

GURPS®

Fourth Edition

EXOTICS



Written by **TEVIET CREIGHTON**

GURPS System Design ■ **STEVE JACKSON**
Managing Editor ■ **ANDREW HACKARD**

GURPS Line Editor ■ **SEAN PUNCH**
GURPS FAQ Maintainer ■ **VICKY "MOLOKH" KOLENKO**

GURPS, Warehouse 23, and the all-seeing pyramid are registered trademarks of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated. *Pyramid* and the names of all products published by Steve Jackson Games Incorporated are registered trademarks or trademarks of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated, or used under license.

GURPS Exotics is copyright © 2014 by Teviet Creighton. All rights reserved.

The scanning, uploading, and distribution of this book via the Internet or via any other means without the permission of the publisher is illegal, and punishable by law.
Please purchase only authorized electronic editions, and do not participate in or encourage the electronic piracy of copyrighted materials. Your support of the author's rights is appreciated.

This supplement is not published by, nor is the author affiliated with:

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

EXOTIC RACES

GURPS campaigns often involve alien races or fantastic races. The five creatures presented here are examples of truly *exotic* races. These are non-supernatural creatures that lie on the boundary between hard SF and rubber science: their makeup and capabilities go beyond currently-known science without contradicting it. Upermon, Cheelapets, and Wisps are creatures that come to us from extreme environments: white dwarfs, neutron stars, and dark matter. The Eigencat stretches our understanding of the quantum nature of reality. The Crawling Chaos skirts the edge of the technological singularity.

The names and descriptions of these creatures have a somewhat jocular tone, which may not be appropriate to all campaigns. You should think of them as *illustrations of concept*, as well as demonstrations of the remarkable range of the **GURPS** character generation system. They can be adapted and modified as necessary before including them in a particular campaign or gameworld.

UPERNOES

The Upernoes were an advanced race that inhabited the surface of a white dwarf star. They went extinct when their world exploded as a Type Ia supernova. Before their demise, they engineered a being superficially similar to humans but based on their own exotic physiology. This “Upermon” was dispatched to Earth, along with the Uperno cultural repository, just prior to the detonation.

Uperno physiology pushes the theoretical limits of structural strength achievable with chemical matter, weaving strands of hyperdense collapsed matter and nanofibre among tissues made up of more conventional matter. The result is a million-fold increase in material strength with only a modest increase in density. Upermon can therefore live in the million-*g* gravity of a massive white dwarf star, while on Earth he is capable of amazing feats of lifting and of speed. However, this incredible strength is geared almost entirely towards supporting and reinforcing his own body, less towards manipulating other objects.

In **GURPS** terms, this means that Upermon has high levels of Super Jump (p. B89) and Lifting ST with Super Effort (**GURPS Powers** p. 58), with much more modest levels of Basic Move. His physical fortitude is based not on massive bulk or armour but on structural resilience: his moderate HP levels are augmented by several forms of Injury Tolerance, including Damage Reduction and Unbreakable Bones (**GURPS Powers** p. 53). Since his brain and vitals are protected by his near-indestructible skeleton, this gives him No Brains and Vitals as well.

Upermon cannot fly *per se*, but can leap over 7,500 yards straight up and 30,000 yards horizontally. Indeed, at the speeds he travels it would be nearly impossible to stay on the ground. In combat, Upermon’s striking ST is unimpressive, but his Slam attack is devastating. His Super Jump ability gives him an effective Move of 6,144 yards per second when jumping, enough to deliver 6d×256 cr damage. His resilient body can easily absorb this damage and heal within minutes.

Although Upermon is commonly thought of as a unique superhero, it is quite possible that other Upernoes or their constructs may also have survived the destruction of their world. The following is thus a racial template rather than a character sheet. “The” Upermon has slightly higher personal stats, combined with several self-imposed mental disadvantages.

Upermon

1,252 points

A humanoid construct with Uperno physiology.

Attribute Modifiers: DX+2 [40], HT+2 [20].

Secondary Characteristic Modifiers: HP+15 [30]; Basic Move+6 [30].

Advantages: Doesn’t Breathe [20]; Doesn’t Eat or Drink [10]; Enhanced Time Sense [45]; Injury Tolerance (Damage Reduction 1,000, No Brain, No Vitals, Unbreakable Bones) [470]; Lifting ST+22 (Super-Effort, +400%; Reduced FP 1, +20%; Cosmic: Allow Reduced FP, +50%) [377]; Regeneration (Very Fast) [100]; Super Jump 11 [110].

CHEELAPETS

The Cheela are a race of friendly sophonts that evolved on the surface of a cool neutron star. They are composed of neutron-degenerate matter and have a biology and metabolism based on nuclear reactions. Their typical biological lengthscales and timescales are thousands of times smaller and faster than ordinary chemical life.

After achieving technological ascendancy, some Cheela thought it would be worthwhile to pursue meaningful interactions with humans. Thus were born the Cheelapets. By the standards of true Cheela, the Cheelapets are inconceivably slow, but by human standards they process information hundreds of times faster than normal.

Physically, however, the Cheelapets are not substantially quicker than humans, due to the nature of their locomotion. Neutron matter is far too dense to be supported by ordinary matter, so the Cheelapets must be in constant

flight. Their means of locomotion is a biological neutrino rocket, powered by the conversion of hydrogen to iron. This is capable of maintaining 1 g thrust indefinitely: enough to maneuver around Earth, but a ponderous micro-gravity thruster from the Cheelapet's point of view.

A Cheelapet is roughly the mass and strength of a human, but microscopic in size (SM -30). Following the rules on *GURPS Powers* p. 76, this makes them devastating in combat. They can only be spotted with a Vision-20 roll (i.e. never), so no active defense is possible against them. They can ignore up to -30 in target size penalties, allowing them to fly through chinks in unsealed armour with an unopposed grapple roll. Once inside they can find or create an opening to enter the bloodstream (their teeth do normal damage), at which point they can make automatically successful attacks on the vitals (×3 wounding modifier).

Although intelligent, the Cheelapets lack manipulators or technological artifacts *at their own scale*, though they can perform feats of fine manipulation from a *human* perspective by pushing objects with their bodies (they still have human-level strength). They sleep approximately 1/3 of the time, like humans, but a Cheelapet sleeps for 8 *seconds* out of every 24. This makes social interactions with Cheelapets rather interesting. Cheelapets *can* speak, by generating a series of microscopic nuclear explosions: this produces a buzzing sound that they can modulate. A newborn Cheelapet takes approximately one week to mature, and they typically live for 4 to 6 weeks.

Note: The Cheelapets are *not* the Cheela of Robert Forward's novels *Dragon's Egg* and *Starquake*. They are *inhabitants of Earth* derived from neutron-star lifeforms, and have been modified to allow them to live and interact with Earthlings. A Cheela proper, living a million times faster than a human, would *start* with 36 levels of Altered Time Rate with the Super-Speed (*GURPS Powers* p. 42) and Cosmic enhancements, costing at least 6,120 points: a steep price for a character that will live less than an hour and not contribute meaningfully to the campaign.

Cheelapet

17 points

A neutronium-based life form, as strong and massive as a human but the size of a cell.

Attribute Modifiers: DX+1 [20], IQ-1 [-20].

Secondary Characteristic Modifiers: SM-30 [0].

Advantages: Doesn't Breathe [20]; Doesn't Eat or Drink [10]; Enhanced Time Sense [45]; Flight [40]; Longevity [2]; Recovery [10]; Regeneration (Very Fast) [100].

Disadvantages: Disturbing Voice [-10]; Impulsiveness (6) [-20]; No Manipulators [-50]; Short Attention Span (6) [-20]; Short Lifespan 10 [-100]; Wealth (Dead Broke) [-25].

WISPS

Wisps (originally an acronym for "Weakly-Interacting Sentient Phenomena") are a sapient race composed of nearly-intangible dark matter. Dark matter had been known to astronomers since the 1930's, and was generally thought to be in the form of massive but diffuse clouds, having negligible interaction with ordinary matter or itself, other than through gravity. This view was overturned in the mid-21st Century when it was found that at least *some* dark matter existed in compact masses: while these objects might be weakly-interacting with ordinary matter, they were strongly-interacting among themselves. Subsequent experiments in high-energy physics showed allowed experimentors to vary the strength of interaction between dark matter and ordinary matter.

What was *completely* unexpected was that some of these dark matter clumps were *living beings*, who were drawn to these experiments like moths to a flame. After several disastrous lab accidents, the two sides figured out what they were dealing with, and established a dialogue.

Physically, a Wisp has complete control over its tangibility to ordinary matter. Wisps spend most of their time in an intangible state, occasionally intruding a claw or pseudopod into our "phase" in order to manipulate objects: they cannot turn ordinary matter insubstantial. They do *consume* ordinary matter in miniscule quantities, converting it directly into energy to power their metabolism.

Wisps fly by emitting streams of neutrinos. Some Wisps can carry enough fuel to achieve near-light speeds, though they must remain intangible at high speeds to avoid damage from cosmic dust and radiation. Others tend to hover in the vicinity of massive objects in order to replenish their fuel, and must hitch a ride with spaceborne Wisps when they want to travel. A Wisp can also "anchor" itself to a solid body using a materialized claw. In *GURPS* terms, only space-traveling Wisps have the Flight advantage, while the ability to hover near ordinary matter is included in the Insubstantiality advantage.

A Wisp can perceive heat and vibrations through a materialized limb, but has no sense corresponding to vision, hearing, taste, or smell: its primary sense is a sensitivity to gravitational fields that allows it to determine the size and shape of nearby masses. While less precise than vision, this sense penetrates through *anything*.

Wisps are inquisitive but not particularly empathetic towards ordinary-matter creatures: while they are not actively malevolent, they regard us as interesting physical anomalies, not as people. They seem to have a very loose social organization among themselves.

Besides the sapient Wisps with whom humans have established contact, there is an entire ecology of dark-matter-based lifeforms. The following racial template can also be used as a *meta-trait* for other dark-matter lifeforms, varying principally in ST, IQ, and mental traits.

Wisp

300 points

A typical human-size and human-intelligence dark-matter creature. Adjust attributes for a larger, smaller, nonsapient, or hypersapient specimen.

Attribute Modifiers: DX-2 [-40], HT+2 [20].

Secondary Characteristic Modifiers: Will+4 [20].

Advantages: Claws (Talons; Cosmic, Irresistable attack, +300%) [32]; Detect (Matter, Very Common; Analyzing, +100%; Precise, +100%; Reflexive, +40%) [102]; Doesn't Breathe [20]; Doesn't Sleep [20]; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards [30]; Insubstantiality (Partial Change, +20%) [96]; Invisibility (Accessibility, Only when insubstantial, -10%; Affects Machines, +50%; Extended, Electromagnetic and magnetic, +20%; Substantial Only, -10%) [60]; Regeneration (Regular) [25]; Unaging [15]; Universal Digestion (Matter Eater, +300%) [20].

Disadvantages: Blindness [-50]; Cannot Speak (Mute) [-25]; Deafness [-20]; Low Empathy [-20]; No Sense of Smell/Taste [-5].

Lens:

Spaceborne (+120 points): A Wisp with enough fuel capacity for interstellar flight. Add Enhanced Move 25 (Space; Accessibility, Only when insubstantial, -10%; Handling Penalty -4, -20%; Newtonian, -50%) [100] and Flight (Newtonian Space Flight, +25%; Space Flight Only, -75%) [20].

EIGENCATS

Many cultures have tales about felines that can appear unexpectedly, vanish without a trace, bestow blessings or curses, and escape seemingly-certain doom. Modern science rejects these stories as mere myths – but maybe the scientists never tested the right cats!

An Eigencat is a being that resembles an ordinary domestic or wild feline, though with intelligence in the low-sapient range. It behaves much like a regular cat, until it or its cat friends are threatened, or it decides to help out a human companion. Then situations have an uncanny tendency to work out in the cat's favour.

In physics terms, this can be explained as an effect of *quantum postselection*: allowing the state of the Universe to split into a quantum superposition of different outcomes, and then *selecting* (increasing the amplitude) of the state with the desired result. According to early-21st Century models of quantum mechanics, this should be impossible: if states superpose *linearly*, the amplitude (probability) of each state cannot be affected by what happens in any other. But even a slight nonlinearity in the laws of quantum mechanics would cause some states to “collapse” (reduce to zero amplitude) and others to survive. Such processes were a standard assumption of 20th

Century quantum theories. If this were true, and an organism gained some control over the process, it would have an obvious survival advantage.

An Eigencat appears to be just such a creature. Eigencats may have started as ordinary cats, but their small initial talent soon allowed them to “tunnel” into a favorable (though improbable) line of evolution. In a sense, their collective ability postselected its own existence.

Of course this could all be complete nonsense. There is nothing obviously supernatural about these cats; the events around them may simply be coincidences that have been exaggerated by confirmation bias. That's a lot easier to believe, isn't it?

Eigencat

475 points

This resembles a typical black cat, except for its intelligence and wishing ability. It can influence the outcome of *any* event it can observe (not just events affecting it). The GM is free to specify (or not) whether this represents a true preternatural ability or a metagame advantage.

Attribute Modifiers: ST-6 [-60]; DX+4 [80]; IQ-4 [-80].

Secondary Characteristic Modifiers: SM-3 [0]; Will+6 [30]; Per+6 [30].

Advantages: Catfall [10]; Claws (Sharp Claws) [5]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Night Vision 5 [5]; Ridiculous Luck (Wishing, +100%) [120]; Serendipity 3 (Wishing, +100%) [90]; Super Luck (Alter Reality, +75%; Wishing, +100%) [275]; Teeth (Sharp Teeth) [1].

Perks: Fur [1].

Disadvantages: Cannot Speak [-15]; Curious (15) [-2]; Quadruped [-35].

Quirks: Proud [-1]; Responsive [-1].

Racially-Learned Skills: Brawling (E) DX+2 [4]-16; Jumping (E) DX [1]-14; Stealth (A) DX [2]-14.

CRAWLING CHAOS

The shapeshifting Döppelgänger, the amorphous devouring blob-monster – these are staples of horror fiction. Modern science can now conceive of a somewhat plausible basis for such a being: the *nanomorph*, a protean mass of self-assembling molecular machinery. It can shape itself into an immense variety of forms (including simulacra of other living beings), disassemble and scan matter at a molecular level (including biological brains), and perform molecular assembly of artifacts (including growing its own body).

The Crawling Chaos is one such entity: an ancient inhuman intelligence embodied in a nanomorphic form. It has spent millennia traveling through the Cosmos in a search for meaning, enlightenment, and diverse new modes of thought. Unfortunately for other sapient beings, its preferred method of evaluating newly-encountered mental

schema is through *destructive testing*: tormenting individuals to the point of insanity, then devouring them in order to scan and analyze their consciousness.

As an ultra-tech artifact, the Crawling Chaos can be designed as a *combination gadget* (*GURPS Ultra-Tech* p. 16) integrating the functions of a nanomorph (*Ultra-Tech* p. 111, bush robot (*Ultra-Tech* p. 85), disassembler nanoglop (*Ultra-Tech* p. 161), and 10 lbs. of assembler goop (*Ultra-Tech* p. 85). The combination would have ST 22, weigh 208 lbs., cost \$420,000, and be capable of assembling up to \$24,000 of items per day; this can then scaled down to a human-sized piece (using the *Nanomorph Attributes Table*, below).

Nanomorph Attributes Table

Size	SM	ST(+Strike)	IQ	Move	DR
1.5 lbs.	-4	4(+1)	9	2	3
3 lbs.	-3	5(+1)	9	3	4
7.5 lbs.	-2	7(+2)	10	4	6
15 lbs.	-2	9(+2)	11	5	7
30 lbs.	-1	12(+3)	11	6	9
75 lbs.	0	16(+4)	12	8	12
150 lbs.	0	20(+5)	13	10	15
300 lbs.	+1	25(+6)	13	13	19
750 lbs.	+2	34(+9)	14	17	26
1,500 lbs.	+2	43(+11)	15	22	32

Crawling Chaos

1,255 points

These stats are for a human-sized piece. For larger or smaller pieces, ST (and Striking ST), IQ, Move, and DR scale as shown in the table above; other stats remain unchanged. It can perform assembly at a rate of 5% of its mass per day; this ability is loosely modeled by the Gadgeteer and Gizmo traits.

Due to its versatility, a universal nanomorph assembler would be a popular form for any transhuman or machine intelligence, who would not necessarily have the Crawling Chaos's amoral personality. The nanomorph itself is a TL12 artifact; however, the *personal* TL of the character (and the TL of items it can assemble) will depend on its own knowledge and stored information.

Attribute Modifiers: ST+10 [100]; DX+2 [40]; IQ+3 [60]; HT+4 [40].

Secondary Characteristic Modifiers: Basic Speed+0.5 [10], Basic Move+3 [15].

Advantages: 360° Vision [25]; Absolute Direction [5]; Ambidexterity [5]; Appearance (Transcendent) [20]; AI [32]; Corrosion Attack 1d (Armour Divisor 10, +200%; Melee Attack, C, -30%) [27]; Discriminatory Taste [10]; Doesn't Breathe [20]; Double-Jointed [15]; DR 15 [75]; Enhanced Move 0.5 (Ground) [10]; Enhanced Tracking 2 [10]; Extra Attack [25]; Gizmo 3

[15]; High Manual Dexterity 4 [20]; Hyperspectral Vision [25]; Immunity (Metabolic hazards) [30]; Injury Tolerance (Homogeneous, No Blood, No Eyes) [50]; Microscopic Vision 6 [30]; Mimicry (Voice Library, +50%) [15]; Mind Probe (Accessibility, Devoured Victims, -40%; Memory Bank, Unlimited, +150%) [42]; Morph (Unlimited, +50%; Mass Conservation, -20%; Improvised Forms, +100%) [230]; Protected Senses (Hearing, Vision) [10]; Quick Gadgeteer (Not for inventing new gadgets, -50%) [25]; Radio (Burst, +30%; Secure, +20%) [15]; Recovery [10]; Regeneration (Very Fast) [100]; Regrowth [40]; Sealed [15]; Sensitive Touch [10]; Slippery 2 [4]; Striking ST+5 [25]; Unaging [15]; Universal Digestion [5]; Vacuum Support [5]; Vibration Sense [10].

Disadvantages: Electrical [-20]; Sadism (12) [-15].

Availability: \$300,000, 150 lbs. LC1.

Other Forms

The Morph (Improvised Forms) advantage gives the Crawling Chaos endless variability in its physical characteristics, limited only by its imagination, and the point value and physical plausibility (GM's judgement) of the traits added. The following lenses are a small sample of the possibilities; they can be mixed and matched (or entirely new ones invented) at will.

Bladed (-3 points): Add One Hand [-15], Accessory (Tools) [1], and Claws (Long Talons) [11].

Tentacled (+0 points): Add Extra-Flexible to both arms [10] and reduce ST by 1 [-10]. Additional tentacles can be extruded: each one adds Extra Arms (Extra Flexible) [15] with Extra Attack [25], and reduces DX by 1 [-20] and ST by 2 [-20] per extra arm.

Quadruped (+0 points): Add Super Jump 1 [10], Quadruped [-35], and increase Enhanced Move to 3 [+25].

Swimmer (-30 points): Add Ichthyoid [-50] and increase Enhanced Move to 2.5 [+20].

Serpentine (-5 points): Add Clinging [20] and Constriction Attack [15]; remove bonus to Basic Speed [-10], Enhanced Move [-10], and reduce DX by 1 [-20].

Parafoil (-8 points): Add Flight (Controlled Gliding, -45%) [22] and reduce ST by 3 [-30].

Chameleon (+0 points): Remove Appearance [-20] and add Chameleon 4 [20].

Other Personas

Canonically, the Shapeshifting advantage can also allow access to different packages of *mental* traits (as used by the Wetware Sub-Personality ability from *GURPS Bio-Tech* p. 180). Combined with the Morph (Improvised Forms) enhancement, the possibilities are nearly limitless. To keep things under control, the GM should require each persona to have some underlying consistency, and restrict traits to those that the Crawling Chaos has assimilated

(through self-discovery or by devouring victims). An advantageous collection of traits must be balanced with disadvantages, often a reduction in IQ.

The following two lenses are standard personality variants that the Crawling Chaos will often assume, separately or in combination.

Hyperactive (+0 points): This persona is wired for fast processing and quick response, rather than careful analysis. It is particularly useful in combat. Reduce IQ by 2 [-40]; add Enhanced Time Sense [45] and Impulsiveness (15) [-5].

Dispassionate (+0 points): This persona *suppresses* certain social and introspective functions to give a more stable “robotic” behaviour. This lens is typically assumed by default in situations where no social interaction is required. Add Indomitable [15], Unfazeable [15], Low Empathy [-20], and No Sense of Humour [-10].

Multiple Pieces

The Crawling Chaos can split itself into smaller pieces and recombine at will. When divided, the separate pieces are effectively Allies (p. B36) or an Ally Group (p. B37). This is treated as an application of the Crawling Chaos’s Morph ability, allowing it to assume the template of a smaller piece combined with Allies. (We note that this gives a more reasonable scaling, both in terms of abilities and point cost, than the Duplication advantage from p. B50.) A large enough collection of tiny pieces is treated once again as a single “swarm” entity.

2 pieces (-60 points): Add Ally (Constant, ×4; Minion, +50%) [30]; reduce ST to 16 [-40], Striking ST to +4 [-5], IQ to 12 [-20], Move to 8 [-10], DR to 12 [-15].

3 pieces (-70 points): Add Allies ×2 (Constant, ×4; Minion, +50%) [60]; reduce ST to 14 [-60], Striking ST to +3 [-10], IQ to 12 [-20], Move to 7 [-15], DR to 10 [-25].

4 pieces (-80 points): Add Allies ×3 (Constant, ×4; Minion, +50%) [90]; reduce ST to 13 [-70], Striking ST to +3 [-10], IQ to 11 [-40], Move to 6 [-20], DR to 9 [-30].

5 pieces (-60 points): Add Allies ×4 (Constant, ×4; Minion, +50%) [120]; reduce ST to 12 [-80], Striking ST to +3 [-10], IQ to 11 [-40], Move to 6 [-20], DR to 9 [-30].

6 pieces (-45 points): Add Allies ×5 (Constant, ×4; Minion, +50%) [150]; reduce ST to 11 [-90], Striking ST to +3 [-10], IQ to 11 [-40], Move to 6 [-20], DR to 8 [-35].

7-10 pieces (-50 points): Add Ally Group ×6 (Constant, ×4; Minion, +50%) [180]; reduce ST to 9 [-110], Striking ST to +2 [-15], IQ to 11 [-40], Move to 5 [-25], DR to 7 [-40].

11-20 pieces (-40 points): Add Ally Group ×8 (Constant, ×4; Minion, +50%) [240]; reduce ST to 7 [-130], Striking ST to +2 [-15], IQ to 10 [-60], Move to 4 [-30], DR to 6 [-45].

21-50 pieces (-40 points): Add Ally Group ×10 (Constant, ×4; Minion, +50%) [300]; reduce ST to 5 [-150], Striking ST to +1 [-20], IQ to 9 [-80], Move to 3 [-35], DR to 4 [-55].

51-100 pieces (+0 points): Add Ally Group ×12 (Constant, ×4; Minion, +50%) [360]; reduce ST to 4 [-160], Striking ST to +1 [-20], IQ to 9 [-80], Move to 2 [-40], DR to 3 [-60].

More than 100 pieces (+0 points): Increase Injury Tolerance to (Diffuse; Swarm, Affects Substantial, +160%) [+210]; reduce IQ to 8 [-100], Move to 1 [-45], DR to 2 [-65].

Growth

The stats above assume a piece of around 150 lbs., but can readily be scaled to larger pieces if needed. The ability of the Crawling Chaos to *grow* through self-assembly is not modeled by any trait. Rather, it would be represented by increasing the character’s overall point cost, converting earned character points into physical traits. Thus, restrictions on its growth are more likely from narrative or metagame considerations (e.g. the needs of the scenario, or the GM’s policies for advantages gained in play), rather than any in-universe limitations.

About the Author

Teviet Creighton is a physics professor and gamer living in South Texas. He has written several *GURPS* supplements – none published – including *GURPS Modified Magic* (a reworking of the default *GURPS* magic system) and *GURPS Gya*, a hard fantasy setting. All supplements including this one were typeset using the `gurps.cls` class file.

About GURPS

For more information about *GURPS* supplements, visit the Steve Jackson Games website at www.sjgames.com/gurps.

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.