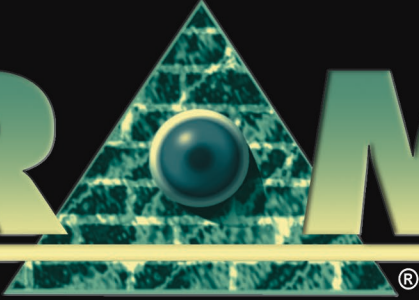


PYRAMID[®]



Issue 4/1 February '21

FANTASY/MAGIC I



STEVE JACKSON GAMES

Stock #37-2751

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FROM THE EDITOR

Fantasy is, perhaps, the hungriest of the genres. Many fantastic campaigns hinge on delivery of . . . well, the *fantastic*. It's not enough to provide the same old magical effects or the usual threats. These campaigns spark when there are new opportunities for adventure, new dangers to overcome, and ways to make the pacing faster and more frantic.

Fortunately, this installment of *Pyramid* is ready to provide. Magical-themed issues have always been among the most popular, so it's no surprise that we're making sure some aspect of the arcane arts is represented. And since *GURPS* likes to deliver in realistic matters, there's also room in a "fantasy" issue for more realistic takes on pre-modern possibilities.

For decades, *GURPS* has been one of the most powerful toolkits for GMs looking to mold their campaign their way. If all has gone according to plan, some of the material herein will help take your games to new places, open up exciting possibilities, and ensure that everything is just plain more . . . magical! But remember that the real magic is always what happens at your gaming table, on the infinite canvas of exciting possibilities that is your mind. Thank you for letting us provide the paints with which you dabble in dreams.

– Steven Marsh, *Pyramid* Editor

ARTICLE COLORS

Each article is color-coded to help you find your favorite sections. Not all themes appear in every volume.

Red-Brown: In every issue.

Light Blue: Powers and magic.

Green: Locations.

Purple: GM advice and adventure ideas.



WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW

Your comments help us give you what you want! How are you using this material in your campaign? What do you wish we'd write about? Let us know via private feedback at pyramid@sjgames.com, or join the public discussion online at forums.sjgames.com.

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IN THIS ISSUE

The flicker out of the corner of your eye. The spark in your fingers when you touch something new. The echo in the darkness that grows louder than its origination. This issue of *Pyramid* is devoted to fantasy and magic; it is where the impossible meets our world and perhaps decides if we are permitted to stay.

Just about anything can be poisonous if you put your mind to it – especially if you have access to the *Toxic Grimoire*. From the quill of *GURPS Sorcery: Sound Spells* co-author Aleksei Isachenko comes a selection of new spells for *GURPS Magic* that greatly expands the options of those who want their grimoires a bit grimmer.

Words have power, as understood by those who wield *Utatsumi*. Expand the options of *GURPS Thaumatology* through the magical might of poetry, with a fictional Japanese magical art form that unleashes the power of the pen.

Dare your heroes explore *The Demonic Temple of Felltower*? Of course they do; they're heroes! *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Treasures 3: Artifacts of Felltower* author Peter V. Dell'Orto presents a ready-to-use mini-dungeon crawl, complete with map and four new monsters for *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy!*

Those who wield magic often get injured, so it can be incredibly useful to tap the potential of *Healing and Purification Ritual Path Magic*. This expansion for *GURPS Thaumatology: Ritual Path Magic* – from Christopher R. Rice, author of *How to Be a GURPS GM: Ritual Path Magic* – includes 15 new spells that provide cleansing, painkilling, purification, and even resurrection!

The real world can provide the strangest inspiration, as proven by *Fraxinetum*. This historic fortress in southeastern France comes alive thanks to Matt Riggsby, world-renowned guide of the *GURPS Hot Spots* series. Discover its history, adventuring possibilities, and even a map.

When it comes to crypt-crawling, making fast work of an adventure can require *Tactical Looting*. This guidance from *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* sage Sean Punch shows you how to devise a different type of dungeon delve, where speed is of

the essence. Discover possibilities, rules, and insight for quick-paced adventures.

Magic is essential to *Stilpnotita, the City of Lamps* – an adventure locale in the Plane of Earth. Its layout, infrastructure, and adventuring possibilities come to life . . . albeit a possibly short life, if one crosses the Deep King.

All heroes tap their inner reserves, but some have access to *Supernatural Energy*. *GURPS Powers: Totems and Nature Spirits* author Rory Fansler offers a new look at how to codify magical energy sources, to provide a different fantastical flavor for your setting.

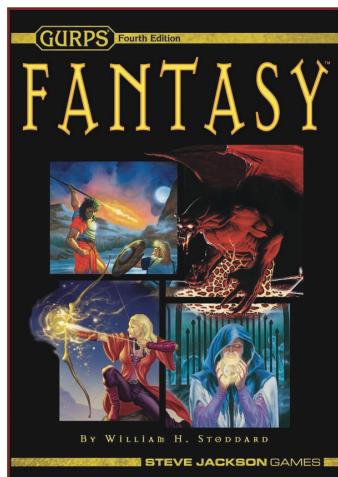
A large number of alternate Earths are fairly mundane – but on others, it's *Pandemonium*. This world for *GURPS Infinite Earths* – from *GURPS Locations: St. George's Cathedral* author Michele Armellini – outlines a setting for adventure (or even campaigns) where demons reign supreme. It's up to the heroes to do what they can to survive while hopefully

uncovering secrets and fighting against terrifying hordes. A pinch of this, a dose of that, shake vigorously . . . and unleash the potential of *Fusion Alchemy*. This optional system from Christopher R. Rice describes a variant alchemical outlook that lets you mix your own brews in a lab – or even *inside* another person. Drink up, if you dare!

One minute the heroes think they know what's going on, and the next minute they're trying to figure out *The Cube*. This encounter for any suitably cinematic fantasy setting shows off an unbelievable set piece for the heroes to use to get where they want to go.

If campaigns are divided between the quick and the dead, then *(Lack of) Speed Kills*. This issue's Random Thought Table looks at some tips for how to speed up gameplay (especially in fantasy campaigns), and how to avoid and mitigate some common time traps that gaming groups might find themselves in.

With this month's *Pyramid*, you'll get more magic, more mayhem, and more methods to manifest your might against myriad monsters and mental mysteries. It's all fantasy, and it's all real!



Cover Art: Dean Spencer • Interior Art: Alex Fernandez, Tithi Luadthong, and Dean Spencer

Additional Material: Jason "PK" Levine, Phil Masters, Sean Punch, and Matt Riggsby

Cartography: Matt Riggsby and Nikola Vrtis • Special Thanks: Peter V. Dell'Orto and Christopher Dorr

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Item

Any item. Always on; the wearer has the Alcohol Tolerance (p. B100) perk (or has the Alcohol Intolerance quirk, p. B165, canceled) while the item is worn or held. *Energy cost to create:* 100.

Alter Poison

Regular

This spell alters the nature of a particular poison stored in a container. The types are: airborne contact agent (a gas or aerosol that takes effect when it is inhaled or lands on exposed skin), blood agent (p. B437), contact agent (p. B437), digestive agent (p. B437), or respiratory agent (p. B437). If the poison is made a respiratory agent or airborne contact agent, it becomes a gas or aerosol that spreads in a 2-yard-radius area upon breakage of the container and then persists for 10 seconds, drifting with air current.

Cost: 3 per dose if the resulting form is airborne contact agent, 1 per dose if the resulting form is an ingested poison, 2 per dose otherwise.

Prerequisites: *Magery 2* and *Analyze Poison*.

Item

A ring. Usable only by mages. *Energy cost to create:* 300; must include an emerald worth \$100.

Analyze Poison

Information; Resisted by Obscure Poison

Identifies a poison. The caster learns the poison's origin, type, and effects (amount of damage, number of cycles, symptoms, etc.).

Cost: 2.

Time to cast: 1 minute.

Prerequisite: *Detect Poison* or *Seek Poison*.

Item

A ring or a wand. *Energy cost to create:* 200; must include an emerald worth \$100.

Apply Poison

Regular

The caster touches a source of poison (a flask or another container, teeth dripping with venom, etc.) and instantly applies the poison to the target weapon. One dose of poison is required to envenom the tip of a piercing or impaling weapon. Poisoning the edge of a weapon, so that a cutting attack can deliver it, requires three doses per yard of reach. This also works on natural weapons, such as teeth or claws.

Cost: 1.

Prerequisite: *Detect Poison* or *Seek Poison*.

Item

(a) A ring. *Energy cost to create:* 100; must include an emerald worth \$100. (b) A scabbard that automatically applies poison, used during the

enchantment, every time a weapon is sheathed in it. *Energy cost to create:* 50 times the \$ value in the game world of a dose of the poison applied; must include an emerald worth \$100 and three doses of poison.

Decrease Potency

Regular; Resisted by HT

This spell can be cast on a source of poison or a poisoned creature. The poison affected (or the poison currently affecting the subject) becomes easier to resist.

Duration: 1 hour.

Cost: 1 per +1 to resistance rolls. Same cost to maintain.

Prerequisite: *Slow Poison*.

Item

Staff, wand, or jewelry. *Energy cost to create:* 300; must include an emerald worth \$500.

Extract Poison

Regular; Resisted by HT

The caster must hold a container while casting this spell. This spell instantly extracts poison from the target venomous creature or poisonous animal, fungus, plant, or other substance, and places it in the container. Note that this spell affects only poisonous and venomous creatures, not *poisoned* creatures (unless they happen to be poisonous as well).

Cost: 1 per dose extracted.

Prerequisite: *Seek Poison*.

Item

A ring. *Energy cost to create:* 150; must include an emerald worth \$100.



HEALING AND PURIFICATION RITUAL PATH MAGIC

BY CHRISTOPHER R. RICE

GURPS Thaumatology: Ritual Path Magic is perhaps one of the most-talked about systems of magic in *GURPS*. It began as a few pages in *GURPS Monster Hunters 1: Champions* and proved so popular that it received its own book. It's spawned numerous *Pyramid* articles, a *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* version (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 19: Incantation Magic*), a follow-up book on using it (*How to Be a GURPS GM: Ritual Path Magic*), and hundreds of forum and blog posts by numerous authors. *This* article seeks to expand the system yet again, this time with spells to heal, restore, or purify subjects.

... Restore Body can provide
healing ...

– *GURPS Thaumatology:
Ritual Path Magic*

NEW SPELLS

Some of the following spells are broken up into “Lesser” or “Greater” types. These do roughly the same thing, but have more or less of a kick and are gameist distinctions to help them stand out.

Cleansing

Spell Effects: Greater Destroy Spirit + Lesser Restore Spirit.
Inherent Modifiers: Bestows a Bonus, opposed rolls for curses/spiritual maladies.
Greater Effects: 1 (x3).

This spell functions identically to Lesser Cleansing (p. 19), but can be used on places as well as people or things. When used on a place (e.g., a house), it can cleanse about 2,000

square feet and uses the better of its HT+5 (HT is typically 12) or the caster's Path skill+5 to shed curses, possession, and similar. Whenever an area is cleansed, ceremonial objects – candles, *putsi* bags, etc. – must be placed in the four cardinal directions of the location. This is a *required* part of the spell.

Typical Casting: Greater Destroy Spirit (5) + Lesser Restore Spirit (4) + Area Effect, 15 yards (10) + Bestows a Bonus, +5 to opposed rolls for curses/spiritual maladies (80). *Note:* This spell requires ritualistic objects to be placed in or near the thing to be cleansed. This reduces total energy by -5%, as per *Traditional Trappings (Ritual Path Magic*, p. 19). 283 energy (99x3).

Greater Cleansing

Spell Effects: Greater Destroy Spirit + Greater Restore Spirit.
Inherent Modifiers: Altered Trait, Blessed + Bestows a Bonus, opposed rolls for curses/spiritual maladies.
Greater Effects: 2 (x5).

This spell functions identically to Cleansing (above), but *permanently* blesses the subject. For objects, this makes them holy and capable of harming beings who suffer a weakness versus holy or blessed things. For places, this consecrates the area, making it holy ground and thus difficult for spirits and unclean things to traverse or enter. For beings, this cleanses their spirits as if they'd gone to confession, been ritually purified by a priest or shaman, and so on. The full effects depend on the spell's target, but at the least, they gain +5 to resist curses, possession, etc. – until the first time they *fail* to resist such an effect.

Typical Casting: Greater Destroy Spirit (5) + Greater Restore Spirit (4) + Area Effect, 15 yards (10) + Altered Trait, Blessed (10) + Bestows a Bonus, +5 to opposed rolls for curses/spiritual maladies (80) + Duration, Permanent until dispelled (24).

PANDEMONIUM

BY MICHELE ARMELLINI

Pandemonium is an “alternate Earth” designed for *GURPS Infinite Worlds*, but suitable as a standalone magical medieval setting. What it has in numbers is . . . demons.

Pandemonium is a world where demons are a frequent, powerful, catastrophic presence. The reason for this remains unknown to both locals and outworld visitors. These beings, having many of the powers attributed to them by Homeline’s literature on the matter, are there to stay.

The invasion began in 1000 A.D., and local Christian leaders predictably interpreted it as the end of the world. It’s now 1489. The world has not ended, but it is certainly much the worse for wear.

*Hell is empty, and all the devils
are here.*

– William Shakespeare,
The Tempest

THE DEMONS ARRIVE

Contemporary accounts of the local year 1000 are sparse, obscure, and desperate. Apparently, demons began to appear nearly everywhere, wreaking havoc wherever they did. It seems they simply came out of nowhere in the Indian subcontinent, the Maghreb, and Southern China. Elsewhere, they had – at least allegedly – plenty of human worshippers, eager to summon them. These supporters usually hoped to control the demons, or to make deals with them; mostly, they failed.

Witchcraft had been forbidden by religious laws, but until then, it was essentially the stuff of scary tales. Although mana was, and is, normal on most of this alternate Earth, actual use of it was exceedingly rare. People did believe that evil supernatural beings existed, usually as an enemy of their deity, and wizards able to summon them were rumored to be hiding somewhere – but that was really no different from Homeline’s medieval superstitions.

Yet within a decade, the risk of an actual demon suddenly showing up in flight over the market square, slithering into one’s bedroom, or even stomping into the city’s cathedral had become very real. Worse, the more powerful demons could unleash a rain of fire, a plague, or clouds of locusts.

From Hell, for All Tastes

Demons are extremely diverse. They also appear to have a variety of goals, and to be able to stay on Pandemonium for differing periods of time. Imps seem content with cruel tricks

and petty mischief, possibly over just one night. Many other demons appear bent on having fun – *their* sort of fun – by possessing a human body for a while. The stronger ones choose to take control of a chunk of local reality – a coven of worshippers, a town, even a whole kingdom – and remain for years. Some of these demons do so openly; others, by possessing or controlling human pawns.

Yet other demons – the truly powerful ones – apparently use Pandemonium as a battlefield on which to face their own kind. Naturally, these battles cause immense collateral damage. The purpose of these confrontations remains unknown to the unlucky locals.

A few demons seem willing to make deals with humans. However, even if they stick to the letter of the deal, more often than not the human party won’t achieve what they really wanted.

While the local priests believe all of these beings are deliberately evil, Infinity researchers don’t entirely agree. There might be a minority who consider humanity a negligible part of the landscape. Others sometimes just toy with humans like an inattentive owner with a neglected pet.

Civilizations Falter

By about 1040, peoples and rulers alike had come to think of demons as a terrible-but-unavoidable fact of life. However, most of these medieval societies were already fragile enough when faced with natural calamities such as droughts and famines. Some civilizations were hit harder than others, and faltered; some even flickered out. Others did their best to cope, in different ways – often because the level of the threat turned out to be different. In general, everyone took at least a few steps backward. No civilization has reached TL4, many are stuck with early TL3 technology, and the Aztec Empire (p. 41) is at TL2.

Understandably, research efforts have largely turned toward discovering or rediscovering magic, especially with a view to deal with demons. But not all civilizations have taken the same path in their efforts to oppose these fearsome intruders.

The Corrupt West

The landscape of Southern and Western Europe is not unrecognizable to Homeline historians, even though most of Italy has coalesced into the Papal State. Here, the demonic presences are more likely to act out on the scale of a bull-like being running amok along the main street than as a new volcano sprouting in the plains. There *are* droughts and plagues caused by demons, but they are not very different from the same occurrences with natural causes.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Michele Armellini lives in Udine, Italy, with his very understanding wife Silvia. Michele makes a living out of foreign languages, but he loves dabbling in and studying the obscure and the uncanny – and trying to convert them into game mechanics! He has written for *Pyramid*, and he is the author of **GURPS WWII: Grim Legions**. He is the author or co-author (with Hans-Christian Vortisch) of several other **GURPS** products: **GURPS Locations: St. George's Cathedral**, **GURPS WWII: Their Finest Hour**, **GURPS WWII: Doomed White Eagle**, and **GURPS WWII: Michael's Army**. With special thanks to the Hellions.

"David Chart" is the pen name of a Japanese author living near Tokyo and working for the largest Shinto organization in Japan. Before he naturalized as a Japanese citizen, it was also his real name, and he wrote *Wings of the Rising Sun* for *Transhuman Space*, as well as serving as the Line Editor of *Ars Magica* for 14 years.

Peter V. Dell'Orto was raised in New Jersey. He started roleplaying in 1981, with *Dungeons & Dragons*, and has played **GURPS** since *Man to Man*. He has been active as a **GURPS** playtester, editor, and contributing author since 1996. Peter is the author of numerous **GURPS** articles for *Pyramid* magazine, and author or co-author of several **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy** supplements as well as **GURPS Martial Arts**. Peter has run the same hack-and-slash **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy** game for over five years and more than 80 sessions mostly using one town and one megadungeon. You can read about it on his blog *Dungeon Fantastic* at dungeonfantastic.blogspot.com.

Rory Fansler (also known as "refplace") is an analyst and tinkerer, preferring "kitchen sink" campaigns with rich backgrounds to explore and puzzles to solve. Some of his ideas can be found at warehouse23.com/products?utf8=&keywords=rory+fansler and refplace.blogspot.com, where he also does reviews and provides information to help newcomers to **GURPS**.

Aleksei Isachenko worked as an engineer at an aircraft plant and is now an associate professor in the department of manufacturing engineering. He wishes to thank his gaming group for support in this foray into writing. Special thanks

to Peter V. Dell'Orto for creating Poison Cloud, Poison Jet, Poison Touch, and Toxic Ball.

William J. Keith is originally from Texas and got his undergraduate degrees from either UT Austin or IOU, depending on who he's talking to. He is now a professor of mathematics in Michigan. He has been playing **GURPS** for about 20 years and has written for several versions of *Pyramid* over that time, mostly about various flavors of fantasy.

Sean Punch set out to become a particle physicist in 1985 and ended up as **GURPS** Line Editor in 1995. In that capacity, he has written, edited, or contributed to hundreds of **GURPS** releases, revised the game into its fourth edition (2004), and been a regular contributor to *Pyramid* magazine. From 2008, he has served as lead creator of the **GURPS Action** and **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy** series; work on the latter led to his design of the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game*, released in 2017. Sean has been a gamer since 1979, but devotes most of his spare time to Argentine tango. He lives in Montréal, Québec with *son amour*, Geneviève.

Christopher R. Rice has been published in *Pyramid* multiple times, and now he's been published in the newest iteration. He's also authored, co-authored, or contributed to eight **GURPS** supplements (and counting!) on a range of subjects. Of course, if he's not writing about **GURPS**, he's blogging about it. Visit his site, "Ravens N' Pennies" (www.ravenspennies.com), for more **GURPS** goodies. He wishes to thank L.A., for being the wonderful, amazing, inspiring woman that she is – not every man gets his muse personified in the flesh! He also wishes to thank his gaming group – the Headhunters – for alpha testing, his family (especially his mother), and Elizabeth "Archangel Beth" McCoy, his Sith Editrix mentor. Special thanks to Christopher Dorr for help with the costs of elixirs in *Fusion Alchemy*.

Matt Riggsby is trained in anthropology and archaeology and, like the rest of his generation, has a job in computers. He works for an international healthcare IT company and lives with his lovely and talented wife, an above-average child, and a pack of dogs.



ABOUT *GURPS*

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ideas to add to your own game! The *Pyramid* web page is pyramid.sjgames.com.

Store Finder (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!

Bibliographies. Bibliographies are a great resource for finding more of what you love! We've added them to many *GURPS* book web pages with links to help you find the next perfect element for your game.

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Errata pages for *GURPS* releases are available at sjgames.com/errata/gurps.

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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