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INTRODUCTION

About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources now available include:

Pyramid (www.sjgames.com/pyramid). Our online magazine includes new rules and articles for *GURPS*. It also covers the hobby's top games – *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, *Traveller*, *World of Darkness*, *Call of Cthulhu*, *Shadowrun*, and many more – and other Steve Jackson Games releases like *In Nomine*, *Illuminati*, *Car Wars*, *Toon*, *Ogre*, and more. And *Pyramid* subscribers also have access to playtest files online, to see (and comment on) new books before they're released.

New supplements and adventures. *GURPS* continues to grow, and we'll be happy to let you know what's new. A current catalog is available for an SASE. Or check out our Web site (below).

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata sheets for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are always available from SJ Games; be sure to include an SASE with your request. Or download them from the Web – see below.

Q&A. We do our best to answer any game question accompanied by an SASE.

Gamer input. We value your comments. We will consider them not only for new products, but also when we update this book on later printings!

Internet. Visit us on the World Wide Web at www.sjgames.com for an online catalog, errata, updates, and hundreds of pages of information. We also have conferences on CompuServe and AOL. *GURPS* has its own Usenet group, too: rec.games.frp.gurps.

GURPSnet. Much of the online discussion of *GURPS* happens on this e-mail list. To join, send mail to majordomo@io.com with "subscribe GURPSnet-L" in the body, or point your World Wide Web browser to gurpsnet.sjgames.com/.

The *GURPS Fantasy Folk* Web page is at www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/fantasyfolk.

Page References

See *GURPS Compendium I*, p. 181, for a list of abbreviations for *GURPS* titles, or for the most recent list, visit our Web site at www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html.

Page references that begin with a B refer to the *GURPS Basic Set*, *Third Edition Revised*; e.g., p. B22 refers to page 22 of the *Basic Set*. M refers to *GURPS Magic*, FB refers to *GURPS Fantasy Bestiary*, PS refers to *GURPS Psionics*, and G refers to *GURPS Grimoire*.

Mankind has been imagining other races since ages before he conceived the idea of writing down stories – legends about concerning spirits, gods, demons, monsters, fairies, and infinitely more. This book is designed to allow the *GURPS* GM to take full advantage of the possibilities of nonhuman fantasy races. *GURPS Fantasy Folk* is really two books in one. The first is a comprehensive racial generation system that allows the GM to define and embody any race he can imagine, or to translate his favorite races from fantastic fiction, or from other roleplaying systems, to *GURPS*.

The second uses this system to create official *GURPS* versions of 24 races – some are mainstays of fantasy literature, others have never been seen before.

GURPS Fantasy Folk can be used with only the *GURPS Basic Set*, but GMs will find their enjoyment of their multi-racial fantasy universe enhanced greatly if they also use *GURPS Magic* and *GURPS Grimoire*. *GURPS Fantasy* and *GURPS Fantasy II* are not necessary, but *Fantasy Folk* can enrich roleplaying both on the world of Yrth and in the Mad Lands. Fantasy races can also enhance campaigns set in the worlds of *GURPS China*, *GURPS Horror*, *GURPS Japan*, *GURPS Supers*, *GURPS Time Travel*, and even *GURPS Ice Age*. The racial generation rules in this book are similar to those given in *GURPS Aliens*. Each book includes a few advantages and disadvantages that the other doesn't have, to fit the different genres. This book also includes many updated point costs, which should also be used for alien races. See the sidebar on p. 5.

Inspiration

It is impossible to catalog every influential author in a lifetime of fantasy reading, but a few whose ideas helped shape this book include J.R.R. Tolkien, H.P. Lovecraft, Fritz Lieber, C.S. Lewis, Michael Moorcock, Stephen R. Donaldson, Donna Barr, Larry Niven, Wendy Pini, and William Messner-Loebs.

About the Authors

Chris W. McCubbin is a nongraduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, in English. He comes to games by way of the comics industry – he previously worked as an editor at Fantagraphics Books on their magazines *The Comics Journal* and *Amazing Heroes*. Since Chris first wrote *Fantasy Folk*, he's gone on to work at Origin Systems writing computer game documentation and hint books. He's presently one of the owners of Incan Monkey God Studios (www.incanmonkey.com). Chris lives in Austin with his wife, Lynette, his gracefully aging cat, Polychrome, and his dog, Penny. Write him at cwm@io.com

Sean "Dr. Kromm" Punch is the *GURPS* Line Editor at SJ Games. Editor or revisor of over a dozen *GURPS* books, he is also the author of *GURPS Wizards* and *GURPS Undead*, coauthor of *GURPS Y2K*, and compiler of *GURPS Compendium I* and *II*, *GURPS Lite*, and *GURPS GM'S Screen*. Sean has been a fanatical gamer since 1979. His other interests include biotechnology, cinema, military science, tigers, and wine. He and his wife, Bonnie, presently live in Montréal, Québec with four cats and one bird.

The World of Yrth

The world of Yrth is the milieu of *GURPS Fantasy*, one of the current “official” *GURPS* fantasy universes. In order to make *Fantasy Folk* easily compatible with any fantasy universe, this book does not specifically follow the rather unusual culture or history of Yrth. For GMs already playing in Yrth, some of the details about the following races’ culture or development will have to be adjusted to fit into the Yrth milieu.

In *GURPS Fantasy*, the native races of Yrth are the Elves, Dwarves, and Orcs. A mishap triggers the transdimensional “Banestorm,” which brings in monsters, persons, and even whole communities from other worlds. Races brought by the Banestorm include mankind, Halflings, Goblins, Hobgoblins, Reptile Men, Kobolds, Minotaurs, Centaurs, Ogres, and Giants. These are the “official” races found in *GURPS Fantasy*, but if a GM wishes to place other races on the world of Yrth, he can do so. The Banestorm could easily have brought small groups to a remote location, where they would have had little or no previous contact with the other races of Yrth.



The Sylvan Races

The descriptions of the various races will occasionally mention the “sylvan,” or woodland, races. This refers to a loose confederation, led by the Elves, of races living in or near the forest. The sylvan races include the Wood Elves, Centaurs, Elyllon, Fauns, Leprechauns, Wildmen, and Sasquatch.

The sylvan races are all lovers of nature, and rarely if ever war among themselves. If one sylvan race is attacked by outside forces, it will receive sympathy, if not outright aid, from the others.

Thirteen of the following races (Elves, Dwarves, Halflings, Goblins, Orcs, Reptile Men, Ghouls, Kobolds, and Minotaurs, and the subraces Gnomes, Half-Elves, Half-Orcs, and Hobgoblins) have been part of *GURPS* since the publication of the first edition of *GURPS Fantasy*. All 24 of these races appeared in the first edition of *GURPS Fantasy Folk* as well. Several racial descriptions have been updated to take full advantage of the revised racial generation rules. At the same time, care has been taken to keep the point total and essential conception of each race as close as possible to earlier versions, to ease the translation for those who are using these races in an earlier form. Nevertheless, there are a few cases where significant changes in point cost could not be avoided. In describing the culture of these races, it was necessary to give them a cultural context, so occasionally the text will assume a world in which all these races co-exist, and are generally aware of one another. Humanity dominates, but does not rule, this hypothetical multi-racial culture. In addition to all the races in this book, this culture involves a few other intelligent creatures, including Trolls, Vampires, Dragons, Unicorns, and the faerie races (see sidebar, next page). Many of these creatures are described in existing *GURPS* books. Hopefully they can all receive a fuller treatment in future releases.

This hypothetical culture exists only as a convenient abstraction to make it easier to describe a given culture’s disposition and interactions with other peoples. The GM should feel free to make whatever alterations he feels are necessary to bring these races into line with his own world, and to use or discard as many of these races as he likes.

To this end, elements of the racial make-up, such as racial Intolerance disadvantages and race-specific Reputations, can be replaced or simply dropped if the GM so desires. Note that such things *are* figured into the “default” racial cost listed for each race, so be sure to update these costs to reflect any changes.

Naturally, since *GURPS Fantasy Folk* is a GM system, the GM is completely free to make any changes that he desires in any of the racial templates presented in the following section. Of course, if such modifications are made, we can no longer ensure that the modified races will be balanced or will remain compatible with future *GURPS* adventures or sourcebooks.

Multi-Racial Campaigns

The 24 races in this book are designed to fit together into the same campaign. However, many GMs might find such a plethora of character races unbelievable, unwieldy, or simply unnecessary. Many “subsets” of the races presented here can create interesting worlds. And if the GM uses the racial generation rules to create his own civilizations, literally anything is possible. Some examples:

Lizards, Bugs, and Fish Humanity

Humanity is the only intelligent mammalian life form, but he shares his world with Fishmen, Insect Men, and Reptile Men. The various races find it very hard to communicate, and have almost no understanding of each other’s minds or way of life. In such a milieu, the GM would probably want to give the nonhumans more advanced cultures than this book portrays. There might be a bloody, unending three-way war between mankind, fish and reptiles, with the insects as (unstable) neutrals. Alternatively, the humans could be oppressed or enslaved by the other races, struggling for their lives and freedom against impossible odds.



In the Deep Wood

The world is dominated by the sylvan races, led by the Elves. The Dark Elves are the “evil empire” of the campaign. The GM could also include Ogres or Minotaurs as more savage menaces. Such a world wouldn’t necessarily need humanity – the Elves could be the dominant race. On the other hand, perhaps mankind could exist – as the *villains* of the campaign. Expansionist human civilizations are threatening the woodlands, and the sylvan folk must fight to protect their way of life. A milieu very similar to this can be found in Wendy and Richard Pini’s long-running comic book *Elfquest*.

Body Shop

Humanity was the only race to evolve naturally, but mighty wizards (perhaps in the remote past, perhaps not) have *created* a number of other races, by tampering with humanity or by engineering human traits into various beasts. Almost any race – even Dwarves, Bales, or Ghouls – can be made to fit into such a world, but especially likely candidates include the enhanced beasts, Centaurs, Fauns, Giants, and Merfolk.

Time Slip

Another possible variation is to take the world outlined in this book, and move it forward or backwards along the time stream. Perhaps the campaign could be set in the future – the Elves are gone and many of the older races (Reptile Men, perhaps Dwarves) are extinct or nearly so. Orcs have been exterminated or enslaved. Humanity is starting to mix magic and technology, like gunpowder and steam engines. The remaining nonhuman races are scarce, downtrodden, and struggling to carve out their own niches in the ever-more intrusive human society.

Or perhaps time could be taken backwards, to the heyday of the Elves and the Dwarves, while the first primitive humans were discovering these already ancient cultures. Or even further back, to the decline of the Reptile and Fishmen empires, and the awakening of the Elves. Perhaps a few of the great lizards still stalked the earth, and humanity, if it existed at all, would be a hairy primate cowering in trees and caves.

The Faerie Folk

The beings of Faerie are often referred to in this volume, but they are nowhere discussed in detail. This is intentional; this book does not deal with any races more supernatural than the Bales.

The folk of Faerie are supernatural beings, known mostly from Celtic folklore. They inhabit a land of their own, which occasionally enters or penetrates our own mundane world . . . usually to the sorrow of humanity. Many are tiny – thus the common name “the Little People” – but some are human-sized or larger. They take an incredible variety of forms, from the beautiful to the monstrous. In general, they are morally neutral, though there are many good and evil *individuals* among them. All are extremely magical, and all are secretive, especially where mankind is concerned. All are immortal, but none can stand the touch of cold iron, and some are vulnerable in other ways.

The many races of Faerie are traditionally ruled by the creatures called the Sidhe. Think of them as super-Elves, *incredibly* beautiful, magical, magnetic . . . and totally amoral. The Sidhe war among themselves, using the other races as cannon-fodder. The “Unseelie Court” is often identified with evil, and the “Seelie Court” with good, but even the “seeliest” of the Faerie lords care little for mortal men. And the Seelie Court is even more likely than the Unseelie to kidnap a baby, or a particularly beautiful young maiden or man, to vanish “under the hill” forever.

Mortal men, fortunately, can usually steer clear of these fey immortals. Try not to discuss them at all (they’re listening). If you *must* speak of them, use a euphemism like the Good Folk or the Wise Ones; *never* call them “fairies.” Avoid dancing lights in the wilderness, and stay safe at home on Midsummer Night and All Hallow’s Eve!

A *GURPS* worldbook on the Faerie Folk is planned. For those who want to use the Little People right now, the Leprechauns and Ellyllon can be made much more magical with relatively slight changes.

