

HIGH ADVENTURE ROLEPLAYING

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Foreword

HARP has had a convoluted existence. It was first published in 2003 as a 160-page volume and enjoyed early success. Constructive feedback from many sources encouraged its then designers to perform a minor revision, incorporating new material, and leading to a 2004 rerelease as a 192-page volume. A number of substantial sourcebooks and supplements (*Martial Law*, *College of Magics*, *Monsters: a Field Guide*, *Loot: a Field Guide*, *Cyradon and Codex*) followed in the next couple of years **HARP SF** was transferred to a different publisher, Guild Companion Publications Ltd, and it was published as a pair of core rulebooks (**HARP SF** and **HARP SF Xtreme**) in 2011. The **HARP Fantasy** license transferred at the very end of 2010 to Guild Companion Publications Ltd. This new book, **HARP Fantasy**, marks a new beginning for **HARP**.

I have been involved with **HARP** from the prepublication playtesting of what would become the 160-page version of the game. My role-playing group and I read the emergent rules and tested them in actual gaming. The reduced complexity and the speed of gameplay resolution coupled with rich detail and flexibility quickly made it my game of choice for GMing and the preferred ICE game of choice for my players. In December 2003, I ran a demo game at Dragonmeet, armed only with a low-resolution prepublication printout of the rulebook. The moment that I had completed my *Rolemaster* sourcebook, *Construct Companion*, I was recruited to design and write **HARP**'s magic sourcebook, *College of Magics*, at one point revising the complete draft to cope with the changes to the 192-page version of **HARP**. I wrote **HARP SF** & **HARP SF Xtreme**, shepherded them through their public beta testing, and eventually formed my own publishing company (*Guild Companion Publications Ltd.*) to ensure that they were published.

When I wrote **HARP SF**, I was adamant that it would be compatible with the fantasy version of the rules set. Careful design, however, meant that it was possible to incorporate many pieces of feedback and lessons learned from my own **HARP** gaming and years of discussions on online forums with and among fellow fans, whilst still achieving the compatibility constraint. When the **HARP** license transferred to my company, the need to rebrand the existing books meant that there was an opportunity to enhance them by improving the balance of the rules, eliminating problems that had been identified by players and GMs over the years, and retrofitting the generic improvements that had been made in **HARP SF**. Of course, the constraint was now that **HARP Fantasy** must be compatible with the already published **HARP SF** and **HARP SF Xtreme**! A team of intrepid souls joined me in the improvement process and we recruited a quartet of artists to

freshen up the look and feel with a fantastic set of new interior illustrations.

So for those who are already fans of **HARP**, here is what has changed:

- ✦ The Professions have been rebalanced in terms of their professional abilities
- ✦ Flat 50 Development Points is the default for calculating Development Points
- ✦ Races have been better balanced in terms of stat bonuses, some racial abilities have been revised, and Humans now get Skill Flexibility (*the ability to make a single skill in a NonFavored category Favored*)
- ✦ Blood Talents have been rebalanced in terms of Development Point cost
- ✦ The Mandatory Subskills rule has been incorporated from **HARP SF**
- ✦ Four new Influence skills have been added from **HARP SF**
- ✦ New talents have been added from **HARP SF** and Development Point costs of existing Talents have been properly balanced
- ✦ The use of Spell Adders and Power Point Adders has been clarified
- ✦ Clarifications and improvements have been made to the rules for Light & Vision, Fighting Blind, Asphyxiation and Holding Breath, Drowning and Stat Loss
- ✦ Life Points have been removed and the Stun rules made consistent with **HARP SF**
- ✦ All of the spells have had their base costs and scaling options made consistent with the revised spell creation system (*to be published in the enhanced College of Magics*) and descriptions have been clarified in specific cases
- ✦ Herb and poison prices have been rationalized
- ✦ A new monster creation system has been used to rework the monster collection with some monsters being replaced with new creatures
- ✦ Several magic items have had their effects adjusted
- ✦ The guidance on customizing clerics and magic users has been revised to better fit with the rules given in the enhanced *College of Magics* and future envisaged sourcebooks.
- ✦ The Language Table and associated rules have been made consistent with **HARP SF**
- ✦ The "*Non-Adventuring Professions*" have been removed – these will return in a future sourcebook in the form suitable for PCs

Whether you are an aficionado of **HARP** or a newcomer to the game, I sincerely hope that you will enjoy playing and gamemastering **HARP Fantasy** as much as I have.

—Nicholas HM Caldwell

1 Introduction



High Adventure Role Playing (**HARP**) Fantasy is a flexible and easy fantasy role playing game. **HARP Fantasy** is rich in detail with the flexibility to be customized to any subgenre of fantasy gaming. **HARP Fantasy** is also fully compatible with **HARP SF**.

You will find all you need to play or GM **HARP Fantasy** in this core rulebook. And for those who want more, look to www.ironcrown.com for the latest news on upcoming supplements. Enjoy!

What is Role Playing?

If you're not familiar with role playing, the idea is incredibly simple: You take on the persona of a character and interact with other "player characters" (or PCs), also portrayed by real people. The PCs go on quests to gain wealth, items and experience to improve their capabilities. The story is directed by one player who is called the "Gamemaster" (or GM). The GM describes the environment, handles any monsters or other menaces that threaten the PCs, and referees the rules that determine how various events turn out.

Role playing is a form of improvisational storytelling with every player helping to tell the story. It's like acting in a movie that has no script – everyone at the table is making up the scenes and the dialogue as the drama unfolds and there is an unlimited budget for special effects! It is not a sequence of events that leads to some predefined end. Every moment of the game is creating a new chronicle of epic deeds, shaped by the players' actions. Unlike a movie where the end credits must roll and a sequel might be years away, the next installment of your story will happen at your next gaming session.

What is a Character?

When you portray a player character, you are in control. You describe what your character does, with dice rolls helping determine the outcome of combat or magical effects. Your character has statistics (or stats), which measure the various abilities that define a person. A character's Strength statistic will determine how mighty he will be, while a high Quickness will make him fleet of foot. You will also need to select a race for your character, whether an aloof Elf, dour Dwarf, or enigmatic Gryx, and a culture such as rural, urban, sylvan or nomad.

Your character will also have a number of skills and talents to help him or her succeed and survive in the adventuring world. Selecting a profession, such as Thief, Mage, or Fighter, will reflect the insight and training your character received prior to starting the game. Each has their own focus and unique strengths, allowing a significant amount of diversity in an adventuring group.

Character Creation Shortcuts

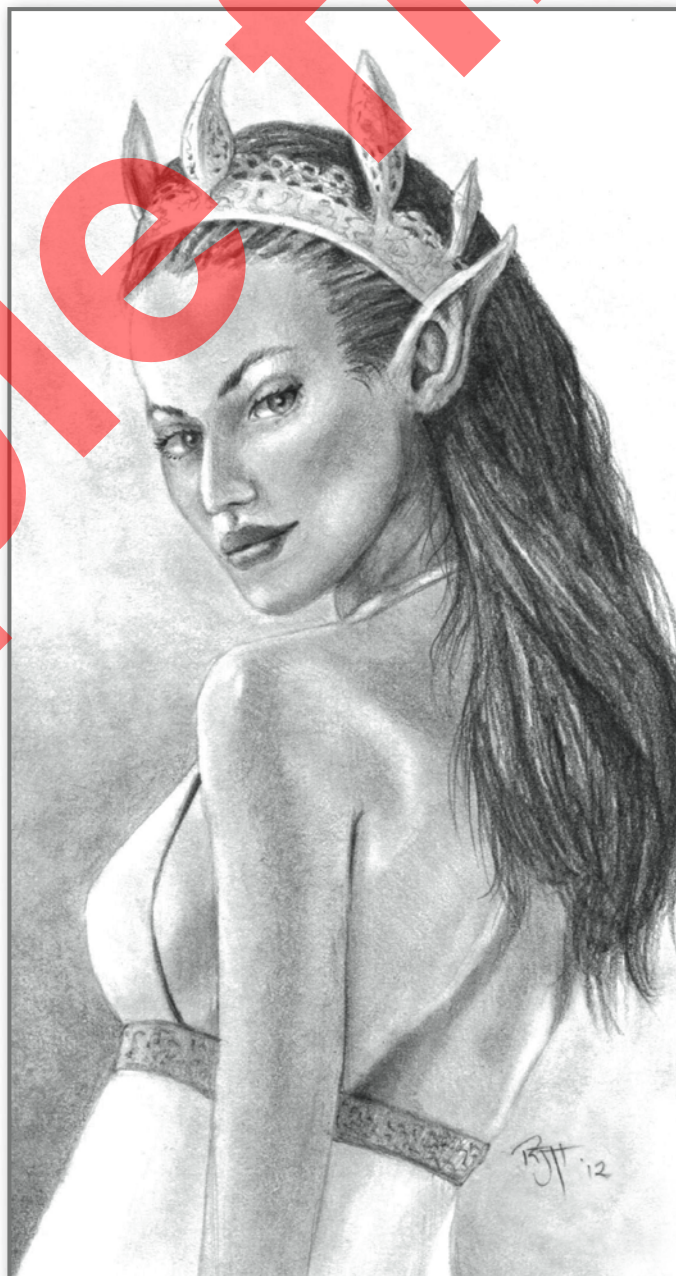
Since HARP Fantasy was designed with a system of character creation that is fast and fun, there are tools that can be downloaded for free, purchased from our e-commerce outlets, or used over the Web to further simplify the creation process. Visit www.ironcrown.com for the latest information on available spreadsheet-based character creators, web-based generators, apps and downloadable software packages, and pick the one that suits your needs.

What is a Gamemaster?

The Gamemaster (or GM) is the "director" of the game, much like the director of a movie; as such, a Gamemaster should be very comfortable being the center of attention. The GM

knows all of the plots and twists that exist in the adventuring world and creates a flexible story which can be adjusted based on player character actions. At the same time, the GM must portray all of the non-player characters (or NPCs) that the players might meet along the way. The GM must know where the story is headed and officiate any time rules are used. Players, on the other hand, only have to worry about what their own characters do. Being a GM can be a challenge, but it's also a lot of fun.

A series of connected adventures is usually called a campaign, and can be set in a world of the Gamemaster's own devising. The backdrop could also be a pre-published setting such as Cyradon, an entire world created explicitly for HARP Fantasy, or Shadow World, the epic world created by Terry Amthor.



After you have noted your bonuses, note down 100 Development Points available at level one, twice the normal amount of 50 Development Points available at second and later levels. At level one, characters receive twice the usual number of Development Points to reflect a solid start in life. You will use Development Points every level to learn new skills and improve old ones, thus expanding your character's abilities.

Step Three: Choose a Race & Culture

Select the race and culture that best suits your character.

HARP Fantasy Races: Human, Elf, Dwarf, Gnome, Halfling, and Gryx. Each of the six races is distinguished by their own special characteristics, abilities, and advantages. For more information on HARP Fantasy races refer to Chapter 5.

HARP Fantasy Cultures: Deep Warrens (*Dwarven*), Shallow Warrens (*Gnomish*), Sylvan (*Elvish or Gryxian*), Nomadic, Rural, Urban, Underhill (*Halfling*). Each cultural group gives a character skills that are usually learned during an adolescent period. Record these skill ranks on your character sheet.

For more information on HARP Fantasy cultures refer to Chapter 5.

Step Four: Buy Skills & Talents

At this stage, players may spend their starting Development Points to purchase a wide variety of skills and talents. All skills are purchased at either 2 or 4 points per skill rank. A skill's cost is based on your chosen Profession. Any skill in a favored category is purchased at 2 Development Points per skill rank, and any skill located in a non-favored category costs 4 Development Points per skill rank. The total numerical value of a skill is increased as "skill ranks" are purchased. The first 10 ranks in a skill bestow a bonus of +5 per rank. A character may normally only have a maximum of six skill ranks in a particular skill at first level (unless the character also possesses specific related Talents). Refer to Chapter 6 for a complete list of skills.

Buying Talents: Talents represent special abilities or training. You can purchase as many talents as you wish. Refer to Chapter 7 for an extensive list of talents and their corresponding Development Point cost.

Skill Name	Cost	Stats	# of Ranks	Bonus Mods	Total Bonus	Skill Name	Cost	Stats	# of Ranks	Bonus Mods	Total Bonus
				Rank + Stat + Spec =						Rank + Stat + Spec =	
Artistic						Influence cont.					
Acting	—	Pr/In				Interrogation	—	Pr/In			
Dancing	—	Ag/Pr				Leadership	—	Pr/In			
Mimicry	—	Pr/SD				Public Speaking	—	Pr/In			
Play Instr:	—	Pr/Ag				Trading	—	Pr/In			
Play Instr:	—	Pr/Ag				Mystical Arts					
Singing	—	Pr/In				Arcane Lore:	—	Re/Re			
Storytelling	—	Pr/In				Arcane Lore:	—	Re/Re			
Athletic						Attunement	—	In/In			
Acrobatics	—	Ag/SD				Power Point Dev.	—	In/SD			
Climbing	—	Ag/Sp				Runes	—	Re/In			
Contortions	—	Ag/SD				Outdoor					
Combat						Animal Handling	—	Pr/In			
Brawling	—	St/Ag				Beastmastery	—	In/Pr			
Combat Styles:	—	/				Foraging/Survival	—	In/Re			
Combat Styles:	—	/				Horticulture	—	Re/In			
Martial Arts: Strikes	—	St/Ag				Navigation	—	Re/In			
MA Styles:	—	SD/				Riding	—	Ag/SD			
MA Styles:	—	SD/				Sailing	—	Ag/Re			
Martial Arts: Sweeps	—	St/Ag				Tracking	—	SD/In			
Weapon:	—	St/Ag				Physical					
Weapon:	—	St/Ag				Armor	—	St/Ag			
Weapon:	—	St/Ag				Endurance	—	Co/SD			
Weapon:	—	St/Ag				Jumping	—	St/Ag			
Concentration						Swimming	—	St/Ag			
Chi Defense	—	SD/In				Subterfuge					
Chi Focus	—	SD/St				Ambush	—	SD/Ag			
Chi Speed	—	SD/Co				Disguise	—	Pr/SD			
Chi Strength	—	SD/St				Locks & Traps	—	In/Ag			
Mental Focus	—	SD/SD				Pick Pockets	—	Ag/Qu			
General						Stalking & Hiding	—	SD/Ag			
Appraisal	—	Re/In				Poisoning	—	In/SD			
Crafts:	—	Re/Ag				Sniping	—	SD/Ag			
Crafts:	—	Re/Ag				Streetwise	—	Pr/In			
Healing	—	Re/In				Trickery	—	Pr/SD			
Herbcraft	—	Re/In									
Mundane Lore:	—	Re/Re				Spell Name					
Mundane Lore:	—	Re/Re				Cost	Stats	# of Ranks	Bonus Mods	Total Bonus	
Perception	—	In/SD									
Resistance: Stamina	—	Co/Co									
Resistance: Will	—	SD/SD									
Resistance: Magic	—	In/In									
Rope Mastery	—	Re/Ag									
Signaling	—	Re/In									
Influence											
Charm	—	Pr/In									
Diplomacy	—	Pr/In									
Duping	—	Pr/In									

Calculate your character's total skill bonus: Total the bonus for your character's skill ranks and add it to the appropriate stat bonus to determine your total skill bonus.

Example: Jurgis, a Thief, has 4 ranks in his Locks & Traps skill, which is governed by the Agility and Insight stats. His stat values in Agility and Insight are both 90, which, as he notes, gives him a +8 skill bonus from each stat. His final total in the Locks & Traps skill is 36 ((4 x 5 [Rank Value]) + 8 + 8).

Step Five: Purchasing Equipment

Each character begins the game with 10+1D10 gold pieces (*gp*) which can be used to purchase equipment. An extensive equipment list is located in Chapter 8.

Step Six: Final Touches

By this point, your character has a fine collection of numbers that describe his or her abilities at a wide variety of tasks. However, the numbers are still lifeless without the intangible aspect of character to back them up. Consider a few important details about your character. What does he or she look like? What sort of attitude do they present to the world? What motivates them? Fleshing out these facts about your character will ultimately help bring him or her to life!

Congratulations!

You have just finished your first HARP Fantasy character. Now get out there and get playing!