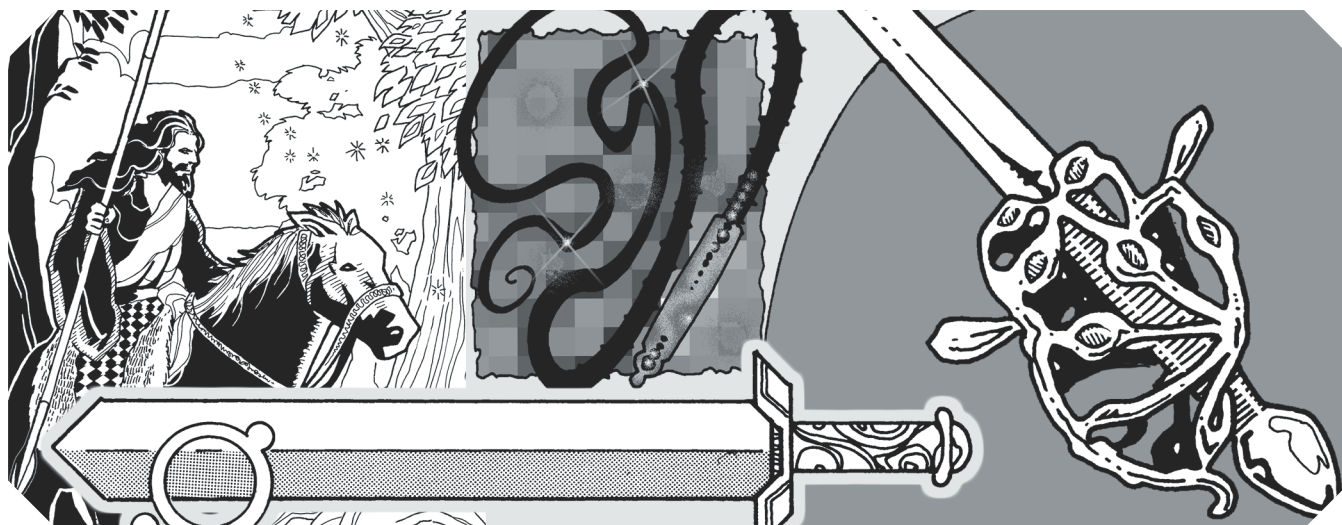


# GURPS®

Fourth Edition

# FANTASY-TECH™ 2

## WEAPONS OF FANTASY™



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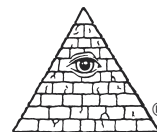
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# STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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## ABOUT GURPS

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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.

*Inigo Montoya: My father was slaughtered by a six-fingered man. He was a great swordmaker, my father. When the six-fingered man appeared and requested a special sword, my father took the job. He slaved a year before it was done.*

*Man in Black: I've never seen its equal.*

– *The Princess Bride* (1987)

# INTRODUCTION

The fantasy gamer's mind is often pulled in two directions at once: On the "fantasy" side is our imagination. We dream up *entire worlds* filled with magic and populated by make-believe people and creatures! Yet our "gamer" side is logical, rational, Cartesian. Beyond striving to follow the rules of the game, we expect things that exist in the real world to act like it, and we make exceptions only for the wholly fantastic, like dragons and sorcery.

Low-tech melee weapons offer a prime example. Fantasy versions can be utterly off-the-wall . . . *if* they're magical. Yet we expect nonmagical ones to behave like historical artifacts. Be honest: How many times have you been in a discussion (argument . . .) over something like how much a realistic sword should weigh or whether three-headed flails ever graced medieval battlefields?

**GURPS Fantasy-Tech 2: Weapons of Fantasy** is here to offer an "official" armory of muscle-powered madness. Don't worry about how realistic these weapons are! All that matters is that they're reasonably balanced for *fantasy* campaigns – particularly **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy**.

Nothing here absolutely requires your campaign to include monsters and dungeons. Magic *might* preempt the laws of physics (or the principles of economics) to justify this stuff, but the explanation could as easily be on the "meta" level: The game world obeys the rules of heroic fiction, so anything that makes for a better story *just works*. And some of these creations may be entirely plausible in a world frozen at TL3-4 for centuries or even millennia, giving craftsmen and warriors time to perfect and master them.

## THERE'S FANTASY AND THEN THERE'S FANTASY

Several items in this collection – full-metal weapons, double-ended weapons, giant swords, absurd rapiers, serpent's fangs – could be made in the real world. In the hands of a determined warrior, they might even be effective. What's fantastic are users skilled or strong enough to fight with them, or just sufficiently wealthy to afford them. Introducing such hardware into the campaign doesn't push the limits of historical technology (much) but implies the existence of larger-than-life heroes.

Other weapons defy logic in their own right and qualify as superscience. This doesn't imply time-travelers or aliens! For quicksilver swords and diabolical whips, the "super" in "superscience" is the "super" in "supernatural": fantastic materials are required for the idea to work. For multi-blades, it's more a question of making a clunky weapon effective simply because it's cool. All of these have a "Λ" on their TL to alert the GM: introducing them declares that the laws of magic or dramatic necessity can preempt those of physics in the setting.

Technology aside, there's the question of whether these weapons suit the desired feel of the campaign. Full-metal weapons are unlikely to be more noteworthy than metal-clad

or -studded ones, and are significantly *less* impressive than the ornate side-arms of the wealthy; serpent's fangs and quicksilver weapons are no more remarkable, and might be carefully guarded craft secrets in non- or hidden-fantasy settings. Double-ended weapons and absurd rapiers are "louder" (harder to ignore), but could be explained by introducing elements that stop short of the fantastic; e.g., they may be the preferred armaments of an ethnic group or fighting art, no stranger than other "martial-arts weapons." At the far end of the scale are giant swords, diabolical whips, and multi-blades, all of which impart an epic, dialed-to-11 vibe: fantasy is at the forefront, about as subtle as a Viking metal album cover. At that point, why not throw *everything* into the mix?

## PUBLICATION HISTORY

This is the first edition of **GURPS Fantasy-Tech 2: Weapons of Fantasy**. Double-ended weapons started life in *Pyramid* #3/61: *Way of the Warrior*; absurd rapiers, in **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Denizens: Swashbucklers**; and multi-blades, as double-swords in **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 8: Treasure Tables**. All have been expanded and generalized considerably.

*What makes a weapon fantastic is as often the wielder as the weapon. Some weapons require implausible materials or economies, or centuries or millennia in which to perfect them. But just as many are useful only in the hands of someone skilled, strong, determined, and crazy enough to master them. Of course, many work simply because they're cool!*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

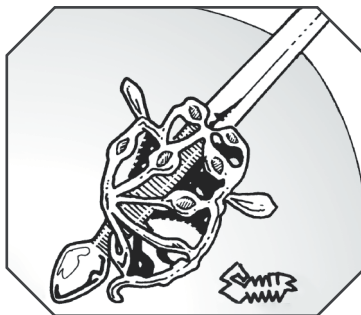
Sean Punch set out to become a particle physicist in 1985 and ended up as **GURPS** Line Editor in 1995. In that capacity, he has written, edited, or contributed to some 150 **GURPS** releases, revised the game into its fourth edition (2004), and been a regular contributor to *Pyramid* magazine. From 2008, he has served as lead creator of the **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy** series, the origin of the **Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game**. Sean has been a gamer since 1979, but devotes most of his spare time to Argentine tango (and occasionally tending bar). He lives in Montréal with his wife, Bonnie, and their cat, Zephyra.

# THE ARMORY

Nothing here is so over-the-top powerful that it's likely to cause problems in a game that features magical weapons and heroes with superhuman capabilities (be those spells, cinematic martial-arts abilities, or merely improbably high ST) – e.g., *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*. But as always, the GM decides which items suit the campaign, and may want to avoid weapons that don't fit the desired "feel," especially if the aim is secret or historical fantasy rather than the hack 'n' slash kind.

## COST FACTOR

Some technologies offer not entirely new weapons but rather ways to modify existing ones.



Price for such a modifier is expressed as a "cost factor" (CF), and multiple modifications can be applied unless noted otherwise. To find \$ cost, multiply the modified item's list price by (1 + total CF). For example, a sword that has one modification with +9 CF and another with +8 CF costs  $1 + (9 + 8) = 18$  times list price. To convert a multiplier for weapon quality or composition in the *GURPS Basic Set* to a CF, just subtract one; e.g., cheap quality ( $\times 0.4$  price) has -0.6 CF, a silver-coated weapon ( $\times 3$ ) has +2 CF, a fine-quality blade ( $\times 4$ ) has +3 CF, and a very fine blade or solid silver weapon ( $\times 20$ ) has +19 CF.

## FULL-METAL WEAPONS

Hafted weapons customarily have a wooden shaft and a metal business end, and for good reason: metal is heavy and *expensive*. When outfitting an army, it makes logistical sense to forge, stockpile, and transport just the *heads* of spears, polearms, etc., attaching them to shafts only when needed. The resulting weapons are light enough for ordinary fighters, and easily and cheaply repaired if the pole breaks.

Sticks are even lighter and cheaper, as they're 100% wood, save perhaps for an end cap. A typical ST 10 human can wield almost any such weapon with ease. While *GURPS* assigns them price tags, that's to keep PCs honest – realistically, sticks are close to free unless shaped to serve as tools (like oars) or replica swords, in which case they're merely inexpensive.

That said, it's quite possible to make such weapons entirely out of metal. This wasn't unknown historically. It's more widespread in fantasy, however, which regularly features warriors who wear steel armor, carry iron shields (see note [4] beneath the *Shield Table*, p. B287), and wield all-metal armaments.

Full-metal construction is an option for all axes, batons, clubs, flails, maces, mauls, picks, polearms, scythes, sickles, spears, staffs, stakes, and warhammers, plus oddities such as oars, wooden swords (like the *bokken* and *dusack*), and any other dangerous toys the GM agrees are made substantially of wood – be such a weapon one- or two-handed, and regardless of its size or the skill required. Effects are as follows:

**TL:** No lower than TL1. When TL0 weapons are made of metal, they *become* TL1. See also *What Metal?* (p. 5).

**Damage:** For hafted weapons, no effect. Sticks are *slightly* more effective: whacking people with a dense metal rod hurts more and adds +1 to damage. (*Exception:* A wooden stake loses

its unfavorable armor divisor instead.) The resulting weapon *can* be less effective than a standard weapon of comparable weight. Damage type is unchanged; e.g., a metal *bokken* is a katana-shaped steel club, not a katana.

**Cost and Weight:** For hafted weapons, add \$80 to cost and 2 lbs. to weight per yard of *maximum* reach. For sticks, multiply cost by five and weight by two – but minimum cost is \$20 per pound of adjusted weight. Apply these changes before modifications with cost factors, such as making the weapon fine quality; such modifiers adjust the increased cost and weight of the full-metal weapon.

**ST:** The ST needed to wield the weapon increases by one for every 2 lbs. added or fraction thereof, with a minimum of +1. This *does* raise the maximum useful ST (triple the minimum; see p. B270).

A full-metal weapon is also subject to these additional rules:

- It's considered solid metal, with DR 6, instead of wood (DR 2) or metal-wood (DR 4). As well, its additional weight helps prevent breakage on a parry and gives it more HP. See *Damage to Objects* (p. B483).

- It has the upsides and downsides of metal rather than wood. It's fireproof, allowing it to carry the Flaming Weapon spell without harm. It won't rot or warp – though it may rust. It's conductive, which is a problem against opponents who use electrical attacks but allows it to bear the Lightning Weapon spell. And affecting it with magic requires spells that are more draining than those that affect wood – good when enemy wizards attack it, bad when you want to magically enhance it.

- It may have modifiers reserved for all-metal weapons, such as quicksilver weapon (p. 12).

*Examples:* A full-metal axe is TL1, costs \$130, weighs 6 lbs. (an extra 2 lbs.), and requires ST 12; it has DR 6, HP 15 instead of DR 4, HP 13. A full-metal light club is TL1, does sw+2 or thr+2 crushing, costs \$120, weighs 6 lbs. (an added 3 lbs.), and calls for ST 12; it has DR 6, HP 15 instead of DR 2, HP 12. A full-metal long spear costs \$300, weighs 11 lbs. (an extra 6 lbs.), and needs ST 13; it has DR 6, HP 18 instead of DR 4, HP 14, and is massive enough to endanger the majority of one-handed swords if they parry it. None of these weapons will burn, making them useful to fantasy dragon-slayers!

## Enchanted Full-Metal Weapons

An inescapable downside of a full-metal weapon is that it isn't organic and therefore cannot be the subject of the Staff spell. It also passes through targets (and would-be wielders!) protected by Steelwraith, making it a prime candidate for enchantment to counter that spell. Otherwise, crafting a weapon entirely out of metal has little impact on enchantment – although the weight increase makes some options (like that Steelwraith countermeasure) more costly.

## What Metal?

The *type* of metal involved can matter for the reasons discussed in *Blade Composition* (p. B275) – or, in fantasy worlds, because some magic and monsters rapidly rust iron and steel! The head of a hafted weapon is assumed to be bronze in a TL1 setting, iron or low-grade steel at TL2, or good steel (but not *sword* steel) at TL3+. Full-metal versions have a shaft of same stuff and may even be forged as one piece, as the whole point

is to avoid weak spots. Sticks are likewise made of this metal. Warriors who want lower-tech metals are welcome to them, with all of their upsides and downsides.

*Silver* poses a tricky question. Silver trades at \$1,000 per pound in many game worlds (*Gold and Silver*, p. B515), but applying the +19 CF for solid silver rarely gives results consistent with this. For instance, a maul with a solid-silver head costs \$1,600, and even if the entire sum bought silver, that would be a tiny 1.6-lb. business end for a massive 12-lb. weapon; by contrast, a solid-silver shortsword costs \$8,000, or as much as 8 lbs. of silver, for a 2-lb. weapon. In such cases, assume that when overall price is lower than \$1,000/lb., only the portions used to strike the target are solid silver, while if it's higher, the excess cost is a premium for labor (like the near-impossible task of crafting a long, slim, sharp silver sword!). Full-metal weapons with the solid-silver modifier aren't all-*silver*, so melting them down isn't a get-rich-quick scheme; e.g., a silver version of the \$130, 6-lb. full-metal axe in the example above costs \$2,600, so it includes *at most* 2.6 lbs. (not 6 lbs.) of silver, and probably less.

If someone desperately *wants* a full-metal weapon to be genuinely all-silver, don't use +19 as the CF. Instead, divide  $(\$1,000 \times \text{full-metal weapon weight in lbs.})$  by (full-metal weapon cost in \$), subtract one, and round up to the next 0.1 to get the CF. For instance, if the \$130, 6-lb. full-metal axe in the example were all-silver, it would require \$6,000 of silver, so the CF for solid silver would rise to  $(\$6,000/\$130) - 1 = +45.2$ , while if the \$300, 11-lb. full-metal long spear were all-silver, it would call for \$11,000 of silver, so the CF would be  $(\$11,000/\$300) - 1 = +35.7$ . Minimum CF is the standard +19. Add the CF for solid silver to the CF for other modifications, as usual, and adjust the full-metal weapon cost to get final cost.

# DOUBLE-ENDED WEAPONS

Everybody knows that for fantasy fighters, two melee weapons are better than one – even if most real-life warriors used one sword or axe or spear at a time. A variation on the theme, rarely seen outside of fantasy, is two weapons joined together by a haft, yielding a two-handed weapon with *two* business ends (usually blades or crushing heads).

Such weapons offer three benefits, not all equally realistic:

- The precisely matched heads counterbalance each other, eliminating the drawbacks of weapon types that are normally unbalanced (“U” on Parry), slow to change reach (“\*” on Reach), or unreadied by attacking (“ $\frac{1}{2}$ ” on ST). Designs based on weapons that suffer *none* of these drawbacks in the first place – or on expensive swords – become better at parrying (if not *quite* as good as a quarterstaff). This benefit is the most improbable!

- The wielder can attack two adjacent opponents – one with either end – at reach 1. This is considered a Dual-Weapon Attack at -4 rather than a Rapid Strike at -6. As the weapon is intrinsically two-handed, there's no -4 for the “off” hand on either attack. You can “buy off” the penalty with a technique; see *Double-Ended Attack* (p. 6). Real-world martial artists who use exotic weapons like the *sanjiegun* (three-part staff) and *qian kun ri yue dao* claim this benefit, but improving it to full skill is probably cinematic.

- When such a weapon is broken by an attack, parry, or critical miss, this smashes *one end*. A one-ended weapon continues to work, but not as well: Parry 0U and Reach 1, 2\*, regardless of type; Polearm and Two-Handed Axe/Mace weapons that require readying after a swing in their single-ended form now do so; and the special Dual-Weapon Attack is no longer possible. If the weapon is broken a second time, it's useless. This is mostly realistic.

However, three realistic downsides don't disappear for fantasy warriors:

- Cost is higher than even that for two weapons. This is considered *base* cost, too, so any modification with a cost factor (CF) exaggerates it. Modifications affect the entire weapon because the ends must be *identical* to counterbalance one another – no making just one end fine, for instance.

- Weight is also higher, encumbering the user and raising the ST requirement. On the upside, this helps prevent breakage.

- Such weapons give -2 to skill for *all* purposes (and thus -1 to Parry), unless the user has the Double-Ended Weapon Training perk (p. 6).

The *Double-Ended Weapon Table* (pp. 6-7) presents statistics for such weapons.

## Enchanted Double-Ended Weapons

A double-ended weapon usually counts as *one* weapon for enchantment purposes. As such weapons are *heavy*, weight-dependent magic (e.g., Dancing Weapon, Distant Blow, Ghost Weapon, Hide Object, Loyal Sword, Planar Visit, Quick-Draw, and Steelwraith) is expensive. On the other hand, enchantments that ignore weight (particularly Accuracy, Defending Weapon, Penetrating Weapon, Puissance, and Shatterproof) are outstanding deals, as a single enchantment is needed where someone who uses paired weapons would require two.

“Elemental” enchantments – Flaming Weapon, Icy Weapon, and Lightning Weapon – obey special rules.

These can affect the entire double-ended weapon (as always, weight is irrelevant) or *just one end*. As the same weapon cannot have Flaming Weapon and Icy Weapon in most fantasy settings, this permits a double-ended weapon with a flaming end and an icy end. Similar options apply in worlds that offer other mutually exclusive effects: holy vs. unholy, positive vs. negative energy, etc.

### DOUBLE-ENDED WEAPON FIGHTING

Double-ended weapon users often learn this perk and technique.

#### Perk: Double-Ended Weapon Training

You ignore the -2 to skill (and therefore the -1 to Parry) when wielding certain weapons on the *Double-Ended Weapon Table* (below). You must specialize by two-handed Melee Weapon skill.

#### Technique: Double-Ended Attack

Hard

*Default:* prerequisite skill-4.

*Prerequisites:* Any two-handed Melee Weapon skill and its Double-Ended Weapon Training perk; cannot exceed prerequisite skill.

This cinematic technique works identically to Dual-Weapon Attack (p. B230) except that it “buys off” the -4 when attacking with both ends of a double-ended weapon wielded in two hands.



## Double-Ended Weapon Table

All double-ended weapons require *at least* the “standard” fantasy TL3, even if the weapons upon which they’re based are normally lower-tech.

TL	Weapon	Damage	Reach	Parry	Cost	Weight	ST	Notes
3	Double-Ended Halberd	sw+4 cut	1, 2	0	\$540	16	14†	[1]
	or	sw+3 imp	1, 2	0	–	–	14†	
	or	thr+3 imp	1, 2	0	–	–	13†	
3	Double-Ended Horse-Cutter	sw+4 cut	1, 2	0	\$540	12	13†	
	or	thr+3 imp	1, 2	0	–	–	12†	
3	Double-Ended Naginata or Glaive	sw+2 cut	1, 2	0	\$500	8	11†	
	or	thr+3 imp	1, 2	0	–	–	10†	
3	Double-Ended Pollaxe	sw+4 cr	1, 2	0	\$540	16	14†	
	or	sw+3 imp	1, 2	0	–	–	14†	
	or	thr+3 imp	1, 2	0	–	–	13†	[1]

## Double-Ended Weapon Table (continued)

TL	Weapon	Damage	Reach	Parry	Cost	Weight	ST	Notes
<b>SPEAR (DX-5, Polearm-4, or Staff-2)</b>								
3	Double-Ended Slashing Spear	thr+4 imp	1, 2	0	\$480	8	11†	
	or	thr+3 cut	1, 2	0	–	–	11†	

## STAFF (DX-5, Polearm-4, or Spear-2)

3	Double-Ended Dao	sw+4 cut	1, 2	+1	\$1,700	14	13†	
	or	thr+1 imp	1, 2	+1	–	–	12†	
3	Double-Ended Falchion, Light	sw+3 cut	1, 2	+1	\$1,100	10	12†	
	or	thr-1 imp	1, 2	+1	–	–	11†	
3	Double-Ended Falchion, Heavy	sw+4 cut	1, 2	+1	\$1,550	13	13†	
	or	thr imp	1, 2	+1	–	–	12†	
3	Double-Ended Sword, Long	sw+3 cut	1, 2	+1	\$1,500	10	12†	
	or	thr+3 imp	1, 2	+1	–	–	11†	
3	Double-Ended Sword, Short	sw+2 cut	1, 2	+1	\$1,100	8	11†	
	or	thr+2 imp	1, 2	+1	–	–	10†	

## TWO-HANDED AXE/MACE (DX-5, Axe/Mace-3, Polearm-4, or Two-Handed Flail-4)

3	Double-Ended Axe, Heavy	sw+4 cut	1, 2	0	\$500	12	13†	
3	Double-Ended Axe, Light	sw+3 cut	1, 2	0	\$450	8	12†	
3	Double-Ended Mace	sw+4 cr	1, 2	0	\$400	12	13†	
3	Double-Ended Maul	sw+5 cr	1, 2	0	\$460	20	15†	
3	Double-Ended Sickle	sw+1 cut	1, 2	0	\$380	6	11†	
	or	sw+1 imp	1, 2	0	–	–	11†	[1]
3	Double-Ended Warhammer	sw+4 imp	1, 2	0	\$500	10	12†	[1]

## TWO-HANDED FLAIL (DX-6, Flail-3, Kusari-4, or Two-Handed Axe/Mace-4)

3	Double-Ended Flail, Light	sw+3 cr	1, 2	0	\$460	8	12†	[2]
3	Double-Ended Flail, Heavy	sw+4 cr	1, 2	0	\$500	12	14†	[2]

## Notes

[1] May get stuck; see *Picks* (p. B405).

[2] Attempts to *parry* this weapon are at -4. Fencing weapons (“F” parry) can’t parry it at all! Attempts to *block* it are at -2.

## OTHER DOUBLE-ENDED WEAPONS?

The stats on the *Double-Ended Weapon Table* (above) were found using a method that stops short of being a design system. To quickly improvise further examples:

1. Start with a standard weapon that has reach 1 at minimum. For polearms, always start with the shorter “dueling” version (reach 2, *not* 3).

2. Double its list price and add \$300 to find double-ended cost.

3. For hafted weapons with longest reach 1, double weight and add 2 lbs. to get double-ended weight. For hafted weapons with longest reach 2+, and flails, double weight and *subtract* 4 lbs. And for swords and fencing weapons, double weight and add 4 lbs.

4. In most cases, the skill required is that for a two-handed weapon in the same broad category: Polearm for polearms, Spear for spears, Two-Handed Axe/Mace for all impact weapons, or Two-Handed Flail for all flails.

However, double-ended swords and fencing weapons use Staff, not Two-Handed Sword.

5. Damage is unchanged for all double-ended weapons except swords and fencing weapons, which get +2 swinging damage and +1 thrusting damage for added leverage.

6. Reach is 1, 2 for all double-ended weapons.

7. Parry is 0 for most double-ended weapons, +1 for swords and fencing weapons.

8. Required ST is that of a two-handed weapon of comparable weight in that general category. If there’s nothing like that, add +2 and be done with it. In all cases, ST picks up the “†” for two-handed use.

The results will sometimes disagree with the stats on the table, which were fine-tuned for game balance. The GM is welcome to do the same if a weapon seems unusually good or bad.

# GIANT SWORDS

Thanks to anime, mainly, many fantasy worlds feature *enormous* swords. These aren't merely the oversized two-handed swords occasionally used by real-world executioners or created as display pieces for shrines and museums. No, giant swords have massive blades – longer than the user is tall, often as wide as a slim wielder – mated to two-handed grips long and narrow enough to allow control with human-sized hands. Wielding such a weapon demands extraordinary skill and strength, and proclaims the owner to be a hero.

The “skill” aspect is reflected in the fact that all such weapons have a built-in penalty for unwieldiness. The resulting skill decrease *does* affect Parry. This can be “bought off” with the Giant Sword perk (below).

The “strength” element is a consequence of weight: Huge blades weigh a lot and have high minimum ST! This also has ramifications for skill, as Giant Sword *cannot* buy off the -1 to skill per level of missing ST (p. B270). Moreover, if the user's ST is less than 2/3 of that required, the weapon becomes unready after each attack. If it's less than 1/3 of that needed, attempts to use it (to attack, feint, parry, etc.) fail automatically and call for a DX roll to avoid falling over. At the GM's option, this last rule could apply to *any* swung melee weapon that has reach 2+ and requires more than three times the user's ST.

*Example:* A titanic sword requires ST 30. Between ST 29 and ST 20, a fighter could use it at -1 to -10 (on top of the basic -2 for size). At ST 19 or less, it would not only be used at -11 or worse, but also become unready after each attack. At ST 9 or less, any use would fail *and* mean a DX roll to avoid falling over.

See the *Giant Sword Table* (p. 9) for stats. The merely *gigantic* sword is almost 10' long from pommel to point, and at least 3-4 inches wide; the *titanic* sword is around 12' long all told,

and 7-8 inches wide; and the *godlike* sword is about 15' overall, and 11-12 inches wide. *Wide* and *double-wide* swords are “just” 6' or 7' long (greatsword-length), but well over 1' and 2' wide, respectively. None of these weapons is notably thicker than an ordinary blade – they taper to a keen edge, maintaining their integrity thanks to labor-intensive smithing (traditionally the secret of gods, demigods, or at least titans).

Gigantic, titanic, and godlike swords cannot be conveniently sheathed and therefore cannot be readied using Fast-Draw. They're customarily carried resting on one shoulder with hands on the grip, which counts as ready; if on a table or rack, carried by a flunky, on the ground, etc., see *Readying Weapons and Other Gear* (pp. B382-383). Wide and double-wide swords can be scabbarded on the back, allowing Fast-Draw (Two-Handed Sword) attempts at the sword's skill penalty for unwieldiness.

## Enchanted Giant Swords

Giant swords are often magical, though their high weight makes certain enchantments extremely expensive – notably Hide Object, which in fantasy that features such weapons is a common way to stash them when not in use. See *Enchanted Double-Ended Weapons* (p. 6) for a list of other weight-sensitive enchantments.

## Lighter Giant Swords

In some settings, giant swords aren't as heavy as they look. They're made from an incredible alloy – like the mythic *orichalcum* – that reduces weight to more manageable levels while somehow hitting no less hard, compensating for lack of mass with a faster swing, a keener edge, or the Power of Plot. And somehow, this doesn't make the sword any more fragile.

This is pure fantasy: add a “^” to the weapon's TL.

### Perk: Giant Sword

You've practiced with truly colossal swords. This perk comes in levels, with each level eliminating -1 to Two-Handed Sword and Fast-Draw (Two-Handed Sword) due to the size of such a sword. It does *not* offset penalties for insufficient ST!

### Other Giant Weapons?

Other giant weapons – like unnatural axes – are less common in fantasy, but the GM may want them. Start by applying *Scaling Weapons* (*GURPS Low-Tech Companion 2: Weapons and Warriors*, pp. 20-21) to a standard melee weapon for SM 0 users; scale to SM +1 if gigantic, +2 if titanic, or +3 if godlike, adjusting damage, reach, cost, weight, and ST. Multiply the resulting cost by 1.5 to reflect specialized grips and surprising thinness. Where a wide or double-wide version would make sense (GM's decision), use the titanic or godlike stats, respectively, but ignore the reach change. In all cases, the penalty to Melee Weapon and Fast-Draw skills is equal in size to the SM used for scaling (e.g., -2 for SM +2); the perk to offset this is specialized by Melee Weapon skill. If final reach is 3+, the weapon *cannot* benefit from Fast-Draw, even if normally possible for the type.

- Cutting weight to 2/3 reduces the required ST to 80% of the listed amount (drop fractions in both cases). For instance, reducing a titanic sword from 44 lbs. to 29 lbs. also whittles ST down from 30 to 24. The alloys required add +9 CF.

- Cutting weight to 1/2 reduces ST to 70% of the listed requirement. Lightening that titanic sword to 22 lbs. chops ST to 21. +19 CF.

- Cutting weight to 1/3 reduces ST to 60% of normal. Taking that titanic sword to 14 lbs. slashes ST to 18. At the GM's option, this may be the same as making the weapon from orichalcum in worlds where that exists. +29 CF.

In all cases, treat the weapon as having its *full* weight when calculating HP and checking for breakage, but use reduced weight for all other purposes: encumbrance, enchantment costs, etc. Lighter construction precludes applying modifiers for materials such as silver or meteoric iron.

The lightening process isn't effective for ordinary-sized weapons. An oversized blade is necessary to prevent loss of damage.

## Giant Sword Table

All of these weapons have the problem of *minimum* reach: they cannot make thrusting attacks on nearby targets. The largest cannot even be usefully *swung* at foes closer than two yards away.

In all cases, these swords are intended for SM 0 users of fantastic ST. They can be scaled up normally for beings of SM +1 or larger!

TL	Weapon	Damage	Reach	Parry	Cost	Weight	ST	Notes
<b>TWO-HANDED SWORD (DX-5, Broadsword-4, or Force Sword-4)</b>								
3	Gigantic Sword	sw+5 cut	1-3	0	\$3,000	16	18†	-1 to skill
	or	thr+5 imp	3	0	–	–	18†	-1 to skill
3	Titanic Sword	sw+8 cut	2-4	0	\$8,400	44	30†	-2 to skill
	or	thr+8 imp	4	0	–	–	30†	-2 to skill
3	Godlike Sword	sw+11 cut	2-5	0	\$16,500	86	42†	-3 to skill
	or	thr+11 imp	5	0	–	–	42†	-3 to skill
3	Wide Sword	sw+8 cut	1, 2	0	\$8,400	44	30†	-2 to skill
	or	thr+8 imp	2	0	–	–	30†	-2 to skill
3	Double-Wide Sword	sw+11 cut	1, 2	0	\$16,500	86	42†	-3 to skill
	or	thr+11 imp	2	0	–	–	42†	-3 to skill

## ABSURD RAPIERS

It was a real historical trend, particularly in the 17th century, to make rapiers longer in order to get the first hit. This was mostly a matter of inches – say, 45” instead of the typical 40-42” – but rapiers have been found with 50-52” blades, which is long enough to justify (if only barely) reach 3 in **GURPS**.

What if the trend went further? In worlds where rapierists anticipate fighting dragons and giants, they might favor *really* long blades – and if the armorers there are capable of forging giant swords (pp. 8-9) and working indestructible alloys such as orichalcum, such weapons would hardly be a challenge. The *Absurd Rapier Table* (below) offers examples.

Rapiers this long *don't* work with the Rapier skill or give a fencing parry, despite the name. In fact, after being swung, they cannot parry at all; Parry is “0U” rather than “0F.” They're considered swords rather than fencing weapons (p. B208), and wielded using the Broadsword skill. However, they're substantial enough to parry flails at the standard -4 instead of being completely unable to do so; see *Flails* (p. B405).

Super-long rapiers can be sheathed, but if worn that way, the scabbard scrapes along the ground, giving -1 to Stealth and annoying allies: -1 to noncombat tasks – like making maps and trying not to step in slime – within (highest reach - 1) yards directly behind the wearer. Fans of these beasts therefore often carry them in hand, sheathed and unready (the law in civilized settlements), or possibly bare and ready. To ready a sheathed rapier quickly, use Fast-Draw (Sword).

*The cause of the great slaughter done by long rapiers consists not in their long reach but in the inconvenient length and unwieldiness.*

– George Silver,  
*Paradoxes of Defense*

### Absurd Rapier Table

Warriors seeking powerful blades take note: All of these weapons receive a flat +1 to swing damage, relative to an edged rapier, for being somewhat heavier. They're still long and slim; they aren't giant swords (pp. 8-9) with extreme weight and damage.

The real benefit is reach, which comes with the problem of *minimum* reach. None of these rapiers can make thrusting attacks on nearby targets, and only the shortest can be swung at foes closer than two yards away.

TL	Weapon	Damage	Reach	Parry	Cost	Weight	ST
<b>BROADSWORD (DX-5, Force Sword-4, Rapier-4, Saber-4, Shortsword-2, or Two-Handed Sword-4)</b>							
4	Absurd Rapier	sw+1 cut	1-3	0U	\$1,500	4.5	11
	or	thr+1 imp	2, 3	0	–	–	11
4	Really Absurd Rapier	sw+1 cut	2-4	0U	\$2,000	6	13
	or	thr+1 imp	3, 4	0	–	–	13
4	Insane Rapier	sw+1 cut	3-5	0U	\$2,500	7.5	14
	or	thr+1 imp	4, 5	0	–	–	14

# SERPENT'S FANGS

Melee weapons that inject poison from internal reservoirs grace the arsenal of many a fictional assassin. Reality throws several barriers in the way of this: The victim's armor, clothing, and flesh are liable to plug the tube. Blowing out the obstruction and delivering poison requires a propellant or heavy-duty syringe. Activating *that* is its own puzzle – it calls for a trigger activated by plunging the blade into the target or operating a control. Finally, there's the design challenge of making a hollow weapon with a complex mechanism robust enough to withstand combat.

Fantasy doesn't care about all that. Somehow, the problems have all been solved via clever artificing!

*Serpent's fang* (TL4) is a modifier for melee weapons that are made of metal or have metal striking heads, and that are capable of impaling attacks. Such a weapon holds four doses of any poison that would be effective if applied to a blade or injected. (*Exception:* Double-ended weapons, p. 5, hold four doses *per end*; they always cost more than two separate weapons, so this is fair and balanced.) The reservoir is in the hilt of a sword or fencing weapon, or in the head of a pick, polearm, spear, warhammer, or similar hafted weapon. When adding this modifier, specify how the mechanism works:

- *Automatic.* The weapon *always* releases poison on an impaling attack that gets far enough to roll damage – even if that damage fails to penetrate DR. Each hit uses up one dose (usually wasted if delivered outside armor).

- *Safety.* The weapon releases a dose of poison on a successful impaling attack *unless the user presses a control*. To prevent this after a hit, roll vs. unmodified weapon skill. Any failure means poison is released anyway. Critical failure also breaks the mechanism: the weapon functions as automatic until repaired (see *Repairs*, pp. B484-485, or use the Repair spell).

- *Trigger.* The weapon releases a dose of poison whenever the user presses a control. To do so after a hit in combat, roll vs. unmodified weapon skill. Any failure means no poison is injected. Critical failure also breaks the mechanism: the

weapon can't inject poison until repaired. Out of combat, no roll is needed to squirt out a dose.

No effect on weapon weight; strictly speaking, the poison and enough solvent to carry it have weight, but tracking this would be needlessly fussy. +9 CF.

This modifier is costly on swords, and overkill on battlefield armaments that can slay with raw damage (like most hafted impaling weapons). Thus, it's most commonly found on Knife and Main-Gauche weapons; see the *GURPS Basic Set* and *GURPS Low-Tech* for possibilities. With no other modifiers, a serpent's fang dagger or stiletto costs \$200; a small knife, \$300; a large knife or rondel dagger, \$400; a katar, kukri, or main-gauche, \$500; a sai, \$600; and a long knife, \$1,200.

Serpent's fang is mutually exclusive with quicksilver weapon (p. 12). The injection mechanism leaves no space for mercury.

## Enchanted Serpent's Fangs

Putting Hideaway on the poison reservoir within a serpent's fang *greatly* expands its capacity! Each pound added allows it to hold 20 *more* doses. (This figure was chosen for convenience – poison varies considerably in weight per dose, and may need added water, alcohol, etc. to flow freely.) At 50 energy per pound, this counts as encumbrance; at 100 energy per pound, it doesn't.

## Elixirs and Serpent's Fangs

Any alchemical elixir that exists in ointment form (*GURPS Magic*, p. 213) can be used in lieu of poison, having its usual effects if it reaches the subject through armor. If using *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*, any "grenade" can be had in a form suitable for such use on a single target, at half the usual price. Either involves a greater volume of liquid: one dose of elixir counts as *four* of poison.

# MULTI-BLADES

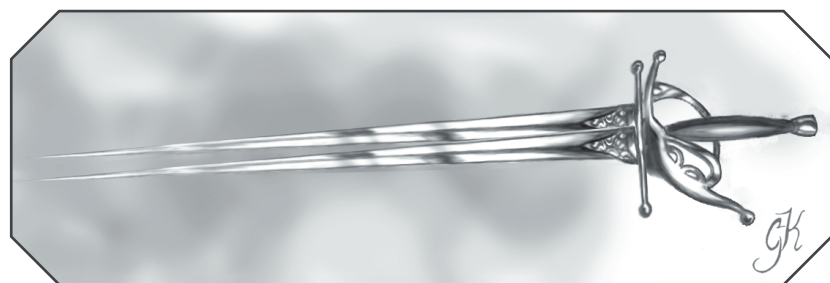
Fantasy is full of swords that have not just small prongs or spurs on the hilt, but two, three, or more *full-sized blades* mounted in parallel. In reality, that would render the weapon unwieldy and expensive while distributing the force of the blow over a wider area, making it less able to pierce

armor – hardly ideal. But in some tales, the Rule of Cool is what matters: The sword becomes much deadlier, with each attack delivering not one but *several* wounds!

Any metal sword or fencing weapon that weighs at least 1.5 lbs. and is capable of a swung cutting attack or thrust impaling attack can be multi-bladed. (Lighter ones – e.g., knives – can be *made* this way but lack the heft to gain anything from it. For non-swords, see *Other Multiple Weapons?*, p. 11.) Effects are as follows:

*TL:* Numerical TL is unchanged, but being effective by virtue of the Power of Plot amounts to "superscience," adding a "^" to TL.

*Damage:* Cutting and impaling attacks gain +1 damage *per die, per added blade*.



*Cost and Weight:* The cost to forge such a complicated weapon, retain the balance of a single blade (no skill penalty), and have the outcome be more rather than less deadly rises *drastically* with blade count; a quadruple sword may be a life's work. Weight goes up, too – but the common hilt means that (for instance) a double sword doesn't weigh *quite* as much as two swords. Additional weight *does* help prevent breakage on a parry.

Number of Blades	Cost	Weight
2	×4	×1 2/3
3	×20	×2 1/3
4	×100	×3

Apply the changes on the table *before* applying modifications with cost factors, such as making the sword fine-quality or a quicksilver weapon (p. 12). Modifiers adjust the *increased* cost and weight, and affect the entire weapon; e.g., no making just one of the blades fine.

*ST:* The ST needed to wield the weapon goes up by one for every 2 lbs. added or fraction thereof, with a minimum of +1. This *does* increase the maximum useful ST (triple the minimum; see p. B270).

*Examples:* A double-bladed thrusting broadsword is TL2<sup>^</sup>, does sw+1 cutting or thr+2 impaling at +1 per die, costs \$2,400, weighs 5 lbs. (that is, 2 lbs. extra), and calls for ST 11. A triple-bladed one does sw+1 cutting or thr+2 impaling at +2 per die, costs \$12,000, weighs 7 lbs. (4 lbs. extra), and requires ST 12. A quadruple-bladed one does sw+1 cutting or thr+2 impaling at +3 per die, costs \$60,000, weighs 9 lbs. (6 lbs. extra), and demands ST 13.

The GM decides how many blades are within the capabilities of the game world's smiths (e.g., "one extra per setting TL beyond the TL needed for the underlying sword"), and may allow even more, multiplying cost by five and adding 2/3 to the weight multiplier per additional blade.

*Fantasy is full of swords with two, three, or more blades. The Rule of Cool makes these **much** deadlier!*

### Enchanted Multi-Blades

A multi-blade usually counts as *one* weapon for enchantment purposes. As discussed in *Enchanted Double-Ended Weapons* (p. 6), increased weight raises the cost of some magic. Also as with double-ended weapons, it's possible to enchant just one blade with Flaming Weapon, Icy Weapon, or Lightning Weapon, allowing Flaming Weapon and Icy Weapon to coexist. In that case, *both* damage bonuses

## OTHER MULTIPLE WEAPONS?

Optionally, *Multi-Blades* (pp. 10-11) can be applied to *any* weapon with a metal striking head, regardless of category or damage type – although such arms aren't as common as swords in fiction. Without the high base price of a sword, this yields a huge damage bonus at low cost. To maintain game balance, further multiply costs by 2.5, yielding a net ×10 for double, ×50 for triple, ×250 for quadruple, and so on.

Such weapons also give -1 to skill per added head, because the extra weight is concentrated at one end in an unwieldy fashion: -1 for double, -2 for triple, -3 for quadruple, etc. This can be "bought off" with a perk (*Multi-Headed Weapon Training*, below).

*Example:* A triple-headed morningstar – three balls on chains, attached to a haft – is TL3<sup>^</sup>, does sw+3 crushing at +2 per die, costs \$4,000, weighs 14 lbs. (that is, 8 lbs. extra), calls for ST 16, and gives -2 to skill without a special perk. The GM decides the extreme price tag reflects a complicated arrangement of swivels and specially twisted chain that prevents the three flails from becoming entangled.

### Perk: Multi-Headed Weapon Training

You've trained with a specific category of multi-headed weapons other than swords. This perk comes in levels; each level eliminates -1 to skill for the number of heads. You must specialize by Melee Weapon skill.

apply – though as separate follow-ups, not added together or to the weapon's physical damage. The same enchantment only ever adds its damage once, regardless of blade count; e.g., on a triple blade, Puissance +1 does +1 damage, not +3, and Flaming Weapon adds +2 fire damage, not +2 three times or +6 once.

### Poisoned Multi-Blades

Assume that one dose of poison has the same effect as it would if delivered using an ordinary, single blade. In keeping with the Rule of Cool, however, someone with a lot of poison can put one full dose on each blade to produce the effects in *Varying the Dosage* (p. B439): two doses divide delay and interval by two, double damage, and give -2 to HT rolls to resist, while four doses divide time by four, quadruple damage, and give -4 to HT rolls to resist – and by extrapolation, three doses divide time by three, triple damage, and give -3 to HT rolls to resist. The GM may require a Poisons roll to do this *right*.

Another possibility is putting a different poison or alchemical elixir on each blade, as they won't interfere with one another. If damage penetrates DR, they *all* take effect!

Finally, multi-blades can have the serpent's fang modifier (p. 10). There's no special effect on capacity – the reservoir is in the hilt, which doesn't change much. However, the sword can optionally be designed to inject one dose *per blade* on a hit; specify this when buying the weapon (CF is unchanged). Injecting more poison empties the reservoir more quickly and works exactly like putting multiple doses of poison *on* the blade, but without the Poisons roll.

# QUICKSILVER SWORDS

Some tales of speculative fiction feature hollow swords partially filled with mercury. The idea is that when swung, the dense liquid rushes to the end, concentrating mass there and increasing the force of the blow.

Real-world physics doesn't agree! Though filling a weapon with mercury would make it heavier (mercury is around 7.8 oz./cubic inch, while dense steel is a mere 4.7 oz./cubic inch) and thus able to hit harder, that would be nothing but a costly way to get a higher-ST weapon; it would be cheaper and easier to use a broadsword instead of a shortsword, a falchion in lieu of a broadsword, etc. Keeping the *same* weight for a user of modest ST would give the weapon the same kinetic energy and thus the same damage when swung at a given speed – and that's optimistic, as the fluid's full weight would arrive an instant *after* impact, probably worsening performance. Lastly, a hollow weapon would be more fragile.

But in a world where the laws of alchemy trump those of physics, mercury might live up to the name “quicksilver,” rushing forcefully to the right spot at the right time. Of course, large quantities of a rare alchemical material wouldn't be cheap, and neither would the smithing required to reinforce a hollow blade.

*Quicksilver weapon* (TL3<sup>+</sup>) is a modifier restricted to all-metal weapons – organic materials would absorb the mercury, eventually allowing it to escape, and the fluid must be able to travel the weapon's *full* length to be effective. Swords and fencing weapons are usual, but the GM may make exceptions; ordinary hafted weapons never qualify, but a *khopesh* or *qian kun ri yue dao* would (these use Axe/Mace or Staff, respectively, but are swords), while clubs and stakes wouldn't (these use sword skills, but are wooden). Multiply the damage adds listed for the weapon's *swinging* attack by 1.5 and round up, but always add at least +1 (e.g., sw-1 becomes sw, sw+1 becomes sw+2, and sw+3 becomes sw+5); apply bonuses for quality, a multi-blade (pp. 10-11), etc. after multiplying, not before. If the swing misses or the target dodges, treat the weapon as

having a “U” on its Parry stat, meaning it can't parry afterward, if it doesn't already have that drawback; this doesn't apply if it hits or if the target blocks or parries. No effect on thrusting attacks, weight, ST, or weapon breakage. +8 CF.

For anything but a large two-handed sword (sw+3 or better), this is less effective than going for fine quality, which adds +1 damage *and* makes the weapon less breakable for just +3 CF, and won't misbehave on a miss. However, as stated above, these (and other) damage modifiers can “stack” – the damage effects are additive – and the resulting +11 CF is less than the +19 CF for a very fine weapon with +2 damage (although the latter is more durable and less, ahem, mercurial). A very fine quicksilver sword is costly (+27 CF) but *deadly*, with at least +3 damage.

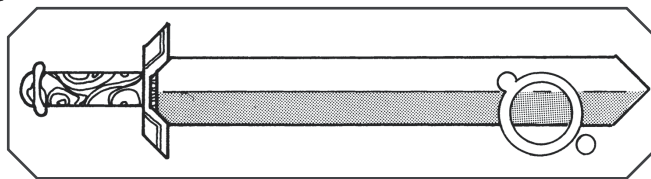
This modifier is mutually exclusive with serpent's fang (p. 10) – there's only so much space inside a weapon!

## Enchanted Quicksilver Swords

The Quick-Draw and Graceful Weapon enchantments normally affect readiness, *not* the ability to parry. However, they interact with alchemical mercury in a way that makes *it* quicker or more graceful: If a quicksilver weapon lacks a “U” on its Parry stat, missed and dodged attacks don't remove the ability to parry afterward. If the weapon has a “U” normally, it loses this – the enchanted mercury makes the weapon *more* manageable!

## Broken Quicksilver Swords

A broken quicksilver weapon loses its mercury. Treat as a regular broken weapon of its type (p. B485). If repaired by someone with access to mercury, use full cost for repairs (pp. B484-485); the result is as good as new. Otherwise, use cost *without* the quicksilver weapon modifier; the repaired weapon will lack this property. Spilled mercury is simply lost unless the GM feels like poisoning somebody who has Unluckiness or Cursed.



# DIABOLICAL WHIPS

In the hands of a sufficiently callous wielder, the whip provides man and beast with a painful incentive to act (or *not* act). It causes lions and tigers to hesitate before the tamer, and the strongest prisoner to obey the overseer. Beyond that, it's a notorious instrument of torture. In short, it's *intimidating*.

However, the whip is intended for use against bare skin – or fur at most. Its blows are ineffective against real armor, and while enough of them might kill a helpless victim, an *armed* foe is likely to preempt 40 lashes by responding with a single, lethal attack. When that happens, a whip isn't optimal for warding off the blow.

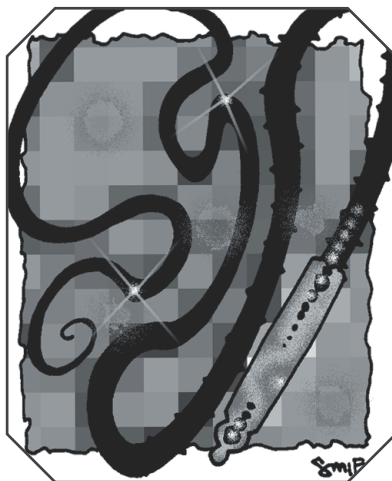
All of this is reflected in whips' combat stats: low damage, a disadvantageous armor divisor, and a penalty when parrying (which isn't even possible after attacking!). Long whips also take time to adjust reach, and become unready after each attack or parry. Although entangling, disarming, and strangling can be effective, the truth is that a whip is no match for a proper battlefield weapon. It's possible to work around some of these limitations by wielding a chain whip, *kusari*, *urumi*, or similar exotic weapon, but only some – and sometimes, the whip's unique strengths are erased in the process.

None of which stops fictional warriors from winning battles using good old-fashioned whips, flicking from foe to foe with lightning speed, never pausing, effortlessly knocking aside enemy weapons.

In fantasy, the solution might be found by literally searching Hell and beyond! Devils and demons *love* their whips, and appear to have little difficulty defeating overconfident heroes who show up clad in plate armor, bristling with deadly weapons. Infernal strength and skill could explain it, but perhaps the whips are crafted from something with innate supernatural properties, such as the brimstone-tanned hide of demonic cattle or the spun stuff of souls . . .

Diabolical whips are more damaging than standard ones, yet *not* subject to most of the limitations of such weapons (*Whips*, p. B406):

- They have Parry 0, not Parry -2U, letting them parry – and do so *effectively* – after attacking.
  - Even long ones don't become unready after attacking or parrying – they can make Rapid Strikes, parry multiple times per turn, etc. at the usual penalties.
  - No Ready maneuver is needed to change reach.
- They retain all the key benefits of standard whips:
- They require only one hand, permitting use with a shield or second weapon.
  - They can be “cracked” at -4 to skill but +2 to damage (over and above the built-in extra damage).
  - They get +2 in Quick Contests to knock weapons away when striking to disarm.
  - Arm or hand injuries cause a Will roll modified by shock to avoid dropping what's in that hand.



- They may strike to entangle rather than to damage, at the usual -4 to skill.

The *Diabolical Whip Table* (below) shows the results. These whips also have a few less obvious properties thanks to their Hellish origins:

- They're fireproof, and can benefit from the Flaming Weapon spell without harm.
- They are detectable by abilities that sense evil, and may be forbidden to holy folk or even illegal for everyone in some settings.
- In worlds where their origins are common knowledge, they grant a minimum +1 for “displays of strength, blood-thirstiness, or supernatural powers” when

using Intimidation (p. B202). This adds to any bonus the GM would give anyway, and *does* increase by +1 if the wielder is Callous.

- They can have a special modifier:

*Barbed* (TL3<sup>^</sup>) is a modification to diabolical whips – though the GM may allow it on other flexible weapons, too. The whip is made from thorny Hell vines, spiny demon hide, or a similar material. This gives +2 in Quick Contests of ST against entangled victims attempting to break free and *another* +1 to damage. +3 CF.

### *Enchanted Diabolical Whips*

Diabolical whips often bear the Flaming Weapon enchantment, bursting into flame when unfurled for combat. The whip itself is the only material component needed – no \$400 ruby required.

## *Diabolical Whip Table*

These weapons differ only in reach, with longer ones becoming heavier and more damaging – and growing progressively more expensive! See above and *Whips* (p. B406) for special rules.

TL	Weapon	Damage	Reach	Parry	Cost	Weight	ST
3 <sup>^</sup>	Diabolical Whip, 1-yard	sw-1 cr	1	0	\$200	2	8
3 <sup>^</sup>	Diabolical Whip, 2-yard	sw cr	1, 2	0	\$700	4	11
3 <sup>^</sup>	Diabolical Whip, 3-yard	sw+1 cr	1-3	0	\$1,350	6	12
3 <sup>^</sup>	Diabolical Whip, 4-yard	sw+2 cr	1-4	0	\$2,000	8	13
3 <sup>^</sup>	Diabolical Whip, 5-yard	sw+3 cr	1-5	0	\$2,750	10	14
3 <sup>^</sup>	Diabolical Whip, 6-yard	sw+4 cr	1-6	0	\$3,600	12	15
3 <sup>^</sup>	Diabolical Whip, 7-yard	sw+5 cr	1-7	0	\$4,550	14	16

*But even as it fell it swung its whip, and the thongs lashed and curled about the wizard's knees, dragging him to the brink.*

*– J.R.R. Tolkien, The Fellowship of the Ring*

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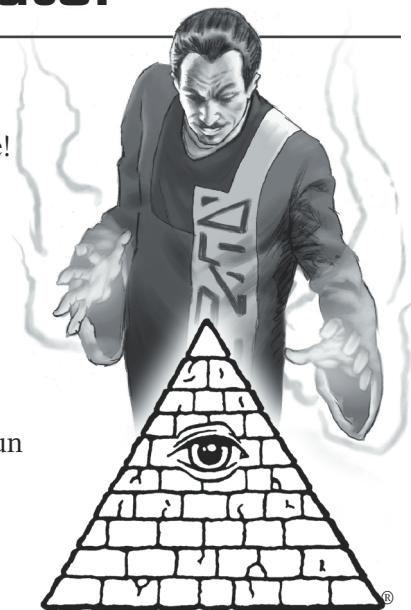
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