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*It is the spirit and not the form  
of law that keeps justice alive.*  
– Earl Warren

*GURPS* System Design ■ STEVE JACKSON  
*GURPS* Line Editor ■ SEAN PUNCH  
e23 Manager ■ STEVEN MARSH  
Page Design ■ PHIL REED and  
JUSTIN DE WITT

Managing Editor ■ PHILIP REED  
Art Director ■ WILL SCHOONOVER  
Production Artist ■ NIKOLA VRTIS  
Indexer ■ NIKOLA VRTIS  
Prepress Checker ■ MONICA STEPHENS

Marketing Director ■ PAUL CHAPMAN  
Director of Sales ■ ROSS JEPSON  
Errata Coordinator ■ FADE MANLEY  
*GURPS* FAQ Maintainer ■  
VICKY “MOLOKH” KOLENKO

*Playtesters:* Frederick Brackin, C. Lee Davis, Emily Smirle

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# INTRODUCTION

*It was when he saw two winged demons come howling down Fifth Avenue that Professor Blake realized that the Secret Kingdom was deadly serious about its threats.*

*He had received a series of demands, first subtle, then increasingly sinister, from that clandestine organization, but he had laughed at all of them. He was a man who still doubted all those claims that he had heard about magic – even though some of them came from respectable scholars these days – and the so-called Secret Pharaoh seemed to him a joke in very poor taste. But on the night before his great discoveries were due to be unveiled to the public, he left the Metropolitan Museum of Art just in time to hear the screaming start, and what he saw swooping toward him banished his doubts completely.*

*Blake had served in the Great War, and he had spent most of the 15 years since it ended on expeditions to remote areas of Egypt; he was used to danger. He instantly turned on his heel and fled, without the hesitation that would have killed other men. But he could hear great wings behind him. At any moment, he expected to feel barbed claws in his flesh. Someone stepped out into his path, and he veered around the person, shouting at him to flee. But the other man stood his ground, hefting something in both hands . . .*

*Professor Blake heard a dull thud behind him – and the leading demon's cry was cut short. Blake risked a glance backward, and then he spun around in astonishment. He was just in time to see the second demon struck square in the ribs with a great two-handed mace. The creature lurched to the ground, but it was still fighting, and it leaped for its opponent's throat. Its claws found no purchase, and a second mace-blow finished the fight. The demon vanished like a bad dream, leaving only a foul stench.*

*The newcomer turned to Professor Blake, who recognized a description from stories in the press. "Doc Mudra!" he exclaimed.*

*The masked mystery man nodded. "Professor Blake?" he inquired, and Blake nodded in turn. "I'm pleased that I found you in time. The Secret Pharaoh evidently believes that you discovered a new form of the Philosopher's Stone in Karnak last year, and this won't be his last attempt to get hold of it."*

*Age of Gold* is a **GURPS** game setting that showcases many of the options and rules in **GURPS Thaumatology**. Specifically, it is a world based on the 1930s of our own history – but it's a version of that past era in which magic of several kinds *works* and is being exploited with increasing enthusiasm by those few gifted folk who can get it to function or who've been imbued with supernatural power by destiny or blind chance.

The 1930s correspond to the latter part of the "pulp era" and the very early days of the "Golden Age" of superhero comics, and that's very relevant here. *Age of Gold* is an age of pulp magic and arcane superheroics. Adventurers in this setting may be two-fisted pulp-style heroes – battling evil masterminds with grit, skill, and scholarship – or masked "mystery men" – alchemically transformed into something more than human. Most of the background will be familiar to anyone who knows the history of our own world in the era, but foreground characters and plots should be wildly dramatic and melodramatic. Magic, it seems, does this to those who encounter it. Some of this magic is ritualistic or alchemical and stylish, while some of it is focused and powerful; the rules from *Thaumatology* allow it to be represented in all its diversity.

## About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of **GURPS** players. Our address is SJ Games, P.O. Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! We can also be reached by e-mail: [info@sjgames.com](mailto:info@sjgames.com). Resources include:

*Pyramid* ([www.sjgames.com/pyramid](http://www.sjgames.com/pyramid)). Our online magazine includes new **GURPS** rules and articles. It also covers the *d20* system, *Ars Magica*, *BESM*, *Call of Cthulhu*, and many more top games – and other Steve Jackson Games releases like *Illuminati*, *Car Wars*, *Tran-shuman Space*, and more. *Pyramid* subscribers also get opportunities to playtest new **GURPS** books!

*New supplements and adventures.* **GURPS** continues to grow, and we'll be happy to let you know what's new. For a current catalog, send us a legal-sized SASE, or just visit [www.warehouse23.com](http://www.warehouse23.com).

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*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 available on our website – see below.

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*Bibliographies.* Many of our books have extensive bibliographies, and we're putting them online – with links to let you buy the books that interest you! Go to the book's web page and look for the "Bibliography" link.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition**. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.