



# SUPPORTING CAST

## Eustace Gillibrand

### For *GURPS Fourth Edition*

by Phil Masters

*Note: This character is intended for use in the setting described in chapters 7 and 8 of **GURPS Dragons**.*

Born in the last years of Queen Victoria's reign, Eustace Gillibrand is a child of the British Empire; his family lives in one of the new suburbs of London, from where Mr. Gillibrand commutes by steam-train to his job as a clerk in the City, while Mrs. Gillibrand looks after the house and her children.

Eustace is an intelligent boy, with just two problems: a sense of responsibility to his younger sister along with the rest of his family (a problem which all brothers with younger sisters will understand), and a capacity for curiosity which has always far exceeded his wisdom.

Four years ago, that curiosity could have led Eustace into bad trouble, as he was, all else aside, possibly guilty of trespass -- although he had entered the grounds of the big house at the bottom of the hill through an unlocked gate, and no one had actually told him that he could not go around that house to the back, or look through the conservatory window. The big house at the bottom of the hill, readers should understand, belonged to the strange Mr. Cholmondley, who Eustace's sister Marjorie believed was a German spy. Eustace was unconvinced by that idea, as there was no evidence in its favor save for Mr. Cholmondley's occasional eccentricities, such as rarely talking to the neighbors, and the way that he let the trees in his garden grow thick and tangled, making it hard for a curious lad to peer in without entering the garden first.

When Eustace *did* look into the conservatory, however, what he saw caused him to become quite frightened, and not just of being accused of trespass. He turned to run, and tripped straight over a flowerpot with a great clatter, grazing his knees quite badly. And then Mr. Cholmondley, who was (and is) in fact a dragon, and who was resting in his natural shape among his favorite pot plants, heard the clatter. He pushed his head out of the conservatory door, and saw Eustace, and then said "Oh dear" and invited Eustace in for tea.

Over tea and cakes (made by his housekeeper, who, it turned out, wasn't a German spy either, but who was simply a nice lady who had worked faithfully for Mr. Cholmondley for many years), Mr. Cholmondley explained that, yes, despite all of the firmly-worded letters in the daily newspaper, dragons were indeed real. However, they preferred to keep their existence as secret as possible, as people were sadly prone to misunderstanding them. Still, Mr. Cholmondley wasn't unduly worried that Eustace had found him out, because, as he pointed out quite kindly, no one

would believe a nine- year-old lad who had been guilty of trespass, however well his teachers thought of him. Then Mr. Cholmondley sent Eustace on his way, even promising to tell him some stories about dragonkind if he wanted at a later date.

Eustace did indeed want to hear stories about dragonkind, and has often had tea with Mr. Cholmondley since, even once he started at grammar school. The teachers there think well of him, too, and he is currently considered a model pupil with a fine prospect of a scholarship to Oxford or Cambridge.

But Eustace's secret had always been a terrible strain to him, and a year or so ago, he finally found a solution of sorts. He realized that he had never promised Mr. Cholmondley that he *wouldn't* tell anyone about dragons; he had merely admitted that the likelihood of him being taken for a foolish untruthful child made telling his tale pointless. By now, his regard for Mr. Cholmondley made him disinclined to betray that dragon in particular -- but he had heard many wonderful tales about dragons in general. He also knew that his teachers said that he had fine handwriting, which could well be taken for the work of a grown man. Finally, having become interested in dragons, he had read various large books in the local library, and come to the conclusion that there were some quite clever adults who took the subject seriously.

Hence, Eustace wrote a letter to one of these adults, a gentleman who was a scholar at King's College Cambridge, explaining some of the ideas which he had acquired from his conversations with Mr. Cholmondley, but not explaining how he had come to know such things. He did not give his own age or personal history, reasoning that merely not mentioning the truth was not the same as telling lies (which he knows to be wrong). He wanted a reply, of course, but didn't want to worry his parents by being seen to receive strange post. Fortunately, a school-friend of his had a father who looked after the local post-office, and who understood about post boxes and so on, and Eustace was able to arrange to have replies held there for him.

The gentleman-scholar replied in some excitement, and after a short exchange of letters, invited Eustace to join a correspondence circle of which he was a member. Eustace accepted the invitation, and is now a member of the Circle of Pliny (p. DR110). He signs his letters to the Circle simply "E.G.," which is generally thought most appropriate, as he provides many useful examples of dragon behavior for discussion (although the other members do think that E.G. can be a little naive in his ideas).

So far as Eustace can establish, no one else knows about his strange triple life, although some of his school friends know that he has some kind of secret hobby which they really do not understand, and Marjorie, whose curiosity is almost as impertinent as Eustace's own, thinks that something strange is going on, and knows that it involves Mr. Cholmondley. (Eustace tries to reassure her that Mr. Cholmondley is not a German spy, but she fears that her brother is rather gullible.) Eustace's parents occasionally worry that their son spends so much of his time either shut up in his room (where he is actually writing his letters and reading about dragons) or out on his own, but his school reports remain good, apart from the fact that he is not very interested in sport.

## Campaign Uses

In a children's story-style campaign, Eustace could be a personal acquaintance of the PCs, and probably their introduction to the secret world of dragonkind. He's not actually terribly physically adventurous himself, but he's very clever and incredibly knowledgeable about dragons for his age. His rather gullible approach to the subject could lead him to mislead PCs by

accident, but his advice will *usually* be sound. Other characters may well be drawn into plots by Eustace's increasingly complicated efforts to preserve his various secrets, which can make for a few chapters' worth of relatively mundane comedy before things become weird. Marjorie Gillibrand might become a prime mover in some plots, perhaps seeking aid when she thinks that her brother has become involved in something unfortunate.

(For that matter, given +10 points in Attributes or Advantages, Eustace could be a starting PC in a 50-point campaign.)

In a darker, more serious game, Eustace is in fact being used as a tool by Mr. Cholmondley -- albeit that the dragon may also have some genuine affection for the lad. Mr. Cholmondley knew *exactly* what he was doing when he failed to extract a promise of silence from Eustace, and has since been providing him with *very* carefully calculated information and misinformation, and even mentioning human scholars who studied dragons with a view to engineering precisely what has befallen. Eustace has become Mr. Cholmondley's means of influencing the Circle of Pliny, and of leaking information about his enemies and rivals to the world at large. While those enemies could certainly trace the connection back through Eustace to his mentor if they tried hard enough, Eustace provides an extra layer of complication in the chain -- and may well become useful for more complicated plots as he grows older and goes on to university. Dragons are well used to thinking in the long term, after all.

Adult PCs associated with the Circle of Pliny might eventually try to trace the eccentric, secretive, and knowledgeable "E.G.," and may assume at first that Eustace is simply a courier, taking letters to and from the post office. If they eventually contact him, Mr. Cholmondley will certainly hear of it, and possibly move against them (or perhaps just go away for a while). If the PCs are clever enough to watch Eustace from a distance, they might eventually identify Mr. Cholmondley -- but by then, the sharp-eyed Eustace, his imaginative little sister, or some of his school friends, may well have noticed *them*, and perhaps spoken to their parents or the local constabulary about these suspicious characters.

## Eustace Gillibrand

*40 points*

A rather thin and lanky, not very athletic-looking, 13-year-old English schoolboy, usually dressed neatly and often with a book under his arm. Dark-blond hair, gray eyes.

**ST** 7 [-30]; **DX** 10 [0]; **IQ** 12 [40]; **HT** 10 [0]

**Secondary Attributes:** SM 0; Dmg 1d-3/1d-2; BL 13; HP 7 [0]; Will 11 [-5]; Per 12 [0]; FP 8 [-6]; Basic Speed 5 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0]; Dodge 8.

**Social Background:** TL 6 [0]; CF Edwardian England [0]; English Spoken (Native)/Written (Native) [0]; French Spoken (Broken)/Written (Accented) [3]; Latin Spoken (None)/Written (Broken) [1]; Classical Greek Spoken (None)/Written (Broken) [1].

**Advantages:** Ally (Father, 150% of starting points, Available 15-) [30]; Contact Group (Members of the Circle of Pliny, Scientific Skills, Effective Skill 15, Appears 12-, Usually Reliable) [40]; Patron (Mr. Cholmondley, Extremely Powerful Individual, Minimal Intervention, Available 9-) [8]; Reputation (+2 as a smart lad, among his teachers and his parents' friends, 10 or less) [1].

**Disadvantages:** Curious (12) [-5]; Dependent (Marjorie Gillibrand, 50% of starting points, Loved One, Appears 6-) [-5]; Poor [-15]; Post-Combat Shakes (12) [-5]; Secret (Triple life, as

ordinary schoolboy, dragon-friend, and member of the Circle of Pliny) [-5]; Sense of Duty (Family and Close Friends) [-5]; Social Stigma (Minor) [-5]; Squeamish (5) [-5].

**Quirks:** Assumes that most dragons are basically benevolent; Generally law-abiding, but doesn't pay much attention to the details of the law, or let it restrain his curiosity much; Likes to share what he knows, if it's safe; Somewhat gullible. [-4]

**Skills:** Area Knowledge (Home Suburb)-12 (IQ, E) [1]; Bicycling-10 (DX, E) [1]; Expert (Dracontology)-12 (IQ, H) [4]; Hidden Lore (Dragons)-11 (IQ-1, A) [1]; Observation-11 (Per-1, A) [1]; Sports (Cricket)-9 (DX-1, A) [1]; Stealth-9 (DX-1, A) [1]; Writing-11 (IQ-1, A) [1].

Note: Eustace's wealth level reflects his *personal* resources and funds, which are in fact severely limited, arguably coming closer to the Dead Broke level; he's a *schoolchild* in a society which doesn't give children huge amounts of material stuff. His parents have Average wealth (albeit with some additional resources -- savings and so on), but this is unlikely to come into play, except in that it defines Eustace's lifestyle.

Eustace's father is a rather ordinary middle-class clerical worker; however, he provides Eustace with a home and some resources, and would do his best for his family if they were in trouble, so he is treated here as an Ally. Still, he would not be much help in really dangerous situations. Mr. Cholmondley is a lot more powerful, but a much less reliable source of aid. Also, whatever magical powers Mr. Cholmondley (and his employees) may possess, he is unlikely to use them to aid Eustace; for practical purposes here, he is merely extremely powerful. (If he chose to exert himself to the full, he could easily qualify as Ultra-Powerful, possibly with Special Abilities.)

Out of all Eustace's family, only Marjorie is treated as a Dependent, partly because his parents probably have higher personal point values than him, and partly because they are unlikely to become involved in problems of their own with which Eustace could help, or to need rescuing. (Marjorie might just insist on involving herself in his concerns.) Still, Eustace feels a proper Sense of Duty towards them all.

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