
Scrollworks

a small rag for fantasy style GURPS

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Psycho Babble

The other day the issue came up of why I publish Scrollworks. There are many reasons, but I think the most interesting answer is that it forces me to write. Life can be a real energy drain and its easy to neglect one's creative impulses. By setting an arbitrary deadline for myself each month, I can focus and publish new game ideas. Moreover, this deadline has helped me to flesh out some ideas for submission to various game magazines. I've already sold one idea to Pyramid, so here's hoping Scrollworks helps me to do it again!

As always, if you'd like to be dropped from the mailing list, or if you have a comment, drop me an e-mail at antissa@deltanet.com. Be sure to tell a friend! Good Gaming!

Interplanar Swapmeet and Astral Bargain Bin : Cube of Slime

Before he died the eccentric mage Jericho the Humble shared a rare and peculiar spell, Summon Slime, to a travelling wizardess. This wizardess, Madelyn Rhys (see scrollworks 3), copied the spell and began disseminating it for profit among the wizards who dwell around the Girian Inlet. What follows are Madelyn Rhys' own words as she experimented with the spell.

"Leave it to an old fool to create as something as trivial as a Summon Slime spell. Nevertheless, I might as well see what this can do. Hmm..channeling the mana is only a slight drain, and look, a cubic yard of quivering, transparent gel. Nice. Wait a minute, with a little concentration the cube actually moves. It moves slowly, but it does move. Wonderful, a slimy broom. Let's see if I can force my will upon this goo. Excellent! Oh look, I can spread it out and make it move like one of those deadly oozes that envelop and slay underground explorers. That should frighten people! OK, let's see now...perfect! I can reshape it to form a sort of barrier. I imagine this might be useful to defend against sling stones, fire, and to slow my enemies. Oops, I almost forgot to maintain my concentration and almost lost it. Its certainly not dangerous although it could be moved over a restrained target to suffocate them. Come to think of it, that might actually be entertaining as you could actually watch the person expire as they choke on gallons of transparent goo. Oh yes, this will be fun indeed."

Summon Slime : Duration 1 minute, Cost 2 to cast, 1 to maintain, Time to Cast 1 round, Prerequisites Create Earth, Create Water. Summons forth a cubic yard of transparent gelatin. The slime can be moved at a rate of 2 if the caster concentrates. The slime is receptive to the caster's commands and can be molded into a number of shapes. Regardless of the shape, this molding process takes 5 seconds. However, if the caster wishes to make a barrier of some sort, it must maintain a minimum thickness of 1 foot. The barrier will double movement through the hex the slime barrier is placed in. Arrows and other impaling projectiles will do 1 less point of damage. Crushing projectiles, such as thrown rocks and sling stones, will have their damage reduced by 2 points. Fire will be stopped at the gelatin barrier, but will destroy it in one round. If the caster wishes to spread the gel out on the floor for the appearance of a monster, then there is no minimum thickness. The gel may be spread quite thin, however it would not hinder movement or make the area so slippery that fall may result. A possible tactic is to move the gelatin up walls and then have it drop on unsuspecting foes, causing some alarm! The gel may cover a prone foe and suffocation may result if the target lacks the means to escape. See the suffocation rules in B122 for details.

Roadkill : NPC's For Your Game

Trader Avinroe of Forge Coinhammer

"Stupid Humans. As dumb as a bag of rocks and about as worthless, too."

Avinroe of Forge Coinhammer is infected with the same distaste and lack of respect for humans that many dwarves possess. This outlook has a rough parallel to the way many Western countries treat the Middle East. "We have money and they have oil. Its really our oil, but we LET them sell it to us." (credit to Lyonel Padilla for that insight) In fantasy terms, the dwarves have access to precious metals via their extensive mines. Humans, and other demi-humans for that matter, have

goods that the dwarves desire, but cannot easily produce, such as timber, cattle, cloth, etc. The dwarves trade with the humans for these things, but are bullying, condescending, and aggressive if the supply of goods they crave is threatened.

Avinroe is a senior trader for his forge, which means he is responsible for major transactions with non-dwarf merchants. He can be met while travelling the roads with his wagon and team of oxen, or met in towns. In settlements he is the most abrasive, constantly on alert and mumbling derogatory remarks to himself about everyone and everything.

Player characters might interact with Avinroe any number of ways. He may very well engage the party in a heated debate about the worthless nature of their race, cheat and bully them if they are trading, or refuse to aid them if the group finds itself beset by enemies while on the road. In fact, a dwarf like Avinroe would be inclined to mock and non-dwarf that found itself in a combat situation it could not handle. Only if the matter threatened dwarf interests would he become involved.

ST 13, IQ 11, DX 11, HT 13. Basic Speed 6.0, Move 5 (reduced move), PD3(1)/DR6(3) (chain with leather beneath, natural DR, may add small shield for 2 more PD), Ads, Disads, Quirks: DR 1, Extended Lifespan, Extra Encumbrance, Hard to Kill +1, Longevity, Literacy, Greed, Miserliness, Reduced Move -1, Intolerance (most other races). Skills: Mace - 14, Axe - 13, Shield - 14, Brawling - 13, Intimidation - 13, Riding (mule) - 12, Teamster - 13, Merchant - 15, Animal Handling - 12, Packing - 13, Blacksmith - 11, Cooking - 10, Language (human) - 12, Carpentry - 12, Accounting - 13, Area Knowledge (Dragon Run Mountains) - 14, Area Knowledge (Restored Kingdom of Darius the Strong) - 12. Weapon : Mace - Swing crush, 2d+2, reach 1, I turn to ready.

Its Not a Matter of If...

GURPS is an enjoyable system because it is designed to handle a wide number of situations without burying the GM and players in a complex set of rules. Every now and again I flip through the rule books and am surprised at the interesting rules I can put to together to cover any type of action a PC or NPC might like to try. Its Not a Matter of If... will be an irregular feature discussing all the rules needed to handle a single, possible action during play.

A Tankard of Ale to the Groin : To attack use the appropriate hand to hand combat skill. If none, then the skill for a basic punch defaults to DX. Damage with the bare fist is thrust-2, crush. A tankard of ale is an improvised weapon and will add 2 points of damage, but will also incur a -2 penalty to hit since it is a weapon (other than a knife) used in close combat. So far, damage is thrust, crush, with q -2 penalty to hit. The modifier for a groin attack (if using compendium 2) has a -3 to hit penalty, for a total penalty of -5 to hit. If the attack is able to overcome the DR of the torso armor, a male target must make a HT roll at -1 for each point of damage sustained to avoid stun. Make a second, unmodified roll to avoid knockout. High Pain Threshold give +5 to these rolls. Low Pain Threshold doubles all penalties.

There ya go, GMs. Introduce the players to Trader Avinroe by having him insult their lineage followed up with a savage blow to the goonies. Man, I love this game.

One Million Ways to Die by Iron Crown Enterprises - \$16.00

I had some extra space that was difficult to fill, so I thought I'd tell you about a kewl supplement I purchased recently. One Million Ways to Die is a detailed combat system adaptable for use with any RPG system. The system is brutal, yet still playable, and the conversions are quite simple. Anyone familiar with Rolemaster will find many similarities. Basically, One Million Ways to Die is a streamlined version of Arms Law. There are individual charts for specific weapon attacks, their effectiveness against various armor types, and detailed critical and fumble charts. The system does not handle magical attacks, though, so some tinkering may be needed. If you're looking to add a gritty edge to your combat, pick this up and give it a whirl. At the very least, the critical hit and fumble charts will make for interesting reading.



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