of *maximum* reach. Swung weapons suffer the same penalty *per die* of damage! Again, unarmed attacks and Reach C weapons take no penalty.

All thrown and other muscle-powered ranged weapons divide their ranges by 10 underwater and do half normal damage (explosive warheads are unaffected). Bows, crossbows, and arrows don't work at all unless built with materials that won't stretch or warp when wet. For possibilities, see *Elven Seabow* (p. 24) and *Waterproof* (below).

*Pyramid* #3/26: *Underwater Adventures*, from which these rules were taken, has detailed rules for fighting and many other underwater activities – including environmental hazards. It is *strongly* recommended for underwater adventures, like anything involving sea elves. And *GURPS Martial Arts: Yrth Fighting Styles* features the Underwater Combat technique.

## Singing Trees

### Area

Similar to Forest Warning (*Magic*, p. 162) and Nightingale (*Magic*, p. 167), but cast on an area of trees or bushes. When anybody walks by or touches a plant in the area, a breeze through the leaves makes a whistling sound. The caster is alerted or awakened *automatically* if within hearing range; others nearby are likely to be alerted, too, but must make a Hearing roll if the area is already noisy. If the caster has at least a point in any musical skill, the spell can whistle a simple tune specified at the time of casting.

*Duration:* 10 hours.

*Base cost:* 1/2 (minimum 2). Same cost to maintain.

*Prerequisites:* Either Sense Danger or one Air spell, one Plant spell (or the Plant Empathy advantage), and one Sound spell.

### Item

Can be cast permanently on an area of trees or bushes. *Energy cost to create:* 100 per yard radius.

## Waterproof

### Regular

An object – or the hair, fur, feathers, and skin/hide/skeleton of a person or creature and anything they're carrying – becomes waterproof. This also prevents an aquatic life form drying out when outside of the water.

Waterproof won't prevent rain, snow, or hail from *hitting* the subject (that's Umbrella; *Magic*, p. 185), only from making them wet. It doesn't *remove* water, either; for that, use Destroy Water (*Magic*, p. 185) or Dehydrate (*Magic*, p. 188). And it cannot change water pressure, make one amphibious, give the ability to breathe or speak underwater, or prevent damage from acids and alkalis.

*Duration:* 10 minutes.

*Cost:* 2 to cast. 1 to maintain.

*Time to cast:* 2 seconds.

*Prerequisite:* Destroy Water or Umbrella.

### Item

(a) Wand, staff, or jewelry. *Energy cost to create:* 400. (b) For 100 times casting cost, any *item* (not person or creature) may be permanently Waterproofed.

## POWERS

For an alternative to magic – especially for modern-day or *GURPS Space* campaigns – elves may rely on psionics. Elven psionics will likely have a mystical aspect to them, tuning one's mind in harmony with the unseen forces of nature. *GURPS Powers* features Psionic, Nature, Biological, Chi, Magical, Spirit, and other powers that could be useful to elves.

For psionics that work on animals – including the Animalism technique, the Animal Speech, Beast Control, and Mind Swap abilities, and the Animal Telepathy power – see *GURPS Psionic Powers*.

## SPELLS

Elves often learn Animal, Plant, and elemental spells appropriate to maintaining and protecting their environment. Below are two new spells, both IQ/H. For *many* more elf-appropriate spells, see *GURPS Magic*, *GURPS Magic: Plant Spells*, *GURPS Magic: The Least of Spells*, and *Pyramid* #3/68: *Natural Magic*. To change the nature of magic altogether, see *GURPS Thaumatology*.



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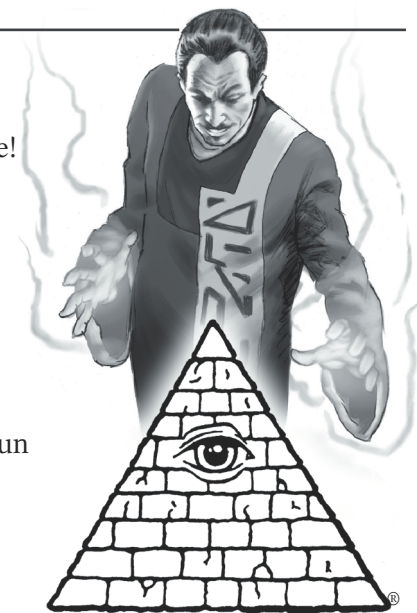
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