

## Captain Harquin

You are a proud citizen of the peerless kingdom of Sto Lat, and you have been for ... quite a long time, you think. In the reign of King Thorbind the Absent-Minded, you entered the great and noble army of Sto Lat, and rose to the rank of Captain in the King's Guard. The King himself appointed you to guard the palace cellars while some building work was taking place there, as he didn't want any spies or assassins sneaking in that way – a vital mission, and indeed one known only to yourself and him.

It worried you a little when the builders dropped some large stone blocks into the only entrance to the cellars while you were patrolling another part, but you assumed that this was all part of the King's plan. No good king could *forget* his faithful servant.

You're a little unclear what happened next, or how long you were down there, but eventually, someone opened up the cellars again. It turned out that it was now the reign of Queen Kelirehenna, which is fine, because she's obviously another good monarch for peerless Sto Lat; you immediately renewed your fealty. The Queen's chief advisor, Igneous Cutwell, seems happy with that, although for some reason, when you raised your visor to swear your oath again, he looked a bit worried and suggested that you should keep your armour on and your visor down as much as possible.

Well, that's fine with you. You find that your loyalty to the crown has now helped you overcome such foolish weaknesses as the need to eat or drink. Some people seem to think that you (and your armour) are a bit "old-fashioned", but that just shows that people in this silly new age of "stage-coaches" and "telegraphs" and suchlike nonsense need to be shown that the old ways are still the best ways. Mr Cutwell gives you the chance to prove this by going on special missions for the Queen, which just shows that the Queen has been wise enough to pick a shrewd and perceptive chief advisor.

So – you're a walking skeleton, animated by a stubborn loyalty to the rulers of Sto Lat, who wears an old (and rather heavy) suit of armour which fortunately hides your skeletal features, and talk in a strange, creaky voice. Is this a problem?

### The Gods Save Sto Lat!

*Some game mechanics stuff. To start with, bear in mind that all that armour slows you down rather a lot. But at least you're quite robust, not having any of the weaknesses of flesh... Okay, sadly, you don't heal naturally (you can be repaired by complex magical treatments), and if you're ever reduced to -12 Hit Points, you'll automatically fall to fragments and die. But it's worth that risk to serve the Queen of Sto Lat!*

*You have 1 point of innate "armour" (**Damage Resistance**), with an effective 3 more against impaling attacks, which tend to just slide off your bones. The armour you wear gives you 4 more DR on top of that. Also, because you're Unliving, piercing and impaling attacks do you less damage than they do to flesh and blood, and you're immune to pain and shock. Still, given your lack of innate healing ability, do try not to get damaged.*

*You technically count as "itinerant", with no fixed abode, which for normal human characters can be a bit inconvenient. However, given that you don't eat or drink and are immune to boredom – well, you can just go stand in a corner somewhere until you're needed. You do have plenty of spare funds for emergencies – such as repair requirements – though.*

## Hiram Frogge

You're a craftsman, from a family in that way of things somewhere on the Sto Plains, and early in life you discovered a real gift; you like inventing things and finding out how other people's inventions work, and you're good at it.

So, a couple of years ago, you signed up with the Grand Trunk Semaphore Company, because they're the people with the most use for engineering skills. You got on quite well with the company, but you did have an accident. Or two. You were working out how to use alchemical explosives for practical (but peaceful!) purposes, and some people who didn't understand your work complained to the authorities. But the Company still had a use for you; they shifted you to troubleshooting duties. It's a bit risky sometimes, but it does present some engineering challenges.

You present as a thoughtful young man, wearing glasses because you need them and plain leather-and-canvas overalls because they're practical. You carry various tools and weapons on belts or in pockets or pouches. (Actually, all this gear puts you near the limit for your encumbrance level.)

*Game Mechanics Note: Your **Gadgeteer** advantage means that you can invent and build innovative new stuff using your technical skills, although only on a fairly realistic timescale – you're not a superhero gadgeteer. For this game's purposes, this has been taken as a justification for you to have stuff from various other GURPS books. Also, the **Serendipity** advantage means that, once per session, you get some lucky break or useful coincidence – the GM decides what and when, but you're free to make suggestions.*

*Also, you have a secret weapon. If and when you detonate your Paper Bomb (basically a giant firework), it generates a 5d cr explosion and also a 5-yard-radius smoke cloud that lasts 1 minute, gives -10 to vision, and smells appalling. Also, anyone who takes damage from the explosion must roll HT-5 or take a hearing penalty equal to their margin of failure for 20-HT minutes, minimum 1. You'll want to light the blue touch-paper and then retire a long distance.*

*You are technically a footloose wanderer - i.e. you have no fixed abode, and need to keep cash in hand for rent and living expenses at all times.*

## Outcrop

You was born inna hilly rural area of what humans call Sto Lat, and eventually went into banditing. Dis is usually a human fink, but as someone once said t'you, "There is a fine trollish tradition of jumping out at travellers, and you might as well make some money from it". In fact, you fink dat banditing is a fink dat trolls oughta get good at. Move wiv deh times an' all dat.

Trouble is, *proper* banditing meant lots o' work setting up traps an' stuff, an' when you went solo, you kept finding dat people was runnin' away from you too fast. So you decided to do the job real proper, an' dug a big pit inna road. Dat took a while, and den you found dat you couldn't get out. (Shouldn't make big plans on warm days, mebbe.) But fortunate like, some human guard people came along an' told you dat dey'd help you out if you came quiet. An' den dey hit you over der head to make sure. Dey's smart.

When you woke up, though, dis little human said dat dey wasn't gonna hex-e-coot you for banditin', 'cos you hadn't actually robbed many people. (You was smart enuff not to say dat was 'cos they kept runnin' away too fast.) But you had to take a job wid dem, workin' for der Queen, or dey'd hex-ecoot you anyways. But der job ain't too bad, just helpin' find people dat der Queen finks is trouble an' tellin' dem ter stop. and they even pay you a bit. You's goin' up inna world!

You still fink dat you should do fings proper bandit-like sometimes, though.

*Note: You count as "settled", so 80% of your starting cash is tied up in a home and so on. Fortunately, as a troll, you don't really need much gear. You trail a big blunt instrument and carry a shovel and a pair of 6' poles lashed to your back.*

## Urbind the Gambler

Your parents came down from Llamados a few decades ago, not long before you were born, because they'd heard – correctly as it turned out – that there was money to be made in the jewellery business among the humans of the plains. Unfortunately, you don't have much taste for that sort of craftsmanship, but once you'd got out of the cellar and found your way round human society, you found something that you did enjoy: gambling. In fact, you found that you could even make a living at it, thanks to your naturally sharp memory. Not that good a living, though – you have a problem with your perfectly natural fondness for gold (Gold! Gold! Gol... ah, sorry) and maybe a bit too much of a love of the game itself. You generally play fair and pay your debts – it's hard to get games otherwise – but sometimes you just have to go for the big pot. In fact, although you have no taste at all for serious fighting, you've had to learn how to get out of sticky situations – by bluff, for preference, but with an axe if really necessary – and you've learned how to duck and dodge. Humans see you as a typical dwarf, scowling beneath your helmet and with an axe at your side, but you're a bit more talkative than some, if only because you're usually looking for a game to get into.

Still, sometimes, you do get into difficult situations. One of those happened in Sto Lat, when the game you were in turned out also to include a couple of Royal Guards. Things got complicated, and you ended up in a Town watch cell. You were soon let out, but that turned out to be thanks to Igneous Cutwell, a high-up human from the palace, who wanted to talk to you. It seemed that he'd somehow acquired a list of your debts, which was a bit long when you looked at it. But Cutwell offered to cover it – well, all of it where the people would take cash, anyway. Of course, there was a catch. He wanted someone to do some odd jobs for him, and he thought that you might be good at some of this stuff.

It's a gamble. But it's a gamble that's cleared some of your back debts, and anyway, you enjoy gambling.

*Note: You count as a **footloose wanderer** – you don't have a permanent home, just your listed gear and a small selection of clothes. You need to keep enough cash in hand to cover food and accommodation from day to day.*

## Miss Baccarat

You are a young woman whose appearance isn't exactly prepossessing, what with the wall-eyed squint, imperfect complexion, and bow-legged stance. You don't let it worry you, but all those colourful multi-layered dresses and fancy headscarves might be considered a mistake by less stylish persons.

You were born in the suburbs of Genua, and someone noticed early in your life that you had a gift for magic – it may have been all that talking to the spirits at voodoo ceremonies that gave them a hint. Fortunately, by that time, Lilith de Tempscire was no longer running the city, so it was quite easy for someone to locate you and offer you training. By the time you reached adulthood, you were a pretty competent voodoo witch, if you do say so yourself. And you do. Your looks aren't great, but you *use* that, cultivating an intimidating style.

However, you weren't the only one of your kind in Genua. With the new regime in place, witchcraft has come out of the swamp and is being treated as a respectable sort of career – which is all very well, but all the competition makes earning a living from magic harder. Anyway, you're a little bit curious about, well, everything, and you realised that you rather fancied seeing the world. So you got on a ship and went off to see the Disc.

After a couple of years of travel, you found yourself in the small city of Sto Lat, and you decided to settle down there for a while – there seemed to be a gap in the market for your skills. You were right, in that you can get a bit of work, but you find that you have a little difficulty making enough money to support that sort of life that a skilled witch, medium, and part-time voodoo expert ought to lead. So when Igneous Cutwell, the wizard (or whatever he is) who seems to run the royal court, came to you with an offer of occasional consultancy work for the government, you didn't see any reason to turn him down.

*Note: You rate as **settled**; you have a home in Sto Lat with fixtures and fittings appropriate to your Status. Among other things, this includes a flying broomstick (can carry up to 200 lbs. at Move 18).*

## Magic Notes

The game system lets you attempt any magic that the GM agrees is vaguely plausible given your sort of witchcraft, but you're a *lot* more likely to succeed with some things than others. (For example, yes, you could try to throw fireballs – but you'd usually have to roll 5 or less on 3d to get that spell to work, and pour a lot of Magic Points into it to get decent levels of damage.) Your particular specialities are *Divination* (magical information-gathering), *Necromancy* (magic pertaining to death and the undead), and *Summonation* (working with spirits).

## Magic Points (MP)

You spend these to work any magic. You start with **5**. Track them as you use them in the box on the character sheet.

You get spent points back at the rate of 1 per 10 minutes of game time (so it isn't going to happen during fight scenes, but you'll always be back to your maximum within an hour).

## Basic Casting Rules

Every spell you might cast has an effective skill level; some which you're good at or which suit your style are listed on your character sheet and are discussed in detail below. If you try anything else, ask the GM and he'll work out the appropriate skill level. To get a spell to work, you take at least one action – sometimes longer, occasionally much longer – and try to make this number or less on 3d. Casting always involves a bit of chanting and/or hand-waving from your character; if your effective skill level is 9 or less, it involves a *lot* of that and always takes at least 2 actions.

Then, when you roll the dice:

- If you roll a critical success (usually a 3 or 4), the spell doesn't cost you any Magic Points – it just works, and the victim can't resist it if that was otherwise an option.

- On a normal success, you spend the required number of Magic Points and the spell takes effect (if you don't have enough Magic Points available, nothing happens).
- If you roll an ordinary failure by 5 or less, nothing happens; you don't lose any Magic Points, and you can always try the casting again.
- If you roll an ordinary failure by 6 or more, nothing happens, and you lose Magic Points equal to a roll of 1d or however many the spell would have cost you, whichever is less.
- If you roll a critical failure (usually a 17 or 18), you spend the Magic Points the spell would have cost you (or all the Magic Points you've got, if that wasn't actually enough), the spell fails, and you get to roll on the *Magical Fumble Table* which the GM should have to hand.

In some cases, a spell may be *resisted* by an unwilling target (who will hope to roll better against Will or HT than you rolled to cast the spell).

### Voodoo Witch Magic

As a witch of sorts, you gain a lot of power by doing magic *right*, with lots of the correct aesthetic, weird conditions, muttering, worrying people, and so on. If the GM agrees that you're acting like a "proper" voodoo witch, the Magic Point cost of any spell is *half* what the same effect would cost otherwise, rounding halves up.

You can also get area-effect spells to work on much broader areas for much less Magic Point cost if the area can be defined as something more stylish than "five yards radius" and if the people within it know you (and know that you're a witch). *And* you can sometimes get spells to last longer by setting interesting conditions on them... The GM has details.

### Spell Duration

Some spells run continuously for a set duration. You're aware of the spells you've got running, but you can move, fight, talk, etc., while they're active, and can even cast further spells – but the rolls to do so are at -1 for every previous spell currently running. You can turn such a spell off at any time by taking a second of concentration.

If a spell has a stated duration, it can (usually) be maintained by taking a second of concentration at the end of that period and putting more Magic Points into the spell to keep it going for the same time again. The number of Points required for this is equal to *half* the number you required to cast it, ignoring the benefits of any critical success on the casting roll for this purpose; round halves up. No further skill roll is required – just a small mental effort.

### Power for Skill

If you're desperate, you can get an extra +1 to modified spell skill for every extra 2 Magic Points you assign to the spell, up to a maximum of +5 (for 10 Magic Points). This does *not* work for ritual castings (below).

### Ritual Casting

Alternatively, you can work magic ritually. This always needs at least three people, who you may have to coordinate using various social skills, and takes multiples of 5 minutes to work. However, it lets you generate large numbers of Magic Points without spending any from your reserve. Ask the GM if you want to try this.

### Spells You Can Definitely Attempt

*A Little Luck*: Takes 2 seconds; roll 8 or less, -1 per yard of distance to the subject; costs 1 MP. The subject gets +3 to the next skill or attribute roll they have to make, or to a reaction roll made when they ask for aid from a random bystander, or someone attacking them does so at -3 to skill. You can only use this *once* per game session.

*Chill Finger*: Takes 2 seconds; roll 9 or less, -1 per yard of distance to the subject; costs 2 MP. Point at the victim, who then has to make a Fright Check, at -1 for every 2 full points by which you made your roll, and must also resist the spell using HT or lose 1d Fatigue Points to a supernatural chill.

*Divine Rider: Li'l Punch-Hard:* Serious voodoo magic, based on your acquaintance with a spirit called Li'l Punch-Hard who likes hitting things. Takes 5 minutes; roll 14 or less; costs 4 MP; effects last 1 hour. Must be cast on someone other than yourself. Gives them +4 ST, +1 DX, +1 DR, Bad Temper (9), and Berserk (12) (if they already have Bad Temper or Berserk, the points come from reduced Will instead). They effectively become a new temporary NPC (even if they were a PC before), a composite of the human and the spirit, and immediately make a Reaction Roll to determine what they think of the situation.

*Exorcise Ghost:* Takes 5 minutes to cast; roll 10 or less; costs 1 MP per yard of radius of the area exorcised, or much less if you use witch-style definitions; effect has a duration of 1 month. Makes the area unpleasant and disconcerting for ghosts, and generally purges it of necromantic energies and the like. Ghosts can resist it with their Will; by default they resist at -2, but if they are bound to the area they resist at +3 instead.

*Exorcise Spirit:* Takes 1 minute to cast; roll 11 or less; costs 3 MP. Drives off one chosen immaterial spirit, making it return to wherever it considers home. (If it's already there, it won't leave, although it can be driven out of a possessed mortal.) The spirit resists with Will at -2. If you lack a clear idea of what you're dealing with, you take a penalty of between -1 (you're a bit unsure *exactly* what sort of spirit you're dealing with) and -5 (you haven't a clue what's going on). If the spirit fails to resist, it won't even consider going *near* the exorcised area or person for at least a day, and may end up back in Hell or wherever for keeps.

*Gate Scan:* Takes 1 second; roll 14 or less; costs 1 MP. Makes any gates, dimensional portals, and weaknesses in reality within (margin of success on the casting roll) in yards glow momentarily.

*Scry Shield:* Takes 1 second; roll 13 or less; costs 4 MP to cast on an individual, or 1 MP per yard of radius to protect an area with a minimum of 4 MP; effect lasts 1 day. Any divination magic cast into or on the individual or into the area must succeed by at least as much as the casting roll was made by, or it gets nothing.

*Scrying: Crystal Ball:* Takes 1 second; roll 10 or less; cost 3 MP, +1 per day or part thereof passed for viewing events in the past; duration 1 minute. Lets you use your crystal ball to view scenes and events remotely. You must specify a location relative to your current position ("three hundred and seven miles in a direction eleven degrees spinwards of hubward from here") and if desired a time in the past ("three days, four hours, and nineteen minutes ago"), though the GM may be flexible about this if he's feeling generous. The roll takes penalties for distance (0 out to 200 yards, -1 to 1/2 a mile, -2 to 1 mile, -3 to 3 miles, -4 to 10 miles, -5 to 30 miles, and so on), and a penalty of -1 per day or part thereof passed since the event when looking into the past. Multiple attempts to observe the same scene in the past create thaumic interference; there is a -1 penalty to modified spell skill for each *unsuccessful* attempt to view the same scene, and -3 per *successful* attempt. Only the caster can see the vision, and non-magic-workers never seem to trust the caster's word on what she saw.

*Speak With the Dead:* As a medium, you can speak with spirits of the dead anyway – but this spell lets you effectively speak their language and draws their attention. Takes 1 second to cast; roll 11 or less; costs 2 MP; effects last 10 minutes.