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Roleplayer®

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The *GURPS*® Newsletter

Before there was *Pyramid*, even before there was a ***GURPS***, there was *Roleplayer*. It was originally produced as a free supplement for ***Man to Man*** and as promotion for the soon-to-be-released ***Generic Universal Role-Playing System, GURPS***. From there it grew to a newsletter, and then a full-fledged magazine, devoted to roleplaying, ***GURPS***-style. And now, through the miracle of online technology, Steve Jackson Games brings back *Roleplayer* in all its mid-'80s to early-'90s glory! All 30 issues are here on e23 . . . so whether you're a completist, a collector, a ***GURPS*** fan of the first order, or you just want a look at the early evolution of one of the best roleplaying systems out there, *Roleplayer* has what you need – and it's only on e23!

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From the ***Gurps Horseclans*** Manuscript

NPC Allies in *GURPS*

by Jerry Epperson

Editor's note: This advantage was omitted from ***GURPS Horseclans*** *because it might not be compatible with every GM's style of play — some referees might prefer simply to allow a player to run two player characters. We'll be interested in your comments.*

Many fictional heroes have partners — loyal comrades, faithful sidekicks, or life-long friends — who accompany them on adventures. These partners are hardly Dependents; they are fully capable of taking care of themselves. Nor are they Patrons; they lack the power, influence and resources for that special status. Instead, these fellow adventurers are equals — Allies.

In one sense, the other PCs who adventure with you are allies. But they can be unreliable allies indeed. Often they are chance acquaintances, first encountered at a roadside tavern only hours before. They have their own hidden goals, ethics and motives, which may or may not coincide with your own. A PC ally may turn on you at any minute, stealing your gold, your horse, or your life. Only a fool trusts a man simply because he is a PC.

An NPC Ally, on the other hand, is an advantage. Perhaps you fought side-by-side in an extended campaign, trained under the same master, or grew up in the same village. The two of you have come to trust each other implicitly. You travel together, fight back-to-back, share rations in hard times, trade watches through the night. No matter where you go, your Ally is not far away.

The point cost for an Ally is determined by his point value and frequency of appearance. Use Frequency of Appearance modifiers described for Patrons, p. B17.

An Ally built on 50 or fewer points is a Dependent (p. B29).

An Ally built on 51 to 75 points costs 0 points.

An Ally built on 76 to 100 points costs 5 points.

An Ally built on 101 to 150 points costs 10 points.

An Ally built on 151 to 200 points costs 15 points, and so on.

An Ally built on more than 50 points more than his PC is a Patron (p. B17).

An Ally having special abilities — magic powers in a non-magical world, equipment far beyond the world's TL — costs an extra 5 to 10 points, at the GM's discretion.

Creating an Ally

An Ally is subject to all the same rules and guidelines as PCs, as described in the ***GURPS Basic Set*** and the appropriate worldbook. An NPC Ally can have up to three disadvantages totaling no more than 40 points, or one disadvantage of any value. A GM may allow occasional exceptions to this guideline, however, just as he might for a PC.

NPC Allies must all pay the points to have their PC as an Ally. For a normal, 100-point PC, this will cost 10 points.

When selecting skills, advantages and disadvantages for an Ally, remember that most Allies share a common background with their PCs as the basis of their to their PC Ally. Soldiers will usually have fighters for Allies, thieves will have other underworld types, priests will have other clerics or holy knights, etc. A player should have to come up with an excellent rationale if he wants his PC to have an Ally from a wildly different background — not many elf water mages are going to be allied with dwarf warriors or orc bandits.

Neither an NPC Ally or his PC may receive points for a disadvantage such as Sense of Duty or Oath to his comrade. The point cost to have an Ally already takes this bond into account.

GMing the Ally

An Ally is a full-fledged NPC, and should be played as such. While Allies are usually agreeable to the suggestions of their PCs, they are not puppets. They will disagree with their friends from time to time. An Ally may try to dissuade a PC from a plan that seems foolish to him; if he can't talk his friend out of the plan, he may refuse to cooperate. Upon occasion, an Ally may even cause problems for his PC, picking fights, landing in jail, insulting a high noble . . . . Of course, the Ally will also try to bail his friend out when ***he*** makes similar mistakes.

A PC should receive no character points for any play session in which he betrays, attacks or unnecessarily endangers his NPC Ally. If the betrayal is particularly blatant, prolonged or severe, the trust between the PC and his Ally will be broken; the Ally is lost, but the points are not recovered.

If, on the other hand, an Ally dies through no fault of his PC friend, the PC should not be penalized. Let the PC form a relationship with another Ally. This relationship should develop gradually — no one gains a true Ally overnight.

Allies in *GURPS Horseclans*

The world of the Horseclans lends itself particularly well to Allies. The following characters make excellent Allies: fellow adventurers; mindspeaking creatures like prairiecats, horses, dogs, and elephants; apprentices; Sword Brothers; battlemates; kinsmen.

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Welcome to the first "commercial" issue of *Roleplayer*. Although the format is the same, if you look closely, you'll notice a couple of changes. The biggest is in advertising; *RP 6* had two full pages of advertising, but *RP 7* has less than half a page!

Which brings us to the second major difference — increased ***GURPS*** content! This issue includes at least one article for *every* published worldbook — ***Fantasy, Autoduel, Horror, Horseclans*** and ***Humanx*** — plus an excerpt from an upcoming release — the ***GURPS Bestiary***. We'll be bringing you more complete ***GURPS*** coverage with every issue. Stay tuned . . . .

— Jeff George

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