



Making Friends and Conjuring People

Summonable Allies for *GURPS Fourth Edition*

by Reverend P. Kitty

The ability to summon forth creatures from another time or place has long been a part of fiction, whether it's a necromancer animating shadows, a cultist calling up demonlings from Hell, or a fiery superhero crafting an elemental out of living flames. *GURPS* has traditionally handled this with spells such as Summon Demon, Create Warrior, and so on. But not all campaign settings feature magic (and not all "conjuring" character concepts make sense as wizards.) Fortunately, *GURPS* now offers an alternative: Summonable Allies.

The Summonable enhancement can turn Allies from a standard social advantage into a supernatural power. In fact, it's reasonable for the GM to rule that Allies becomes a [Mental, Supernatural] advantage instead of a [Social] one when used in such a manner. The Minion enhancement is equally appropriate, and since most summoned creatures will have Slave Mentality, it's free! Since a failed Frequency of Appearance roll means that your Allies are unavailable for one full day, it usually makes sense to buy them as Constantly Available (x4 cost) and then apply limitations like Limited Use or Unreliable if you wish to restrict use of the power.

Disposable Sidekicks

"But, gee, Mister Lizard, what happens when you add nitroglycerin to rocket fuel?"

"Well Timmy, why don't you find out while I stand behind this lead shield?"

"Okay!"

[KA-BOOM!]

"We're gonna need another Timmy!"

--Dinosaurs

The downside to using Allies as summonable cannon fodder is that once they're gone, they're gone, and the only way to bring them back is with more character points. That's just no fun. So the simplest solution is to make sure they never die for good. Unkillable makes that possible, while Regeneration (only when dead) makes it convenient.

To help offset the high cost of those advantages, consider some of the drawbacks that summoned creatures typically have. Adding Fragile (Unnatural) will reduce the cost while making bookkeeping easier -- not to mention, if they die at -HP every time, it means less waiting for them to come back to life. It's also thematically appropriate, as are Automaton (p. B263), Dead Broke, and a few Features. To save time and space, these abilities can be wrapped up into a meta-trait:

Conjured Servant: You only exist in our world when summoned here to obey your master. If reduced to -HP, you vanish in a puff of smoke, and can be summoned again

within (2×HP) minutes. Regeneration (Fast; Only when dead, -40%) [30]; Unkillable 3 [150]; Automaton [-85]; Fragile (Unnatural) [-50]; Dead Broke [-25]; Neither has nor can spend Fatigue Points (see Machine, p. B263) [0]; and Vanishes when dead [0]. 20 points.

What Do You Want to Summon Today?

GURPS Campaigns has simplified templates for animals and **GURPS Magic** has templates for the classic elementals, undead, and demons. Just add the Conjured Servant meta-trait and you're ready to buy it as an Ally (or Ally Group). What follows are some additional beings that a summoner may wish to bring forth. Each template includes notes on varying the power level, since Allies are bought as a fraction of their master's value and thus will usually need their point cost adjusted up or down slightly. A worked example of using the creature as an Ally follows each template.

Shadow (100 points)

Attributes: ST 0 [-100]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 8 [-40]; HT 10 [0].

Secondary Characteristics: HP 10 [20]; Per 8 [0]; Will 8 [0]; FP - [0]; Speed 5.00 [0]; Ground Move 5 [0]; Air Move 10 [0]; Dodge 8; Parry 10.

Advantages: Alternative Attacks: Fatigue Attack 1d (Cosmic, Irresistable Attack, +300%; Freezing, +20%; Melee Attack, C, -30%) [39] & Toxic Attack 1d (Cosmic, Irresistable Attack, +300%; Melee Attack, C, -30%) [15/5=3]; Conjured Servant [20]; DR 4 (Can't wear armor, -40%) [12]; Flight [40]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards [30]; Injury Tolerance (Diffuse; No Eyes; No Neck) [110].

Disadvantages: Frightens Animals [-10]; Lifebane [-10]; Mute [-25]; Social Stigma (Monster) [-15]; Vulnerability (Light, ×2) [-20].

Skills: Brawling-15 [16]; Stealth-15 [20].

Notes: Takes maximum of 1 or 2 points of damage from non-area attacks. Killed by 20 points of damage; can be summoned again in 20 minutes. Does 1d damage to either HP or FP of any living being by touch (DR does not protect).

Power Level: To save points, reduce Air Move [-2/level], change Flight to Walk On Air [-20] (Air Move becomes 5), or reduce attack damage to 1d-2 [-24]. To spend points, raise Ground Move [5/level], Air Move [2/level], Basic Speed [20/level] (which will raise both Moves along with Dodge), or attack damage to 1d+1 [+13], 1d+2 [+26], 2d-1 [+31], or 2d [+42].

Worked Example: Shayde wants the ability to animate the shadows of her enemies. She's a 400-point superhero, so each Shadow is 25% of her point total (base cost 1 point). She wants to be able to animate up to 50 of them, in case she's attacked by a mob (×10 normal cost) and she wants them Constantly Available (×4 normal cost). They're Summonable Minions, of course, but she saves some points with an appropriate Accessibility limitation (which limits the number of Shadows she can conjure and also makes her power useless in total darkness) and Costs Fatigue.

Animate Shadows: Allies, 50 Shadows, 25% Power, Constantly Available (Accessibility, Can only summon one Ally for each enemy shadow, -30%; Costs

Fatigue, 1 FP, -5%; Minion, +0%; Summonable, +100%) [66]

Poltergeist (150 points)

Attributes: ST 0 [-100]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 6 [-80]; HT 10 [0].

Secondary Characteristics: HP 5 [10]; Per 6 [0]; Will 6 [0]; FP - [0]; Damage 1d+1/2d+2 (TK); BL 51 (TK); Speed 5.00 [0]; Move 5 [0]; Dodge 8; Parry 10.

Advantages: Conjured Servant [20]; Telekinesis 16 [80]; Spirit (p. B263) [261].

Disadvantages: Bestial [-10]; Cannot Manifest (Change both "Usually On" limitations in the Spirit meta-trait to "Always On") [-10]; Dread (Exorcised or Consecrated Areas, 11 yards) [-20]; Mute [-25]; Weakness (Exorcism, 1d per 5 minutes) [-5].

Skills: Brawling-14 [12]; Dropping-9 [1]; Throwing-14 [16].

Notes: Killed by 10 points of damage; can be summoned again in 10 minutes. Can strike with TK for 1d+1 cr. TK range is 10 yards; must stay at least 11 yards away from sacred ground. Will flee from exorcism; takes damage if somehow trapped in the area.

Power Level: To save points, reduce Telekinesis [-5 points/level] or skill levels [Varies], or increase Weakness to 1d per minute [-5]. To spend points, raise Telekinesis [+5 points/level], reduce range of Dread [+1/yard, maximum +10], or remove Cannot Manifest [+10], Dread [+20], or Weakness [+5].

Worked Example: In preparing to take the role of tribe shaman, Red Wolf has bound a Poltergeist to himself. He is only a 100-point character, making the spirit a 150% Power Ally. To save points, he takes it on a 12 or less. Each time he summons the Poltergeist he must roll, and on a 13 or higher, he cannot summon it again for a full day. Still, these are minor things to Red Wolf, as he "flies" towards the sun, held aloft by his spirit's power.

Bound Poltergeist: Allies, 1 Poltergeist, 150% Power, 12 or less (Minion, +0%; Summonable, +100%) [40]

Winged Monkey (75 points)

Attributes: ST 13 [30]; DX 12 [40]; IQ 8 [-40]; HT 12 [20].

Secondary Characteristics: HP 15 [4]; Per 10 [10]; Will 10 [10]; FP - [0]; Damage 1d/2d-1; BL 34; Speed 6.00 [0]; Ground Move 6 [0]; Air Move 12 [0]; Dodge 9; Parry 10.

Advantages: Blunt Claws [3]; Conjured Servant [20]; DR 4 (Can't Wear Armor, -40%) [12]; Flight (Winged, -25%) [30]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Sharp Teeth [1].

Disadvantages: Bestial [-15]; Cannot Speak [-15]; Dyslexia [-10]; Frightens Animals [-10]; Ham-Fisted 2 [-10]; Innumerate [-5]; Social Stigma (Monster) [-15].

Skills: Brawling-14 [4]; Flight-11 [1].

Notes: Killed by 30 points of damage; can be summoned again in 30 minutes. Can claw

for 1d+2 cr.

Power Level: To save points, reduce Ground Move [-5/level], DR [-3/level], or Per [-5/level]. To spend points, add Striking ST [+5/level], ST [+10/level], or Enhanced Move (Air) [+20/level].

Worked Example: No one messes with Old Jeb. He's built on 150 points, but he's not very strong . . . not very smart . . . and doesn't have friends in high places. But Jeb has the monkeys. And no one wants Jeb to let the monkeys out. Sure, it'll knock the wind out of him to do it. And sure, it means he'll have to head back up to his house on the hill and spend most of the day casting that spell again. But he'll do it. So just leave Old Jeb alone.

The Monkeys: Allies, 1,000 Flying Monkeys, 50% Power, Constantly Available (Costs Fatigue, 8 FP, -40%; Minion, +0%; Preparation Required, 8 hours, -60%; Summonable, +100%) [144]

Gotta Catch 'Em All!

But what if you just can't bring yourself to settle on one type of Summonable Ally? What about the beastmaster who can summon any living animal? Or the grand mage who can conjure forth whatever elemental he wishes, from flame to iron to sound? Is it possible to build a character who can summon *anything*?

Of course. The key is taking it in two steps. First, determine what the most expensive "conjunction" will be. This might be a single, powerful animal or a swarm of weaker ones. Then, purchase a Modular Ability (Cosmic Pool) that can handle that one conjunction, with the limitation, "Only to buy appropriate Allies with the Summonable enhancement, -50%". Add any other limitations you can live with to get the cost down, of course.

By rearranging the points in your Cosmic Pool, you can use those points to temporarily "purchase" one or more Summonable Allies. The advice on making them Constantly Available is even more apropos here; if you fail a Frequency of Appearance roll for an Ally, it means the points "spent" on that Ally in your Cosmic Pool are tied up for a full day! Similarly, if an Ally dies, the same points are tied up until he comes back from the dead, assuming he has the Conjured Servant meta-trait (if not, the GM will decide when and if you can use the points again, per the guidelines on p. 37 of the *Basic Set*.)

It's useful to know how many Cosmic Pool points you'll need to allocate to have a certain Summonable Ally available. If we can assume that every Ally will be bought as Constantly Available, Summonable, and the +0% version of Minion, then that tells us:

You'll need to allocate 8 points to have a 25% Power Ally.
You'll need to allocate 16 points to have a 50% Power Ally.
You'll need to allocate 24 points to have a 75% Power Ally.
You'll need to allocate 40 points to have a 100% Power Ally.
You'll need to allocate 80 points to have a 150% Power Ally.

That means that if you have a 40-point Cosmic Pool for Allies, you could have a single 100% Ally [40] "prepped" (i.e., waiting to be summoned). Or you could rearrange your points so you instead have one 75% Ally [24] and one 50% Ally [16] prepped. Or with another rearranging, you could have five 25% Allies [8 each] prepped.

Worked Example: Red Wolf is many years older (and now a 200-point character) and can bind any spirit to himself that he wishes. He may summon and dispel his bound spirits with a moment's thought, but must chant and pray for 10 minutes if he wishes to release his old spirits and bind new ones.

Spirit Binding: Cosmic Pool, 48 points (Only for Summonable Spirit Allies, -50%; Preparation Required, 10 Minutes, to Switch Abilities, -30%) [96]

This gives him 48 points to "spend" on his spirit Allies. Red Wolf normally has two 150-point spirits bound to him (each one is a 75% Power Ally and thus costs 24 points) - a Poltergeist and a Guardian. He can summon and dismiss either one (or both) at will, as often as he likes. With war approaching, he realizes that he needs something more powerful, and begins to chant and pray. Ten minutes later, he is able to free his old spirits and bind new ones. He "spends" 40 of the points in his Cosmic Pool on a 100% Power Ally -- a 200-point Warrior spirit to fight at his side. Since he has 8 points left over, he "spends" them on a 25% Power Ally -- a 50-point Watcher to act as a lookout. He leaves them unsummoned for now. At this moment, he could summon the Warrior, the Watcher, or both, but he has no ability to summon the Poltergeist or Guardian; they were freed when he reallocated the points in his Cosmic Pool.

Red Wolf now sits and faces the horizon. For he knows . . . the monkeys are coming . . .

Article publication date: September 16, 2005

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