Fantasy is the realm of the imagination. If a fantasy writer wants to tell stories about dragons, wizards, or fairy kingdoms, he doesn’t need historical documentation or scientific explanations – he can just imagine them. This gives writers more freedom than any other genre.

But “more freedom” doesn’t mean unlimited freedom. The reader has to believe that the characters and events are possible in the world of the story. A fantasy world with its own logic – what critics call the inner consistency of reality – yields more interesting stories than a world where anything can happen.

In roleplaying games, one source of that consistency is the rules system. A good set of rules isn’t a barrier to the GM’s imagination . . . it’s a tool for making everything he imagines hold together. GURPS Fantasy shows how to run the fantasy campaign you really want.

A great resource for creating fantasy comes from the legends, myths, and folklore of the past. Everyone knows about dragons, so readers and players are already halfway to believing in them. GURPS Fantasy describes many legendary beings, creatures, and objects, and gives advice on using GURPS for your own fantasies.

The final chapter puts it all together in a new fantasy setting, Roma Arcana, based on the legends of ancient Rome in its darkest and most exciting time. If you want to start a new campaign in a familiar but exotic setting, Roma Arcana is ready to play. If you’re using the Infinite Worlds framework from the GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition, you can fit Roma Arcana into it as an alternative history, at once familiar and weird. And if you’d like to design your own original world, Roma Arcana is a model you can follow.

About the Author

William H. Stoddard is a freelance writer and editor living in San Diego, California, in an apartment crammed with books. He was introduced to RPGs in 1975 and has played them ever since. His main other hobby is research; new game books give him an excuse for even more library visits than he would make anyway. His previous work for Steve Jackson Games includes GURPS Steampunk and four other books, as sole or co-author, as well as contributions to numerous other books.

He dedicates this book to the memory of Felon, felis optimus maximusque, who supervised the writing of its earlier drafts.