Fantasy-Tech 2
Weapons of Fantasy

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STEVE JACKSON GAMES
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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 “game” 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 “A” 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.
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.

**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 × 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 ($6000/$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 (“‡” 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.


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**

*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.

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

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 Table (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TL</th>
<th>Weapon</th>
<th>Damage</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Parry</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>SPEAR (DX-5, Polearm-4, or Staff-2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Double-Ended Slashing Spear</td>
<td>thr+4 imp</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$480</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11†</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or</td>
<td>thr+3 cut</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STAFF (DX-5, Polearm-4, or Spear-2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Double-Ended Dao</td>
<td>sw+4 cut</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>$1,700</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13†</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or</td>
<td>thr+1 imp</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Double-Ended Falchion, Light</td>
<td>sw+3 cut</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>$1,100</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12†</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or</td>
<td>thr-1 imp</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>11†</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Double-Ended Falchion, Heavy</td>
<td>sw+4 cut</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>$1,550</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13†</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or</td>
<td>thr imp</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>11†</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Double-Ended Sword, Long</td>
<td>sw+3 cut</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12†</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or</td>
<td>thr+3 imp</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>11†</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Double-Ended Sword, Short</td>
<td>sw+2 cut</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>$1,100</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11†</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or</td>
<td>thr+2 imp</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>10†</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TWO-HANDED AXE/MACE (DX-5, Axe/Mace-3, Polearm-4, or Two-Handed Flail-4)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Double-Ended Axe, Heavy</td>
<td>sw+4 cut</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13†</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Double-Ended Axe, Light</td>
<td>sw+3 cut</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$450</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12†</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Double-Ended Mace</td>
<td>sw+4 cut</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13†</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Double-Ended Maul</td>
<td>sw+5 cr</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$460</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15†</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Double-Ended Sickle</td>
<td>sw+1 cut</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$380</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11†</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or</td>
<td>sw+1 imp</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>11†</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Double-Ended Warhammer</td>
<td>sw+4 imp</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12†</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TWO-HANDED FLAIL (DX-6, Flail-3, Kusari-4, or Two-Handed Axe/Mace-4)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Double-Ended Flail, Light</td>
<td>sw+3 cr</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$460</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12†</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Double-Ended Flail, Heavy</td>
<td>sw+4 cr</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14†</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes

[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.
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.

- 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. slashes 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.

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.
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!

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

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 rapiers 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).

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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Blades</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>x4</td>
<td>x1 2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>x20</td>
<td>x2 1/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>x100</td>
<td>x3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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+, 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 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.

**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 x10 for double, x50 for triple, x250 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^, 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.
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 is 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+) 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 multiblade (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.

THE ARMORY 12
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\(^\ast\)) 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.

**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.

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

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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