


PYRAMID



Issue 3/69 July '14

PSIONICS II



A LITTLE BIT PSYCHIC

by Sean Punch

MIND AND BODY
by Christopher R. Rice

THE PYRAMID FARM
by J. Edward Tremlett

THE OVERMIND INSTITUTE
by David L. Pulver

EXPANDED PSI FOR SANDMEN
by Jason "PK" Levine

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

Stock #37-2669



IN THIS ISSUE

CONTENTS

FROM THE EDITOR 3

A LITTLE BIT PSYCHIC 4
by Sean Punch

MIND AND BODY 13
by Christopher R. Rice

EIDETIC MEMORY:
THE OVERMIND INSTITUTE 20
by David L. Pulver

THE PYRAMID FARM 26
by J. Edward Tremlett

EXPANDED PSI FOR SANDMEN 31
by Jason "PK" Levine

RANDOM THOUGHT TABLE:
TWEAK THE HIDDEN TRUTHS 36
by Steven Marsh, Pyramid Editor

ODDS AND ENDS 38

ABOUT GURPS 39

We're reading your brain waves, there's no use in not thinking about white elephants, and not even the tinfoil hat will keep you from loving this month's *Pyramid*! We're turning our all-seeing eye toward psionic powers, with special emphasis on how it intersects with the world of **GURPS**.

Sometimes you don't want psionic powers to be the dominant force of a campaign, but you still want a light addition of psi for flavor. When you want to be *A Little Bit Psychic*, Sean Punch – mastermind of **GURPS Power-Ups 2: Perks** – has just the mini-supplement for you. It includes over a dozen new psionic perks, a new Talent, 30+ new minor abilities (and guidelines for creating your own), plus a table of existing mental-minded perks and where to find them.

When your *Mind and Body* are one, you can do truly extraordinary things. Learn about three new fighting styles that fuse **GURPS Martial Arts** with **GURPS Psionic Powers** from the dojo of Christopher R. Rice. You'll also get new techniques, new perks, two new psionic abilities, and expanded suggestions for psi-amplifiers.

Hints of their existence have flitted out from the shadows for years, across several supplements. Now, David L. Pulver – author of **GURPS Psi-Tech** – expands on the history, organization, and key people of *The Overmind Institute* (first introduced in **GURPS Psionics** for Third Edition). This month's Eidetic Memory also includes a **GURPS** template for a typical Overmind scientist, plus insight for adding this sinister group to a **GURPS Monster Hunters** campaign.

If you're psychic, the latest New Age movement – Next Nubia Now – is tailor made for you. Visit *The Pyramid Farm* for a refreshing haven from the fast-paced modern world! But once you're there, you might discover something far more sinister . . . and you might never return. Learn the systemless secrets herein, if you dare.

GURPS Horror: The Madness Dossier offered some brief suggestions for including psi in Project SANDMAN campaigns. Jason "PK" Levine – editor of that supplement and author of **GURPS Psionic Campaigns** – offers his suggestions for *Expanded Psi for Sandmen*. This guide provides seven new abilities (including psi techniques), tips for adjusting the taisher template, and ideas for "imperfect psi" that augment the setting's horrific aspects.

This issue's Random Thought Table goes right for the liver with some challenges to psionic presuppositions, while Odds and Ends out the issue with suggestions for low-psionic campaigns plus thoughts on species-specific abilities. This issue of *Pyramid* is an "all that and a kitchen think" of awesome!

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

David Patrick Menahan

Editor-in-Chief ■ STEVE JACKSON
GURPS Project 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
 Managing Editor ■ MIRANDA HORNER
 Marketing Director ■ LEONARD BALSERA
 Director of Sales ■ ROSS JEPSON
 Page Design ■ PHIL REED & JUSTIN DE WITT

FROM THE EDITOR

EDITOR'S LOG, "SUPPLEMENTAL"

One of the earliest issues of *Dragon* magazine I purchased as it was coming out monthly was #91. That issue contained something that I considered one of the mind-blowing things about that era of the magazine: a pullout supplement. In issue #91's case, it was "Treasure Trove," a collection of magic items. If it had been a standard article listing a new collection of ensorcelled equipment, that would've been cool enough. But it was designed as the center of the issue, in exactly 12 pages, with a secondary "cover" – so if it could be pulled out and treated as a mini-supplement.

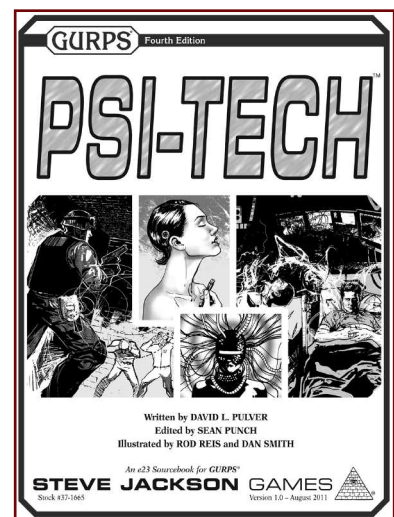
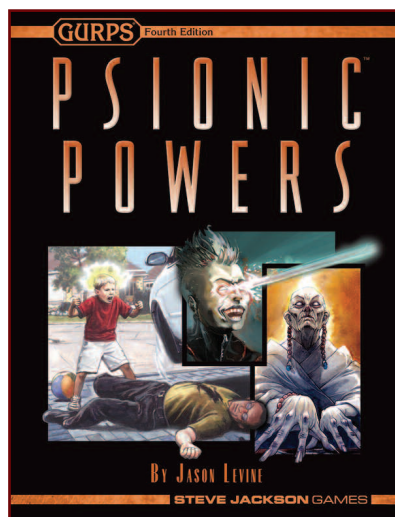
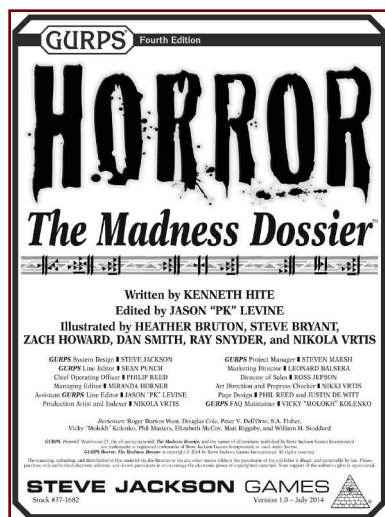
That blew my 11-year-old mind, and gave those types of articles an increased weight and utility. I felt like I was getting a free supplement (or adventure, or whatever they included in the center). In hindsight, I realize it was part of the periodical I'd paid my 11-year-old lunch money for, but it still felt like a bonus.

While this third volume of *Pyramid* doesn't really need to worry about page signatures – and our experiments at including staples with the digital downloads has been a big flop – I do

still feel a special thrill when we offer an article that could serve as a mini-supplement all by itself (such as Sean Punch's excellent "A Little Bit Psychic," pp. 4-11). I also know many readers print out articles that appeal to them when they download a new issue, so we strive to make sure that articles run on sequential pages; we even make sure articles end on a full page (even if we need to squeeze in an ad or a quote to make it look pretty, or shuffle a standalone bit to Odds and Ends), unlike magazines of old who would strew their content across multiple quadrants of the issue. Hopefully, we'll never need to do the "(Turn to page 30)" thing that even my beloved *Dragon* often did in the middle of many features.

WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW

How well did our mental efforts work this month? Did we blow your mind, or overthink it? Send us your private thoughts to pyramid@sjgames.com, or gather at the hive mind of forums.sjgames.com. We're always reading your comments and working to make the magazine better, and we promise to always
(Turn to page 87.)



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

The GM will give you, *the player*, one real-world minute to speak clearly to the person or small group of your choice – a sibling, the local police chief, your fellow PCs, your killer, whoever. Savvy spooks might share the name and ravings of an assassin who gloated Bond-villain style, or just practical stuff like combinations to safes and passwords to accounts.

This doesn't guarantee returning as a *playable* spirit or astral entity – but if the GM allows that, you qualify, and enjoy +5 on any roll required to attain that state.

I Feel Them Watching Me

Suggested Powers: ESP or Telepathy.

You don't have Danger Sense, exactly, but whenever a sapient (IQ 6+), living being takes an Aim or Evaluate maneuver against you – or uses Observation or a social tactic such as Cutting Out (*GURPS Social Engineering*, p. 81) with hostile intent – the GM will make a secret Per-3 roll for you. Success means he warns, "Somebody is watching you." While you won't be *surprised* and freeze up in response to ensuing trouble, you must spot the enemy using your ordinary senses in order to identify the threat or receive an active defense.

Ignorable

Suggested Powers: Ergokinesis, Probability Alteration, or Telepathy.

Perhaps your mind photokinetically dims the light or broadcasts "Don't look at me!", or maybe you're simply a serendipitous sneak, but some psychic influence renders you slightly harder to spot when you want to go unnoticed. If the penalty to detect you with Vision or a skill (Observation, Shadowing, etc.) is at least -1 because of a dense crowd, poor lighting, or other mundane obscuration, there's an *extra* -1 to notice you. This *does* affect rivals rolling Quick Contests against your Camouflage, Stealth, and similar skills. On the other hand, you're at -1 to be noticed even when you want to be!

Lucky Token†

Suggested Power: Probability Alteration.

This unusual variant of Equipment Bond (*Power-Ups 2: Perks*, p. 9) means you have an item that's uniquely suited to you and that gives you +1 to a skill . . . but the item is a lucky charm of some sort (coin, medicine bundle, St. Christopher medal, etc.), while the skill is one culturally accepted as being especially sensitive to fickle fortunes. Specialize by skill: Driving, Explosives (EOD), Gambling, Market Analysis, Performance ("Break a leg!"), Sex Appeal, and most Games and Sports qualify, and the GM may permit others, such as Survival or Tracking in a low-tech society. Handle loss and replacement as for Equipment Bond.

Over There!

Suggested Power: Telepathy.

Your verbal ruses are just a *little* telepathic. When you feint in combat or use a social skill such as Fast-Talk for a distraction, you may opt to speak loudly: "Look, an eagle!", "Your shoe's untied!", etc. If you do this – and your victim can hear you – you may roll a Quick Contest of Will with that person. Victory gives you +1 on the ensuing ploy; loss, -1. Mute psychics, mimes, and stealthy ninja are out of luck; this gift relies on the power of the *voice*.

Presence

Suggested Powers: Ergokinesis, Probability Alteration, or Telepathy.

Almost the opposite of Ignorable (above); you cannot have both. When you *want* to be seen, you are a little more brightly lit, in just the right place, or ooze telepathic attraction, giving others +3 on Vision and skill rolls to spot you. When you would prefer to remain unobvious (e.g., when using Stealth), make a Will roll to rein in this effect or observers gain your margin of failure as a bonus, to a maximum of +3. This is effectively a visual version of Penetrating Voice (p. B101).

Psychic Commentator

Suggested Power: Ergokinesis.

You generate electronic voice phenomena (EVP) *unconsciously* when under stress. Radios within 10 miles and tuned away from strong signals pick up vague snippets of your thoughts. This is a marginal advantage because savvy allies could eventually use it to learn that you're in trouble. Or that you're starving and could really go for a pizza.

Though this could be built as Telecommunication (Radio; PM, -10%; Send Only, -50%; Unconscious Only, -20%; Uncontrollable, -10%; Vague, -50%), it's considered a perk for the reasons given in *Modifiers and Minimum Costs (Psionic Powers*, p. 19).

Psychic Medic‡

Prerequisite: Psychic (p. 6).

Suggested Power: Psychic Healing.

This perk comes in levels. You may have only as many levels as you have of Psychic. Add the level to your First Aid rolls.

The GM might generalize this idea to other skills plausibly aided by psychic powers. Each skill is its own perk. In effect, such perks extend Psychic to aid additional skills in accordance with *Smooth Talent Cost (Power-Ups 3: Talents*, p. 25).

The Buzz

Suggested Powers: Psychic Vampirism or Telepathy.

You have an uncanny sense for the moods of crowds (10+ people). Whenever this is important, the GM will make a secret Per roll. Success returns a one-word description of the overall atmosphere – "angry," "bored," "excited," etc. – along with any modifiers to social skills that would apply as a consequence, allowing you to judge what approaches are likely to work. This isn't enough to give a true bonus to mass-influence rolls such as Public Speaking, but it *does* mean that in a Quick Contest against the Will of the mob or a rival speaker, all ties go to you . . . unless your rival *also* has this perk!

Weirdness Wormhole

Suggested Powers: Probability Alteration or Teleportation.

This is a mix of perk-level Snatcher (p. B86), an uncontrollable deviation of Doodad (*Power-Ups 2: Perks*, p. 9), and a specialized variety of Weirdness Magnet (p. B161). Minor-but-bizarre physical artifacts seek you out. These vary from innocent (like other people's missing socks) to creepy (how *did* that live spider get inside the light bulb?). The effect is that once per game session, the GM will roll 3d. On a 6 or less, you'll find a material object that serves as a minor clue or a hint about a side-quest, or that's trivially useful in its own right.

The psi must specialize in a specific item or weapon, and can have only one Psionic Bond at a time. However, he may freely shift the bond to another suitable item with a day of meditation, which makes replacing lost items easier to manage.

Rules Exemption†

This works much like Extra Option (p. 16), except that instead of granting access to a specific, *beneficial* optional rule that *isn't* used campaign-wide, it allows an exemption from a particular, *detrimental* optional rule that *does* apply to everybody else. For example . . .

Certainty of Power†: If the GM uses *Strange, Uncertain Powers (Psionic Powers, p. 8)* to give psis penalties for doing a particular action, or making them roll for every use, the ability to ignore these penalties for one specific power is a perk.

*There was a blur of movement.
Dion heard a wild cry and saw flame
burst from the sword's hilt, swinging in
a deadly arc.*

– Margaret Weis, *The Lost King*

TK Knuckles

Prerequisite: TK Shield 3+.

You can temporarily shield your arm, leg, or other body part in a portion of your TK Shield, allowing you to increase your barehanded damage. This gives +1 damage and you are considered armed, but you suffer from Bad Grip 2 while using

it. Turning this perk on or off takes a Ready maneuver, but may be attempted quickly by rolling against your TK Shield skill at -4; success means you did it instantly!

TK Projection†

Prerequisites: TK Grab or Telekinetic Control; see below.

By spending 2 FP, you can use your TK to project an attack, with your power's normal range. If using a weapon, your ability does not *physically* move your weapon; you are simply projecting the force of the blow. Figure damage based on your power's ST, not yours. With a weapon, your power must meet its minimum ST requirement in order to use it with this perk.

Tolerance†

This perk is normally an Anti-Psi perk (*Psionic Powers, p. 24*), but it makes sense to allow those with a martial-arts style that uses psionic abilities to take it as well, as stylists have been “practicing” on one another. In this case, it becomes a psionic perk for the ability it is selected for.

Warrior Psi†

You can use extra effort with a psionic power! You must specialize by power, which must be one that inflicts injury or causes an affliction. At the instant you attack, you may opt to use Mighty Blows (p. B357). This costs 1 FP to use, which can come from any source. For abilities that cause damage, this gives either +2 damage *or* +1 damage per die, whichever is better. For abilities that cause afflictions and require a Quick Contest, it instead adds *two* to your skill roll or your final margin of success (chosen before you roll). For abilities that do damage based on the margin of success, you must choose whether this adds to base damage, skill roll, or final margin before you roll.

NEW PSIONIC POWERS

Two new abilities for the Psychokinesis power are especially useful for martial artists.

PSI-SHIELD

22/43/64/85 points for levels 1-4

Skill: Psi-Shield (DX/Hard).

You can manifest a shield of pure psychokinetic force. This takes a skill roll and a Ready maneuver to activate and lasts for one minute, after which you must make another skill roll. It works exactly like a normal shield, giving you +1 to all your active defenses. Use your Psi-Shield skill to block attacks. You may optionally “bash” with your shield; it has a Reach of 1, uses your Psi-Shield skill to hit, and deals your thrust plus Psychokinesis Talent in crushing damage. It provides (25 × its level) cover DR, but if penetrated, it fizzles out and must be activated again.

Each level gives +1 to all your active defenses while active, but you cannot use the hand that it is created onto (you're holding it).

Statistics: Defense Bonus 1 (Can block attacks like a normal shield, +15%; Nuisance Effect, Occupies one hand, -5%; Psychokinesis, -10%; Requires DX Roll, -10%; Requires Ready, -10%; Visible, -10%) [21] + Striking Surface (*Power-Ups 2, p. 12*) [1]. Further levels increase Defense Bonus by one level at a time [21/level].

Barrier Shield

Hard

Default: Psi-Shield-10; cannot exceed Psi-Shield.

Instead of creating a shield you can use to attack, you instead create a large plane of force that acts as moveable cover, like a mantlet or pavise. You can have up only one such barrier at a time, but you can move the barrier at a rate of one yard/second.

The shield protects a one-yard area; for every 5 points by which your (modified) skill roll succeeds, double the width, cumulatively. It provides cover DR (18 × Psi-Shield level).

This is *much* faster – though often dangerous! You must be within a reality subduction zone, within a few yards of an irraptor, or within reach of a reality shard that has not yet been moved from its place of discovery. Use the normal rules, reading “minutes” as “seconds.”

Specific Search

Hard

Default: Ontomancy-10; cannot exceed Ontomancy.

You may look for omens about a specific event, person, group, etc. If successful, the GM still provides the details, but they must relate to the topic you’ve chosen.

Sandman Foresight

5/8/13/17/27 points for levels 1-5

Skill: Sandman Foresight (IQ/Hard).

You get flashes of warning about History B. The specifics depend on your level, but in all cases you only receive information relevant to *your* future – or, at level 2+, to the future of someone you touch. (These visions are often triggered by shaking the hand of a person who’s about to encounter an irraptor, reality shard, etc.)

With Sandman Foresight 1, the GM will roll against your skill if something from History B is about to put you or your compatriots directly in danger; in effect, it acts as a very limited, skill-based Danger Sense. You receive no information past “Incoming danger!” and are limited to learning about immediate threats.

At Sandman Foresight 2, the GM will roll when he believes that you’ll be coming into contact with something from History B in the near future. He’ll *also* roll if you touch someone for whom this is true. Success means you receive a vague vision of what may happen; your margin of success determines its clarity.

Sandman Foresight 3 allows you to *actively* look for History B in your own future or the future of someone you’re touching. Success gives you a vision *if* the GM thinks the subject is at all likely to interact with irruptors, reality shards, a reality subduction zone, etc. This is not easy! It takes 10 minutes of concentration, is done at -8 to skill, and costs 2 FP. Sandman Foresight 4 removes the skill penalty and Sandman Foresight 5 removes the FP cost, but only Fast Fortune (below) can reduce the 10-minute requirement.

Statistics: Precognition (Accessibility, Anunnaki phenomena only, -40%; Aspected, Danger, -20%; ESP, -10%; Passive Only, -20%) [5]. Further levels remove Aspected [8], then Passive Only [13], then add Reliable 8 limited by Active Only [17], and then Reduced Fatigue Cost 2 [27].

Fast Fortune

Hard

Default: Sandman Foresight-10; cannot exceed Sandman Foresight.

Your active reading takes only 20 seconds (instead of 10 minutes). This psi technique is only useful in combination

with Sandman Foresight 3+, but you may learn it at lower levels in case you use extra effort.

Visions of Clarity

Hard

Default: Sandman Foresight-10; cannot exceed Sandman Foresight.

You may attempt this psi technique immediately after the GM succeeds at a passive Sandman Foresight roll; this requires one second of concentration and a completely separate roll. If successful, you receive a brief vision. If you have Sandman Foresight 1, this is the *only* way to get some clue of what danger is coming – at the cost of a full combat turn you could have spent reacting! Otherwise, it supplements the vision you’ve already received with a second perspective, a related event, etc. As always, your degree of success determines how useful the vision is.

You may also use this technique when actively reading someone’s future, to the same effect. However, if the GM doesn’t have a vision for you in the first place, using Visions of Clarity doesn’t change that!

Template Changes

When using these expanded psi rules, make the following changes to the taisher template (*Madness Dossier*, p. 27).

- In *Advantages*, replace Detect (History B) [38] with Anunnakku Sense 3 [36].
- If the GM allows other psi in the game, the taisher may reduce his Unusual Background by 5 or 10 points if he can’t access all of it. See *Unusual Background and Powers* (p. 31) for details. These points may be spent on further advantages.
- In *Primary Skills*, add Anunnakku Sense (H) Per+3 [2]-18. This includes +4 from ESP Talent.

Rookie Taishers

When using *Budget Cuts and Rookie Sandmen* (*Madness Dossier*, p. 28), the change to Detect should be interpreted as a downgrade to Anunnakku Sense 2 [18] and Anunnakku Sense (H) Per+2 [1]-15 (including +4 from ESP Talent). The taisher should take *five* secondary skills from the last list (instead of six), spending 1 point on each (instead of 2). Otherwise, use the lens as written.

Shard Study

10 points for level 1, plus 2 points for each additional level

Skill: Shard Study (IQ/Hard).

You can identify a reality shard and get a sense of its general purpose and history. Roll against your skill when a shard is within range (see below); alternatively, if one comes within range without you realizing it, and the GM feels that it’s giving off strong enough “vibes,” he may roll secretly at -4 for you. Your margin of success determines how clear and complete the information is; on a critical success, you receive visions of the shard in use. On a failure, you cannot study that shard again for 24 hours.

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