

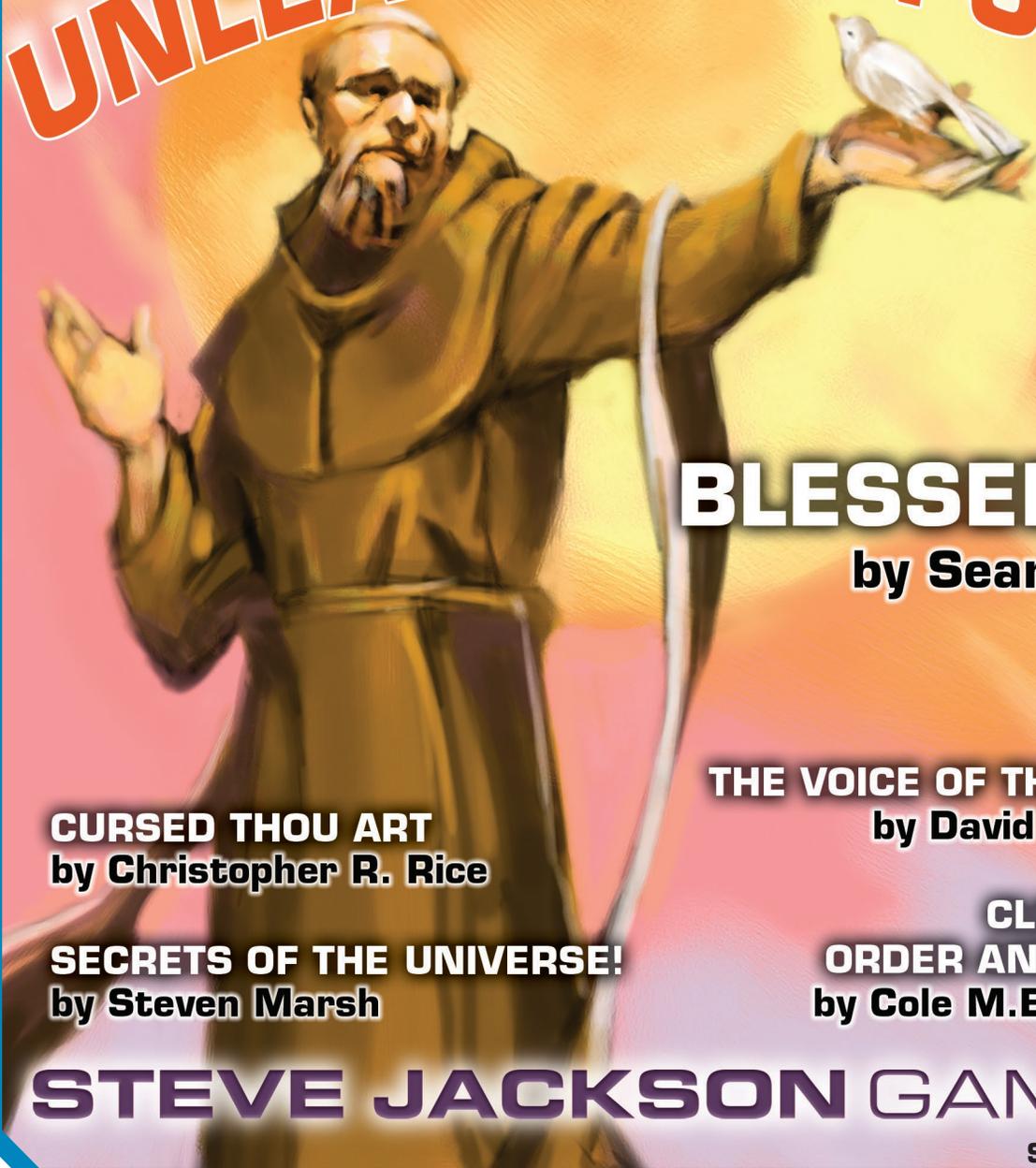


# PYRAMID<sup>®</sup>

Issue 3/78 April '15



## UNLEASH YOUR SOUL



**BLESSED BE**  
by Sean Punch

**CURSED THOU ART**  
by Christopher R. Rice

**SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE!**  
by Steven Marsh

**THE VOICE OF THE MOON**  
by David L. Pulver

**CLERICS OF  
ORDER AND CHAOS**  
by Cole M.B. Jenkins

**STEVE JACKSON GAMES**

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We've got spirit; yes we do! We've got spirit . . . and powers, too! This issue of *Pyramid* looks at the intersection of faith and power, and those who use it for good or ill.

Sean Punch – all-knowing co-author of *GURPS Basic Set* – helps inspire GMs with an in-depth examination of the Blessed advantage. After breaking down various forms of Blessed, the guidelines offer numerous building blocks, alternate options, and premade examples to help the GM determine a fair cost for new versions of Blessed. May *Blessed Be* your go-to divine advantage!

Get your *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* faith back to the basics with *Clerics of Order and Chaos*. Learn about the benefits of being a priest or holy warrior of primal forces, plus get two new lenses for divine servitors, two new divine elements, and a new aura.

What if the Man in the Moon is real? Some witches, past and present, certainly think so, because they can hear *The Voice of the Moon*. In this month's Eidetic Memory, David L. Pulver – author of best-selling supplements such as *GURPS Spaceships 7: Divergent and Paranormal Tech* – reveals the secrets of a 17th-century cult and its modern reconstruction . . . which is also spookily suitable for PCs to be members of. What will you do to get to the moon?

Know, mere mortal, just what's going to happen when *Cursed Thou Art*. Long-time *Pyramid* contributor Christopher R. Rice delves into the inner workings of curses with a meaty mini-supplement that includes tips for pricing (with eight examples), suggestions for related disadvantages, using the Mitigator limitation, cursing as an ability or as magic, and more.

Open your mind and learn the *Secrets of the Universe!* With the religious organization detailed herein (suitable for past, present, or future eras), you'll discover how you can acquire *GURPS* psionic abilities simply by attending a few retreats . . . and donating all your money.

The latest Random Thought Table explores different options for explaining how certain fantastic divine abilities never seem to have an effect on everyday life, while Odds and Ends has a new tradition that lets you wear your faith on your sleeve (or body!) and offers a Murphy's Rule that's not for the weak. That palpitation in your chest is your soul, eager to experience this month's *Pyramid*; unleash its power and sate your spirit!

### 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

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#### INTERIOR ART

*Greg Hyland*

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*GURPS* Line Editor ■ SEAN PUNCH  
Assistant *GURPS* Line Editor ■  
JASON "PK" LEVINE

Managing Editor ■ MIRANDA HORNER  
*GURPS* Project Manager ■ STEVEN MARSH  
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# FROM THE EDITOR

## YOU GOTTA HAVE FAITH

There are two things I love about matters of faith and spirituality in roleplaying games. First off, it's underutilized as a plot element. Let's say that you have a game with a bunch of bounty hunters as quasi-recurring characters; they're not interesting enough to get full write-ups, but you'd like to differentiate them in some way. "Devout Unitarian Universalist Bounty Hunter" is certainly different from "Atheistic Nihilist Bounty Hunter" . . . and both can have an easy-to-remember hook that differentiates them from "Agnostic Shoot-You-in-the-Kneecaps Bounty Hunter."

Second, it's an interesting part of the human experience that can be realistically inserted into just about any campaign setting – past, present, or future. The Church was a significant element in Renaissance Florence, religion continues to shape the modern geopolitical and social landscape, and matters of faith will almost certainly influence us at least in the near term as we work our way off this mudball. (There's a "Religion in Space" page on Wikipedia that's in interesting – if brief

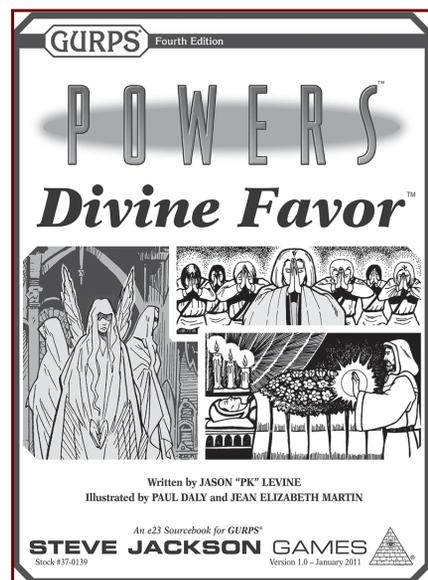
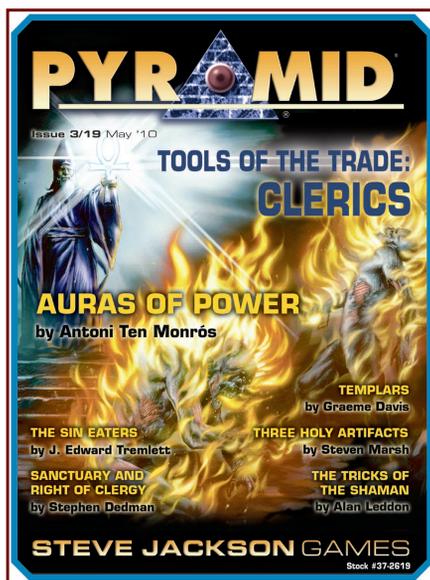
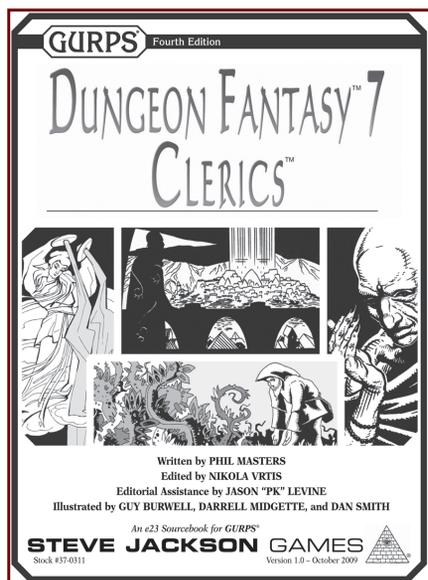
– rabbit hole to fall down.) "The High Priest of the God of War needs you to investigate a forgotten cathedral . . ." is certainly a different hook than "the King sends you to a dungeon."

If you add divinely powered elements of faith to the mix – and it's *GURPS*; why wouldn't you?! – the possible plot and gaming elements explode. "Devout Unitarian Universalist Bounty Hunting Crusader of Light" (p. 10) is not only an awesome character concept, but it's also a phrase that has yet to appear on Google. Err . . . until the preview of this issue is uploaded. But I digress.

So if your campaign is feeling a bit generic and you're looking for something cool and nifty to add, please consider a faith lift . . . courtesy of this issue.

## WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW

Your comments are heavenly music to our ears. Were we touched by angels? Or touched by madness? Let us know via private feedback at [pyramid@sjgames.com](mailto:pyramid@sjgames.com), or join the public discussion online at [forums.sjgames.com](http://forums.sjgames.com).



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## TAKING THE BLESSING OUT OF BLESSED

As *Doubly Divine* (p. 8) notes, many *GURPS* supplements treat Blessed as unitary, not as an advantage that can be decomposed into parts. This sometimes obscures its nature, but that's unimportant when the goal is simply to swap the implicit holy power for something else, as in *Other Powers* (p. 8). But what if the objective is to turn Blessed into something that isn't associated with *any* power? Apply these steps in order:

- If *any* component makes no sense except for holy folk, simply remove it, reducing cost.
- If an *unremarkable* component (ones that's mundane and available to all, like Claim to Hospitality) makes sense, leave it alone.
- If a *remarkable* component makes sense *and* has had its cost increased for *Cosmic, Universal truth* (implicitly or explicitly), leave it be – it has already paid the surcharge to “just work.”
- If a *remarkable* component makes sense *and* has the Divine power modifier, rip out the modifier and redo the math. This will increase cost.
- If a *remarkable* component makes sense but *lacks* Cosmic or Divine, and is being turned into an exotic ability that works without the drawbacks of a power or a code of conduct, add whatever Unusual Background cost suits the campaign, increasing cost. A fair cost is usually close to the value of the element itself.

*Example 1:* For non-holy folk, both the “holy” status and reaction bonus from the faithful inherent in Blessed (Divine Guidance) make little sense. That leaves only the divination ability. The GM decides that if it works regardless of mana, sanctity, etc., then limited Magery or Power Investiture make no sense, either. He treats it as Charm (Divination) [1] and Divination (H) IQ [4], for 5 points, and adds a 5-point Unusual Background, for a total of 10 points.

*Example 2:* *GURPS Fantasy* presents Blessed (The King's Two Bodies). This is fundamentally Sense of Faith (p. 7) corresponding to a kingdom rather than a religion. As that's Special Rapport with its cost doubled to 10 points for *Cosmic, Universal truth*, it remains at 10 points – “holy status” and “political status” are considered equivalent.

At first level, Blessed (Dark Disciple) mainly serves the interests of Hell. Once the Disciple dies, his diabolical patron gets to keep him forever (**Covenant of Rest**). He also desecrates the very ground he walks on: **One-Task Wonder (Religious Ritual), with Lingering and No die roll required**. He can conjure up (more like “set free”) demons, too – treat this as **Summon Demon at IQ level**. Still, demons *are* required to leave the Disciple alone, provided that he doesn't meddle (**Brotherhood, with Universal Truth**).

The second level imbues the Disciple with demonic character. He has the right to add one demonic trait (**Special Exercises**) – e.g., horns as a Striker – chosen when Blessed is bought and paid for separately. He can also use **Heroic Feats** to emanate Terror for 3d seconds, once per session. And whenever he wants, he can garner +1 to Intimidation by surrounding himself in creepy-crawlers (**Pet**).

Disciples *never* gain “holy” status – casting out demons doesn't serve their masters' goals! And while those with Blessed normally reflect their deity's rules and values via disadvantages, a Disciple's are *particularly* nasty.

### Divine Monarch

30 points

In some kingdoms, Divine Right is fact: the gods crown the king, who rules his fellow man with their blessing. A ruler with Blessed (Divine Monarch) counts as “holy” (**Licensed Exorcist**) and may wield any state regalia – from the simplest wax seal to the crown jewels – as a sanctified holy symbol (**Accessory**). However, his real power is his pull with his people: he enjoys their unfailing recognition, giving +2 on reactions (**Holy Regard**); he can bind them to freely given vows by casting **Oath at IQ level**; and he may learn Enthrallment skills for influencing them (**Unusual Training**).

Moreover, he's always aware of the status of his lands and subjects, and those he leads can likewise sense when he's in need (**Sense of Faith**). Finally, *blood will tell* – he can invoke **Heroic Feats** for +1d levels of Hard to Kill (3d seconds per session) to foil assassins, and if they *do* get him, he's guaranteed a **Dramatic Death** to issue final orders or skewer them.

### Inquisitor

10 or 20 points

Not all deities are comfortable with magic-using mortals. Some charge worldly agents to seek out unethical wizards, try them for “playing god,” and mete out punishment. This is Blessed (Inquisitor), which comes in two levels.

At first level, the Inquisitor enjoys +1 on all rolls pertaining to defeating evil wizards, as long as he keeps the faith (**Higher Purpose**). He can thwart magic through **Heroic Feats** that grant 2d levels of Magic Resistance (3d seconds per session). And enemies he slays stay that way (**Rest in Pieces**), which is vital against powerful magic-using foes.

### Crusader of Light

10 points/level

Fantasy holy warriors often exchange unwavering faith for divine assistance with putting evil monsters to the sword. Blessed (Crusader of Light) comes in six levels that allow **Heroic Feats**, each giving one of +1d to ST, DX (Combat Rolls Only), or HT – to a maximum of +2d per score – when activated. The first level also grants basic “holy status” (**Licensed Exorcist**). At higher levels, the Crusader may choose *one* benefit per level from among **Accessory (Holy Symbol), Accessory (Holy Water), Covenant of Rest, Dramatic Death, and Rest in Pieces**, until he has six perks to accompany his six dice of bonuses. The order in which perks and bonuses are acquired is his decision.

### Dark Disciple

10 or 20 points

Selling one's soul to demonic forces is a tried-and-true road to power. This particular path comes in two levels.

## SERVITORS OF ORDER AND CHAOS

*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 5: Allies* recommends that all divine servitors take one of the Good, Evil, or Nature elements. However, for primal Nature-aligned servitors, none of these seem especially appropriate. Good and Evil are moral positions unsuited to the neutrality of Nature, and the Nature element is primarily concerned with living things as opposed to elemental natural forces.

### *New Lenses for Divine Servitor*

The following lenses are more suitable for divine servitors of Nature-aligned gods of order and chaos and for servitors of primal natural forces in general.

#### **New Lens: Elemental (+0 points)**

This servitor is an intelligent emanation of some cosmic force or classical element. Unlike other elementals, these are physical manifestations of a cosmic power rather than free-willed spirits. Reduce IQ to 8 [-80] and Will and Per to 8 [0]. Remove Blessed [-10], the Holy Might moral code [10], Dependency [25] and the five quirks [5]. Add Doesn't Breathe [20], Doesn't Eat or Drink [10], Doesn't Sleep [20], Injury Tolerance (Homogenous) [40], Single-Minded [5], and Unfazeable [15]. Add Fragile (Unnatural) [-50] and Obsession (Promote my element above all else) (12) [-10]. Change the Hidden Lore to (Elementals) and the *Class* to Elemental.

#### **New Lens: Fae (+0 points)**

This servitor is a powerful faerie summoned from some idyllic realm. It is most appropriate for servitors of faerie deities. Regardless of deity served, these beings may always take Beauty as an element. Reduce ST to 11 [-10]. Increase DX to 13 [20]. Remove Immunity to Metabolic Hazards [-30], the Holy Might moral code [10], and Wealth (Dead Broke) [25]. Change the Dependency to (Mana; Very Common, Constantly). Add Magery 0 [5], Callous [-5], and Sense of Duty (Nature) [-15]. Change the Hidden Lore to (Faeries) and *Class* to Faerie.

### *New Elements*

Two new descriptive elements expand the potential spheres of influence for deities.

#### **Primal**

This element, which has the Elemental lens (above) as a prerequisite, is for the servitors of cosmic gods of natural forces. Like Evil, Good, or Nature, this element fleshes out the servitor. It can be used independently or combined with any of those elements.

**Attributes:** ST+4 [40].

**Secondary Characteristics:** HP+1 [2]; Will+4 [20].

**Perks:** Primal Rage\*. [1]

**Disadvantages:** Berserk (12) [-10]; Cannot Speak [-15].

**Skills:** Brawling (E) DX+2 [4]-15; Intimidation (A) Will+1 [4]-13; Mental Strength (E) Will+2 [4]-15.

\* The servitor gets +3 to the Will Roll to deliberately go berserk.

#### **Primal (Doubled)**

As above, plus:

**Secondary Characteristics:** HP+5 [10].

**Advantages:** DR 2 [10]; Patron (Primal deity; 6 or less; Highly Accessible, +50%; Minimum Intervention, -50%; Special Abilities, +100%) [30].

#### **Faerie**

Servitors with the Fae lens (above) may take this element. It fleshes out the template for servitors of Nature aligned faerie lords and ladies who are more associated with natural elements than other things. It can also be used alongside Good, Evil, or Nature. As creatures of magic, Faerie servitors are empowered both with magic and the power of their god. They may learn and cast wizard spells as though they had Magery equal to their Power Investiture as well as learn the spells of their religion. They cannot use clerical or druidic spells as prerequisites for wizardry spells. *All* of their spells are subject to *both* Mana and Sanctity (or the druidic modifiers).

**Attributes:** IQ+2 [20].

**Secondary Characteristics:** Per -3 [-15].

**Advantages:** Power Investiture 3 (Faerie Servitor) [45].

**Disadvantages:** Duty (To the faerie courts; 12 or less)\* [-10] and *either* Lecherousness (12) [-15] *or* Trickster (12) [-15].

**Skills:** Connoisseur (any) (A) IQ-1 [1]-13; Innate Attack (any) (E) DX [1]-13; Naturalist (H) IQ-2 [1]-12; Savoir-Faire (Faerie Courts) (E) IQ [1]-14; Thaumatology (VH) IQ-3 [1]-11.

**Spells:** 20 wizard spells or the spells of the servitor's patron, which will be either (H) IQ+1 [1]-15 or (VH) IQ [1]-14 with the +3 for Power Investiture.

\* Roll whenever the servitor is summoned. If the duty comes up, it means the servitor has been given some other task in addition to aiding the summoner while it's in the mortal realm.

#### **Faerie (Doubled)**

As above, and:

**Advantages:** Patron (Deity; 6 or less; Highly Accessible, +50%; Minimum Intervention, -50%; Special Abilities, +100%) [30]; Wild Talent 1 (Focused; Magical, -20%) [18].

**Skills:** Increase two skills by 1 point or take two additional spells.

## UNDER THE HOOD: TECHNOLOGICAL BANE

Technological Bane includes an Anti-Talent (*GURPS Power-Ups 3: Talents*, p. 20) covering technological skills and a new enhancement for Affliction. At the GM's option, these traits can be used on their own.

### Tech-Hex

-15 points/level

All rolls where you *use* commonplace technology, including TL-based skills. You can still learn TL skills and use them normally, but when you use your skill in conjunction with technology, you suffer the penalty. This makes learning some skills useless (e.g., Computer Operation)! However, you could learn Mathematics/TL8 (Applied) and suffer no penalty if you used a slide rule and paper.

*Reaction Penalty:* Technophiles, computer geeks, people who have been victims of your "gift" (see below), and so on.

*Additional Drawbacks:* +1/level to Malfunction number of any technological device you use. Gear without any listed Malf. start at 19; subtract your level of this Anti-Talent *only when you use it*. For example, if you have Tech-Hex 3, you'd decrease the Malf. of devices you use by three and devices without Malf. (like most gear) will have something bad happen on a 16 or higher.

*Notes:* Given what adventurers do, this disadvantage needs no additional drawbacks. This trait does assume that significantly older technology (at least two TLs) is unaffected. The disadvantage only makes sense at TL6+.

though "Tock-Hex" or "Steam-Hex" may be a viable Anti-Talent in a TL4 or TL5 campaign; the GM may reduce the value of this trait to -10 in such games, while increasing it to -20 (or more!) in high-TL campaigns. Optionally, the effects of the disadvantage may be applied to not just gear *you* use, but any such equipment *nearby*. The GM can rule this effect "disperses" the further away you are. Regardless, this adds -5 to the base cost of the Anti-Talent.

### Affliction

see pp. B35-36

The following new enhancement suits probability manipulators, witches, technopaths, and gremlin-like creatures.

### New Special Enhancement

*Malfunction:* You can temporarily increase or decrease an item's Malfunction value by one. If it doesn't normally have Malf., treat it as 19. For firearms and other weapons, this has the usual results; for equipment which normally lacks Malf., any roll indicating a malfunction means it breaks down and requires a minor repair (p. B484). A roll of three or more over its Malf. (or an 18) means it requires a major repair instead! At the GM's option, you can affect more than just personal gear; add Cosmic (+50%) to target vehicles, cybernetic implants, etc.

This costs +10% per  $\pm 1$  to Malf. (choose to either increase or decrease when selecting the disadvantage), or +20% per 1 point if you can do both.

## The Rhymer's Tongue

-27 points

*Suggested Types:* Commandment, Misfortune, or Supernatural Affliction.

You are forbidden to speak untruths, though you *can* lie by omission or rely on other's assumptions. If you try to lie, make a Will-15 roll. Success means you lie, but suffer 1 point of injury as you bite your tongue; critical success avoids the injury as well. Failure means you verbalize the truth or aren't convincing with the lie. Furthermore, if you *do* manage to lie, the GM immediately gets a free use of *Player Guidance* (p. B347) – to make your lies come true! Lies that benefit you, however, will backfire. For example, if a cursed adventurer says he has money to pay for the arms shipment, he'll

inevitably *find* the money . . . but it'll belong to the Mafia, be stolen, etc. The GM may save up a couple of "dangerous coincidences" for a single session that quickly goes pear-shaped.

Because you cannot lie, you've become adept at spotting other liars. Treat this as having Detect Lies at Per-2.

*Designer's Notes:* Destiny (Major Disadvantage; Accessibility, Only for player guidance, -50%; Faster Refresh\*, Full replenishment per session, +100%) [-15], Detect Lies (H) Per-2 [1], and Truthfulness (Will-15; see p. 27) (Successful resistance costs 1 HP, +10%) [-13]. Destiny uses the alternate rules from *Impulse Buys*, p. 5; saving points across sessions is a feature.

\* Normally, the GM may only tap into the "player guidance" effect once every other session. With "Faster Refresh," the GM can get the effect *every* session.

# CURSING FOR FUN AND PROFIT

When the character is doing the cursing rather than being cursed, there are still plenty of possibilities.

*Curse with an ability, spell, and more!*

## CURSING AS AN ABILITY

Some folks may call down curses using supernatural power or close association with the divine (or profane . . .).

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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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