

Issue 3/65 March '14

ALTERNATE GURPS III

TEAM UP!

by Christopher R. Rice and Antoni Ten Monrós

NATURAL WEAPONS by Ítalo G. Gonçalves

EVERYMAN TASKS
by William H. Stoddard

BY DEFAULT by Douglas Cole

A FULL COMPLEMENT by Sean Punch

BUCKETS
OF POINTS
by Sean Punch

SOCIAL POINTS
by David L. Pulver

ALTERNATE GUNS
SPECIALTIES AND TECHNIQUES
by Hans-Christian Vortisch

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

Stock #37-2665

CONTENTS

From the Editor
BUCKETS OF POINTS 4 by Sean Punch
TEAM UP!
ALTERNATE GUNS
Specialties and Techniques 16 by Hans-Christian Vortisch
EIDETIC MEMORY: SOCIAL POINTS 20 by David L. Pulver
NATURAL WEAPONS
EVERYMAN TASKS
By Default
A FULL COMPLEMENT
RANDOM THOUGHT TABLE: THIS ONE GOES TO 11
Odds and Ends
ABOUT <i>GURPS</i> 37

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

John Zeleznik

IN THIS ISSUE

Pyramid is the home for great new *GURPS* options, but sometimes we pull out all the stops to take the system to new and interesting places. These issues we call "Alternate *GURPS*." Buckle up; you're in for an amazing ride!

Are you looking for a new take on character creation – one that accommodates power-gamers and varied heroes with oddball flaws? The Grand Master of *GURPS*, Sean Punch, gives you *Buckets of Points* to work with, and walks you through how to design perfect character-creation budgets and post-adventure rewards.

Don't go it alone; save the day with *Team Up!* These two new advantages, four new skills, eight perks, and plenty of *GURPS* rules tips let you replicate action-fiction group dynamics, turning your collection of adventurers into a highly effective outfit.

GURPS Tactical Shooting expert Hans-Christian Vortisch turns his sites on the Guns skill, using his know-how to deliver Alternate Guns Specialties and Techniques. With this simplified system of three specialties, six familiarity penalties, and two techniques, shootists can more accurately reflect real-world experiences.

When you want your campaign to rely heavily on interpersonal interactions, consider character creation with *Social Points*. In this month's Eidetic Memory, *GURPS Basic Set* co-designer David L. Pulver explains how he did it and the interesting side effects – including increased interest in Secret Advantages!

Not everything natural is healthy! *Natural Weapons* offers a new *GURPS* advantage for making heroes and monsters with innate weaponry. In addition to game mechanics and special modifiers for the titular trait, you'll get 11 sample abilities.

Sometimes it's useful to have an idea of things that anyone can do. William H. Stoddard, author of *GURPS Fantasy*, describes dozens of *Everyman Tasks*, divided by attribute default and offering modified *GURPS* skills for each one.

When you want your campaign to focus more on skills than on attributes, you should consider changing how things are done *By Default. GURPS Technical Grappling* author Douglas Cole reveals the benefits and pitfalls of altering how skills default to attributes.

Make your skills even more useful with *A Full Complement!* Sean Punch winds down the issue with a *GURPS* discussion of complementary skills, which rewards teamwork and promotes obscure skills.

This month's *Random Thought Table* turns the "average" into some extraordinary, while *Odds and Ends* wraps up with tiny bits we couldn't fit elsewhere, including a new option for *GURPS Powers: Divine Favor* from its author, Jason "PK" Levine.

Whether your game has shooters, talkers, clawers, loners, or comrades, this issue has alternatives for you!

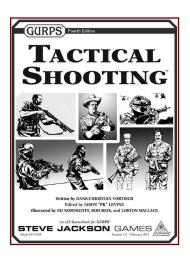
Editor-in-Chief ■ STEVE JACKSON e23 Manager ■ STEVEN MARSH GURPS Line Editor ■ SEAN PUNCH Assistant GURPS Line Editor ■ JASON "PK" LEVINE Art Director SAMUEL MITSCHKE
Assistant Art Director BRIDGET WESTERMAN
Production Artist & Prepress Checker NIKOLA VRTIS

Chief Operating Officer
PHILIP REED
Marketing Director
LEONARD BALSERA
Director of Sales
ROSS JEPSON
Page Design
PHIL REED and
JUSTIN DE WITT

FROM THE EDITOR

SAY, YOU KNOW WHAT'S AWESOME?

As I write this, *The Lego Movie* is still performing strongly in the theaters. One of the things that struck me about it is how *genuine* it seemed to me. It was a movie that doesn't feel like it could have existed (say) 20 years ago; even a film that flirted with a genuine appreciation of the non-mainstream – such as 1992's *Wayne's World* – wrapped much of its view on life in an ironic detached "not!" mentality.



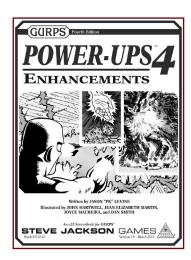
I came away from *The Lego Movie* realizing that society's ability to be unapologetically optimistic and unironically enthusiastic might be at a level unknown since the late 1950s and early 1960s, when running around pretending to be a jet pilot was a normal child-

hood activity, and educational films on the value of community were meant to be watched without snarky quips from Mystery Science

Theater 3000/RiffTrax-style commentators. (I note that my choice of this era of enthusiasm may well be a reflection of American/Baby Boomer-childhood history; I'm honestly not sure what the mindset was in other parts of the world at that time.)

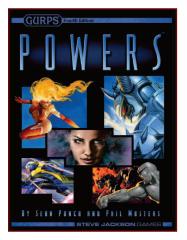
What does all this have to do with *GURPS*? (This is one of our "Alternate *GURPS*"-themed issues, after all ...) Well, as I was sitting in the theater watching *The Lego Movie*, I realized I recognized the spirit I was witnessing.

It's common on the GURPS forums, when countless new ideas spring into life each month for how to use this Generic Universal Role-Playing System: "Looking to convert some near-forgotten RPG or TV show into a more active system? Awesome! An economicsbased simulationist game set in medieval Europe? Awesome! A low-level look at the support teams that keep giant combining robots operative during wartime conditions?



Awesome!!" And I hope some of that spirit is in every issue of *Pyramid*, but especially the "Alternate **GURPS**" issues. May this issue supply a new batch of toys and tools to play with, let-

ting you take your gaming to new and awesome areas.



WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW

You know what else is awesome? When you tell us how we're doing! Did some of these tools get used immediately in your game? Or did some come broken or otherwise fall to the bottom of the toy box? Let us know privately at **pyramid@sjgames.com**, or join the madcap gaming modders at **forums.sjgames.com**.

Additional Material: Peter V. Dell'Orto, Jason "PK" Levine, Phil Masters, and Sean Punch

Pyramid, GURPS, Warehouse 23, and the all-seeing pyramid are registered trademarks of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated. e23 and the names of all products published by Steve Jackson Games Incorporated are registered trademarks or trademarks of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated, or used under license.

Pyramid is copyright © 2014 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.

Multiple Guidance attempts can be used on the same group, but require separate rolls and are at a cumulative -3 per skill beyond the first.

Group Size: You may not affect a group of people larger than your Charisma level *squared*.

Modifiers: All four Guidance skills are at -3 for Low Empathy (p. B142). +1 if you successfully use Public Speaking to give a speech (+2 on a critical success).

Instigation

IO/Hard

Default: None.

You can instill a fervor and belief in your cause to all your allies, giving them a bonus to resist any attempt to sway them from attacking, whether this is from supernatural mind control or Intimidate skill rolls. This skill also gives a bonus to your team's Morale Checks (p. B561). The total bonus granted equals *half* the margin of success (round down; minimum +1).

Time: 1 minute.

Fatigue Cost: 2 FP, whether successful or not.

Duration: One hour; if used in combat, until the end of the battle.

Motivation

IQ/Hard

Default: None.

Prerequisite: Instigation 12+.

You can motivate your allies to perform better. This gives all those affected +1 to their rolls (+2 if a critical success is rolled) for the next hour (or rest of the battle they are in). If you succeed by 5 or more (or critically succeed), affected followers also are immune to the negative effects of having less than 1/3 of their FP (see p. B426).

Time: 10 minutes.

Fatigue Cost: 4 FP, whether successful or not.

Duration: One hour; if used in combat, until the end of the battle.

Swift Action

IO/Hard

Default: None.

Prerequisite: Motivation 12+.

You can inspire urgency in your teammates; this does one of the following (choose before rolling).

- Your followers' Basic Move improves by 1/10 your margin of success (round final Move down; minimum +1).
- Your associates' Basic Speed increases by +0.25 for every five points of success, or fraction thereof.
- One companion of your choice gains an additional Move maneuver per turn. This may be done a maximum number of times per combat equal to one-fifth your margin of success (minimum of one). Optionally, you don't have to pick a specific person; you can use it on any compatriot of your choice during the battle by taking a Concentrate maneuver. You must pick one or the other before you roll for this skill.
- The group's overland movement rates increase by 1% per point by which you succeed on your roll, with a minimum of an increase of 5%. This stacks with bonuses to movement from other sources (e.g., the increase gained from making a Hiking skill roll).

Time: 30 minutes.

Fatigue Cost: 6 FP, whether successful or not. Duration: Until the end of the battle or march.

Unwavering Fortitude

IO/Hard

Default: None.

Prerequisite: Swift Action 12+.

You can infuse an unflinching resolve in your compatriots. This allows them to fight or act longer, even when they should be reeling from their injuries, lack of sleep or food, etc.

Battle, Glory, and Honor!

These new rules can be used with *GURPS Mass Combat*, with the following changes in traits. (The GM may allow other effects as befitting the trait, character, and situation).

- *Instigation* (above): This allows the character to temporarily bestow either the Impetuous or Fanatic feature on a particular element for one battle. If used on a unit that already has this feature, it negates the downsides of the trait for that battle only.
- *Motivation* (above): Temporarily increases the Troop Quality of an element by one class. This has no effect on Elite units.
- *Natural Leader* (p. 11): Allows a Rally Strategy to be used "instantly" for every two points of margin of success, the motivator can automatically end confusion for one element. If the person has the Powerful Voice or Tactical Influence enhancement, this becomes one element per point of
- their margin of success! If he has both, this becomes two elements per point! If the user has the Frail Voice limitation, this becomes one element per three points of margin of success. Additionally, once per battle, Tactical Influence can be used to give the person's side's commander (which can be himself) a bonus to his Strategy rolls.
- Swift Action (above): Temporarily increases the Mobility class of an element: Foot becomes Mounted, Mounted becomes Mechanized, Slow Air becomes Fast Air. Optionally, it could allow a non-Recon unit to temporarily gain the Recon class.
- *Unwavering Fortitude* (above): This skill can be used before a battle on a particular unit. For every point by which the leader succeeds, he can replace up to 5% of that unit's losses. See *Force Replacement* (*Mass Combat*, p. 14) for more details. This can also be used to increase the speeds listed under *Forces In Motion* (*Mass Combat*, p. 27).

Loki Jesus Mao (200 points)

L.J. is 23, with black skin, amber eyes, and a slight build. He grew up in the slums that clung like fungi to the arcology towers on Celephais, a world on the galactic fringe. His mother, Ali, was a homeless runaway who died when he was born. By local custom, he was named after old Terran deities. At age 12, he escaped a state orphanage to join a street gang. His wits and talent for burglary hastened his rise in the underworld; by age 20, he was dubbed "the Black Cat of Celephais." When the PCs arrived seeking a way into the fortified vault of local billionaire and artifact collector Inigo Stern, L.J. was their man. Afterward, with Celephais too hot for him, L.J. joined their crew.

This is L.J. at that point – built on 200 points, including 30 Social Points. Months later, as the PCs burglarized the offices of Poniard Industries (a megacorp they suspected of developing an illegal nova bomb), his Secret Advantage activated. Company files revealed his mom was really Alice Poniard, lost megacorporate heir, who'd fled years ago to escape a coup by her usurping aunt Alexandra. L.J. learned he had considerable Status and Wealth – and powerful Enemies.

ST 9 [-10]; **DX** 13 [60]; **IQ** 13 [60]; **HT** 11 [10]. Damage 1d-2/1d-1; BL 16 lbs.; HP 11 [4]; Will 13 [0]; Per 13 [0]; FP 11 [0]. Basic Speed 6 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0]; Dodge 9. 5'6"; 125 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 10 [0].

CF: Galactic [0].

Languages: Galactic Standard (Native) [0].

Advantages

Appearance (Attractive) [4]; Comfortable [10]*; Gizmos [5]; Intuition [15]; Luck Points 13 [13]*; Reputation +4 (Master thief; In underworld) [7]*; Secret Advantage [20]*.

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (Pirate's) [-5]; Enemy (Interstellar Police; Hunter; 6 or less) [-15]*; Greed (12) [-15]; Lecherousness (12) [-15]; Skinny [-5]; Status -1 [-5]*; Xenophilia (12) [-10].

Quirks: Careful; Code of Honor (Always finish a job and never betray a client); Loves to cook; Nosy; Proud. [-5]

Skills

Acrobatics (H) DX-1 [2]-12; Acting (A) IQ [2]-13; Architecture (A) IQ [2]-13; Beam Weapons (Pistol) (E) DX [4]-14; Brawling (E) DX [1]-12; Cartography (A) IQ-1 [1]-12]; Climbing (A) DX-1 [2]-13; Cooking (A) IQ-1 [1]-12; Computer Operation/TL10 (E) IQ [1]-13; Computer Programming/TL10 (H) IQ-2 [1]-11; Connoisseur (Visual Arts) (A) IQ-1 [1]-12; Disguise/TL10 (A) IQ [2]-13; Driving/TL10 (Groundcar) (A) DX-1 [1]-12; Electronics Operation/TL10 (Security) (A) IQ+7 [24]-20; Fast-Draw (Pistol) (E) DX [1]-12; First Aid (E) IQ-1 [1]-12; Forced Entry (E) DX+1 [2]-12; Forgery (H) IQ-1 [2]-12; Garrote (E) DX [1]-12; Gesture (E) DX [1]-12; Holdout (A) IQ [1]-13; Jumping (A) DX [1]-13; Knife (E) DX [1]-12; Lockpicking (A) IQ [2]-13; Pickpocket (H) DX-1 [2]-12; Piloting (Flight Pack) (A) DX-1 [1]-12; Research/TL10 (A) IQ-1 [1]-12; Scrounging (A) Per-1 [1]-12; Shadowing (A) IQ-1 [1]-12; Stealth (A) DX+2 [8]-15; Swimming (E) HT [1]-10; Traps (A) IQ+1 [4]-14.

This rule allowed players to spend bonus character points (p. B498) to buy or improve successes on die rolls and affect plot points. Such player-direction was, in theory, extremely useful for the sort of high-powered, action-heavy cinematic space opera game I was running. The trouble was my players *hated* using this rule because they never wanted to sacrifice hard-earned bonus points unless faced with absolutely certain death, and even then grumbled about doing so! From their perspective, earned character points were for advancement, and that was it!

I eventually realized that this was the same mentality that had led to the decision to use Social Points in the first place: An unwillingness of my players to spend points on transitory outcomes rather than solid improvement. This provided a natural sink for unspent Social Points. I ruled that unspent starting Social Points could be used as bonus character points for influencing success rolls. Players quickly referred to these as "Luck Points." I further decided to award all characters one extra "Luck Point" after each adventure session (two if they engaged in heroic or entertaining play). This also ensured that, like other social advantages, they could be freely acquired during play.

My players rarely spent more than 5-10 Social Points on Luck Points, but for game balance I ruled no more than five Luck Points could be expended in a single game session. This was about the same as the number of bonus character points PCs tended to have unspent, ensuring Luck Point play could influence but not dominate the game.

ABOUT THE COLUMNIST

David L. Pulver is a Canadian freelance author. An avid SF fan, he began roleplaying in junior high with the newly released Basic Dungeons & Dragons. Upon graduating from university, he decided to become a game designer. Since then, David has written over 70 roleplaying game books, and he has worked as a staff writer, editor, and line developer for Steve Jackson Games and Guardians of Order. He is best known for creating Transhuman Space, co-authoring the Big Eyes, Small Mouth anime RPG, and writing countless GURPS books, including the GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition, GURPS Ultra-Tech, and the GURPS Spaceships series.

^{*} Purchased with Social Points.

Chi Blast: Natural Weapon (Crushing; Cannot Parry, -40%; Hidden, +20%; Increased Damage, +2 per die, +120%; Intangible, +50%; Power Modifier, Chi, -10%; Ranged, +100%; Single, -20%; Two-Handed, -30%) [15]. Notes: An energy blast created with your chi. You have to use both hands to focus your inner energy. The ability is completely invisible until the moment when you attack. 15 points.

Decaying Touch: Natural Weapon (Corrosion; Cannot Parry, -40%; Hidden, +20%; Intangible, +50%; No Signature, +20%) [15]. Notes: Touching a target causes it to crumble to dust! 15 points.

Dragon's Breath: Natural Weapon (Burning; Cannot Parry, -40%; Cone, 5 yards, +100%; Hidden, +20%; Intangible, +50%; Limited Use, 3/day, -20%; Ranged, +100%; Single, -20%; Swing-Capable, +20%) [16]. Notes: The cone of fire is five yards wide with range equal to your ST. 16 points.

Freezing Strike: Natural Weapon (Fatigue; Cannot Parry, -40%; Extra Damage Type, Burning, +20%; Freezing, +20%; No Incendiary Effect, -10%; Side Effect, Paralysis, +200%; Switchable (*Power-Ups 4*, p. 17), +10%) [30]. Notes: You turn your fists into ice to freeze your enemies slowly (dealing fatigue damage) or quickly, like liquid hydrogen (burning damage), with the possibility of paralyzing them with the cold. You can't parry with the *ability*, but you can still parry normally with your hands! 30 points.

Hammer Hands: Natural Weapon (Crushing; Accessibility, breaking the weapon cripples the hand, -20%; Extra Reach, C, 1, +50%; Heavy 10, +100%; Increased Damage, +2 per die, +120%; Swing-Capable, +20%; Switchable (Power-Ups 4, p. 17), +10%; Temporary Disadvantage, No Fine Manipulators, -30%; Unbalanced, -30%) [16]. Notes: You turn your hands into powerful hammers to smash your foes. 16 points.

Lightning Whip: Natural Weapon (Burning; Destructive Parry, +40%; Disarming, +20%; Extra Reach, 1-4, Ready maneuver necessary, +90%; Flexible, +30%; Light 4, -20%; Poor Defense, -20%; Single, -20%; Surge, Arcing (Power-Ups 4, p. 21), +100%; Swing-Capable, +20%; Switchable (Power-*Ups 4*, p. 17), +10%; Unbalanced, -30%) [16]. *Notes:* This whip made of lightning takes one Ready maneuver to appear in your hand, and another whenever you want to change reach.

The Weapon Adaptation perk allows you to crack the whip and deliver painful blows (see p. B406). 16 points.

Minotaur's Horns: Natural Weapon (Impaling; Cannot Parry, -40%; Increased Damage, +1 per die, +60%; Link, +10%; Single, -20%) [9], bought twice. Notes: You may gore with both horns as a single attack; if you hit, figure damage for each horn separately. They have the same DR as your skull (DR 2 by default). If you lose one horn, you may still attack with the other. 18 points.

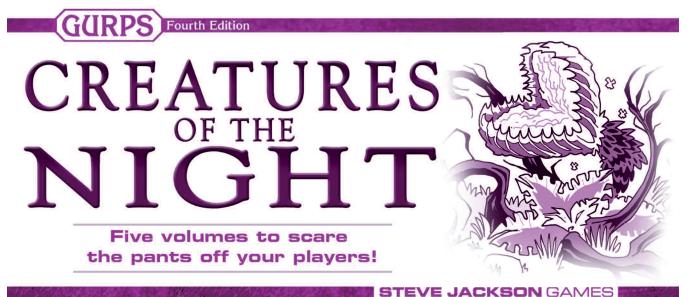
Psychic Dagger: Natural Weapon (Fatigue; Affects Insubstantial, +20%; Cannot Parry, -40%; Intangible, +50%; Mental Resistance Only (Power-Ups 4, p. 19), +250%; Power Modifier, Telepathy, -10%; Single, -20%; Switchable (*Power-Ups 4*, p. 17), +10%) [36]. Notes: This dagger made of psychic energy allows you to strike directly into your foes' nervous system. 36 points.

Telekinetic Push: Natural Weapon (Crushing; Cannot Parry, -40%; Cone, 5 yards, +100%; Double Knockback, +20%; Hidden, +20%; Intangible, +50%; No Blunt Trauma, -20%; No Wounding, -50%; Power Modifier, Psychokinesis, -10%; Projected, +50%; Ranged, +100%; Swing-Capable, +20%) [17]. Notes: If you are using GURPS Psionic Powers, damage and range can be based on the psionic skill (instead of ST) as a special effect. 17 points.

Ultra-Sharp Claws: Natural Weapon (Impaling; Armor Divisor (10), +200%; Disarming, +20%; Extra Damage Type, Cutting, +20%; Increased Damage, +2 per die, +120%; Resilient, Unbreakable, +40%; Swing-Capable, Cutting, +20%; Switchable (Power-Ups 4, p. 17), +10%) [44]. Notes: This set of claws can cut through anything. Damage is sw cut or thr imp. 44 points.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ítalo Gomes Gonçalves is a professor of the Mining Technology course at the newly created Federal University of the Pampa. He lives in Cacapava do Sul. Rio Grande do Sul. Brazil, with his wife, Daniela. His favorite hobbies are terrorizing his students, playing video games and tweaking game rules beyond reason. He would like to thank his cousin Diogo (who introduced him to **GURPS**) and his RPG group, Daniel, Felipe, and both Thiagos, for enduring all his crazy ideas.



Find them at Warehouse23.com.

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