CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

THE very first roleplaying was fantasy roleplaying. No game system is complete without a good treatment of magic. That's why *GURPS Fantasy* was our very first *GURPS* worldbook. That book presented both the magic system and a brief look at the world of Yrth, a magical game background.

However, feedback from *GURPS* players indicated that they wanted an entire book devoted to magic, with the Yrth material moved and expanded to a book of its own. There were also a lot of requests that the *Basic Set* cover magic.

Your wish is our command. The third edition of the *GURPS Basic Set* includes a chapter on magic, and over 100 spells . . . but there's room for much more. And here it is. This is the book for GMs and players who are ready for a campaign with high-powered magic.

GURPS Magic contains nothing but magical source material; all the world-specific background has been removed. (The world of Yrth has its own book: the second edition of *GURPS Fantasy*.)

This book repeats the magic rules from the *Basic Set,* for two reasons. First, some buyers of this book will be using earlier *GURPS* editions, which did not include magic. And second, it seemed worthwhile to keep all the material together, to minimize page-flipping and make reference easier for both GMs and players. So this book includes all the rules and spells already presented . . . and many, many more.

That extra space has allowed us to add more than 100 new spells to the list from *Fantasy,* for a total of about 420. It's also given room for several additions, all leading to a more creative and "generic" approach to magic. These include:

More detail on alchemy, and over twice as many alchemical elixirs.

A new college of spells: Plant Magic.

Some optional elaborations, such as mana "type," clerical magic, and one-spell mages.

Advice for the creative GM of a magical campaign — and a Campaign Record to make it easy to start a new campaign or game-world. All too often, fantasy campaigns seem trite and predictable, trapped by their sources in Tolkien and Arthurian England. But magic and magical worlds can have infinite variety.

And, best of all, we have a whole new *system* of spellcasting, designed by Steffan O'Sullivan and Brett Slocum. This "improvisational" magic allows mages to improvise any spell . . . if they know the right Words! It can be used to augment the *Spell List*. The 25 magical Runes can be used to create magical items, or to replace the spell list entirely, making *all* magic and enchantment improvisational.

Finally, if this book isn't enough, we've got a brand new book of completely new spells. The book is called *GURPS Grimoire,* and it's available now. It includes new spells for every college in this book, and also introduces two new colleges: Tech Magic and Gate Magic.

The real purpose of *GURPS Magic* is to let the GM create exactly the type of magical campaign he prefers, within the framework of a detailed spell list and other rules.

Enjoy the book; may your triumphs be many and your backfires few.

— Steve Jackson

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. Our bimonthly magazine includes new rules and articles for *GURPS,* as well as information on our other lines: *Car Wars, Toon, Ogre Miniatures* and more. It also covers top releases from other companies — *Traveller, Call of Cthulhu, Shadowrun*, and many more.

New supplements and adventures. We're always working on new material, and we'll be happy to let you know what's available. A current catalog is available for an SASE.

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.

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!

Illuminati Online. For those who have home computers, SJ Games has an online service with discussion areas for many games, including *GURPS*. Here's where we do a lot of our playtesting! It's up 24 hours per day at 512-448-8950, at up to 14.4K baud — or telnet to io.com. Give us a call! We also have conferences on Compuserve, GEnie, and America Online.

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set* (Third Edition). Any page reference that begins with a B refers to a page in the *Basic Set* — e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *Basic Set,* Third Edition. A "BY" page reference means a page in the *GURPS Bestiary, Second Edition.*

Because some of the material in this book repeats rules in the *Basic Set,* some page references are given to *both* books (for instance, p. 92/B12). This is to make it easier to reference between the two books.

Since this book was released after the *Third Edition,* it corrects a few errata, and makes a few changes (in particular, stats for missile spells are slightly different, since this book adds the Spell Throwing skill). Where the two books differ, follow this one.

1 Principles Of Magic

Magical Terms

abort: To stop the casting of a spell before its completion.

backfire: A critical miss when a spell is cast. Same as "fumble."

base skill: The level of spell skill given by spending one point (the minimum) for an ordinary (Mental/Hard) spell, or two points for a M/VH spell.

basic spell: A spell with no other spells as prerequisites.

blocking spell: A spell which can be cast as an instant defense — i.e., a block — to some sort of attack.

cancel: To end your own spell before it would normally be over.

caster: The person casting a spell.

effective skill: Your true skill, plus or minus any bonuses or penalties (usually penalties) you have for range, circumstances, etc. A caster rolls against effective skill.

energy: The "cost" to cast a spell. Energy cost may be paid in either ST points (fatigue) or HT points (hits). Lost energy of either kind is recovered as usual: resting for fatigue, healing for hits.

grimoire: A book of spells. Specifically, the list of spells available to a particular character, and their cost.

mage: Anyone with the advantage of Magical Aptitude.

magery or magical aptitude: Two words for the same thing. Magery is the advantage of being "in tune" with the powers of magic; see p. 103/B21.

maintain: To continue a spell after it would normally end. Costs more energy, unless the caster has high skill.

mana: The energy of magic. Different areas (or worlds) have different levels of mana. See sidebar, p. 6/B147. Different types of mana are possible as well — see p. 94.

mastered spell: A spell that is known at a high enough skill to eliminate the need to concentrate to cast it.

missile spell: A spell which is first cast, and then "thrown" at the subject. Requires two rolls: a skill roll to cast, a DX or Spell Throwing roll to hit.

prerequisite: A requirement for learning a spell.

resisted: Any spell that must overcome the "power" of its subject before it works.

subject: The person, place, or thing on which a spell is cast.

wizard: Any user of magic, whether he is a mage or not.

*M*AGIC is a powerful and fickle force, controlled through procedures called *spells*. Magic draws upon an energy called *mana* — but, though we have a name for it, we do not know what it is. Even the most powerful wizards do not fully understand magic . . . or, if they do, they haven't told *us* about it.

There are hundreds of different magic spells, each with a different purpose. Skilled wizards can modify old spells or even invent new ones . . . but experimental magic is dangerous, and not for the beginner.

Certain people have an inborn ability to learn and use magic. This advantage is called Magical Aptitude (see p. 103/B21). Anyone with any degree of Magical Aptitude is called a *mage*. In many game worlds, only mages can use magic. In all game worlds, they are *better* with magic than are non-mages.

Some religions teach that magic is inherently evil, and that any magic-user is endangering his immortal soul. Certainly, badly-cast spells seem to attract the attention of *something* powerful and malicious — and occasionally a clumsy spellcaster is devoured by a genuine demon!

But it is also true that many good men know and use magic — and the saintliest of these seem to be immune to the worst magical "fumbles."

No one really knows. The consensus is that magic, of itself, is neither good nor evil. It is the way a spell is used — the intent behind it — that determines whether magic is "white" or "black." But there is no doubt that certain forms of magic — human sacrifices, for example — are inherently evil and are despised by all honest mages.

Learning Magic

Most spells can be learned by anyone (though remember: in some worlds they can only be *used* by mages). Some spells can only be learned by mages — being a mage is a *prerequisite* for the spell.

Each magic spell is considered a *skill*, and is learned the same way that any other skill is learned. But, as the saying goes, "one spell doth not a wizard make." Many rogues and adventurers can command a few useful spells, but a true wizard will be the master of dozens.

Spells have no default level; you *must* be trained in a spell to use it. Spells are Mental/Hard or Mental/Very Hard skills. However, your level of Magical Aptitude *adds to your IQ* for the purpose of learning spells. Thus, if you have an IQ of 12 and 3 levels of Magical Aptitude, you learn spells as though you had an IQ of 15. No one may have a Magical Aptitude of more than 3.

Important note: To learn a spell, you must put a *minimum* of one point in it — even if you are brilliant and blessed with magical aptitude. Any less study, and the spell simply doesn't "take." Also, note that Eidetic Memory is not too useful for spells; it gives you rote memory, but not true understanding. First-level Eidetic Memory gives a +1 to IQ for learning spells; second-level gives a +2. It gives no other bonuses.

Finding a Teacher

In a world in which magic is common, it will probably be taught just like any other trade. You may apprentice yourself to a wizard to learn his whole craft . . . or hire a magic instructor to teach you a few spells. Of course, there is always the possibility that magic will be a closely-guarded secret in your world. This can lead to interesting complications!

In a world where magic is rare (or in which few believe in it), finding an instructor will be much harder. Most wizards will shroud themselves in secrecy — or belong to mysterious, far-off cults — or prove to be fakes!

Like any other intellectual skill, magic can be learned without a teacher. You must be Literate and have access to good textbooks. Even with the *best* textbooks, an unsupervised student learns at half speed (each spell costs twice as many character points). And most spell-books — *especially* those found in non-magical worlds — are complex and deliberately obscure!

In campaigns set in "normal" fantasy worlds, where magic is common, it is suggested that the GM ignore the question of supervision *unless and until* players create characters with skill levels which seem unreasonably high for the campaign. At that point, the GM can require that characters either pay double points for further improvement, or find someone of superior skill to teach them. Such skilled teachers may be hard to find and costly to hire!

Prerequisites

All spells except the most basic have *prerequisites* — requirements that must be met before the spell can be learned.

If the prerequisite is another spell, it must be known at skill level 12 or better before the higher spell may be studied. Thus, a magic-user must learn simple spells first, and proceed to advanced ones as his knowledge increases.

"Magery" is a prerequisite for most of the stronger spells. This means that no one but a mage — a person with Magical Aptitude — can learn them. "Magery 2" means that *two* levels of Magical Aptitude are required to learn the spell, and so on. Some spells also require a minimum basic DX or IQ, or a particular advantage.

Grimoires

When you play a character who knows a number of spells, you may wish to make a "grimoire" for that character. A grimoire is a book of spells. Your character's grimoire is a list of the spells he knows, his skill with each, the energy each costs to cast, and other important details about them. This will save a lot of reference time in play — because, with over 420 spells, not even the most dedicated player will know the details for every one!

A "grimoire form" is located on p. 128. You may wish to copy it onto the back of each mage's Character Sheet. This is for the *players'* convenience. A *character* has his spells memorized, and can leave his spellbooks at home.

Casting Spells

In order to cast a spell, you must *know* that spell, or possess an item that lets you use the spell (see p. 19/B153). Then you must spend one or more turns in *concentration*. At the beginning of the turn *after* your last turn of concentration, you must make your skill roll for that spell. You may then do something else on that turn (use a weapon, start concentrating again, etc.).

Casting a spell works just like any other use of a skill. The caster rolls three dice and compares the result with his "skill level" in that spell. If his roll is less than or equal to his skill level, the spell works. If his roll is greater than his skill, the spell fails.

Hiring a Wizard

PCs may want to hire a wizard for a teacher. Or a group of adventurers may need a mercenary magician! Use the same procedure and pay rules as for any other hireling (see p. B194). The more common magic is in your world, the easier it will be to find any sort of wizard and the less you will have to pay him. See p. 106 for some basic job information.

However, it will be harder to find a wizard hireling if you want to specify the exact spells he must know, especially if you choose complex ones. To find a wizard with Create Fire, for instance, you would need to roll at only a -1, since this is a common spell. But to find a wizard who knew both Lesser Geas and Summon Spirit (two complex, unrelated spells) you would have to roll at a -8!

Specifying a high level of skill will also make a hireling harder to find: in general, -1 to the search roll for each skill level above 15 which you require.

Setting these penalties is up to the GM. Any mage gets a +1 when searching for another mage as hireling; connections with the local wizardly guilds or power structure could be good for a further +1 to +3 bonus.