

GURPS®

Fourth Edition

POWER-UPS™ QUIRKS



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INTRODUCTION

Few things breathe life into a fictional person as surely as interesting peculiarities and foibles. In an RPG, however, noting such traits on a character sheet is dicey . . . if they're interpreted prescriptively, the hero can end up hamstrung by life's smallest wrinkles and curveballs. Fortunately, **GURPS** accounts for this and provides a way to strike a balance: *quirks*. These colorful traits enable you to personalize PCs with aplomb, yet their modest price tag (-1 point apiece) formally excuses you from full-sized problems.

Despite their light weight, quirks are heavy hitters. Hand a dozen players the same list of stats and ask each one to add five quirks (the recommended number), and you'll see a dozen distinctive characters in play! Being essentially player-defined, quirks are a potent customization tool. At the same time, their point cost is trivial enough for both GMs and players to feel comfortable prioritizing individuality over game balance, which isn't true of big-ticket disadvantages.

GURPS Power-Ups 6: Quirks opens with a few words underlining and expanding the role of quirks, and then launches into an extensive collection of worked examples. You can use these as written, adapt them to individual PCs, or simply peruse them for inspiration. They should provide you with endless ideas for memorable *people* to inhabit your game worlds.

PUBLICATION HISTORY

This is the first edition of **GURPS Power-Ups 6: Quirks**. It includes all the quirks defined as formal character traits in **GURPS** publications up to February 2013 – notably those from the **GURPS Basic Set**, **GURPS Bio-Tech**, the **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy** series, **GURPS Horror**, **GURPS Low-Tech Companion 1: Philosophers and Kings**, **GURPS Supers**, **GURPS Thaumatology**, and *Pyramid*. These are relatively few

in number; upward of 80% of this material is original. However, NPCs found in **GURPS** publications as far back as 1986 inspired many of the new quirks!

A quirk is a minor defining feature that makes a character seem real and unique.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sean “Dr. Kromm” Punch set out to become a particle physicist in 1985, ended up the **GURPS** Line Editor in 1995, and has engineered rules for almost every **GURPS** product since. He developed, edited, or wrote dozens of **GURPS Third Edition** projects between 1995 and 2002. In 2004, he produced the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition** with David Pulver. Since then, he has created **GURPS Powers** (with Phil Masters), **GURPS Martial Arts** (with Peter Dell’Orto), **GURPS Zombies**, and the **GURPS Action**, **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy**, and **GURPS Power-Ups** series . . . among other things. Sean has been a gamer since 1979. His non-gaming interests include cinema, mixology, and Argentine tango. He lives in Montréal, Québec with his wife, Bonnie.

About GURPS

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Bibliographies. Many of our books have extensive bibliographies, and we’re putting them online – with links to let you buy the resources that interest you! Go to each book’s web page and look for the “Bibliography” link.

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata pages for all **GURPS** releases, including this book, are available on our website – see above.

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.

CHAPTER ONE

QUIRKY SUBJECTS

A “quirk” is a minor feature that sets you aside from others. It has a negative point value, but it is not *necessarily* a disadvantage. You may take up to five quirks at -1 point apiece . . . and if you do, you’ll have five more points to spend.

While quirks have a small cost, they are a large part of what makes a character seem “real,” and merit no less thought than big-ticket items. A “valid” or “legitimate” quirk meets one of these criteria:

- It occasionally requires you to make a specific choice, or to have your character engage in a particular action or behavior. This needn’t be especially inconvenient, but it must be something that you have to *do* in the course of the game – it can’t be completely passive. Such quirks are nearly always mental in nature, and epitomize “not *necessarily* a disadvantage.”
- It causes a small game-mechanical drawback very occasionally or when engaging in a narrow set of actions. This might be a penalty to a dice roll, but it need not be. Equally good possibilities include modest bonuses to rivals’ rolls, diluted effects taken from full-sized disadvantages, small expenditures of time or money, and meta-game restrictions (e.g., forbidden abilities or rules options). Quirks like this *are* minor disadvantages. A mental quirk might work this way; physical and social quirks *always* do.

Hard vs. Soft

Players will notice that roleplaying-only quirks have “soft” effects while minor disadvantages have “hard,” unavoidable ones. That isn’t a problem – nobody has to take *any* quirks at character creation, and players are welcome to avoid those that penalize or complicate actions. There are two things to remember, though.

First, the player must roleplay “soft” quirks or receive fewer bonus character points (*Enforcing Quirks*, p. 5). Losing just one point this way compensates for the quirk left unplayed; missing *several* points makes the quirk a “hard” liability indeed. Roleplaying mini-disadvantages is encouraged, too, but the GM has the recourse of enforcing in-game effects (penalties, expenses, etc.) instead of meta-game ones (docking points). Thus, gamers who tend to forget quirks are better off choosing ones that have concrete drawbacks.

Second, quirks can be acquired in play (*Gaining New Quirks*, p. 7). Such traits represent madness, injuries, curses, and other Bad Things. They’re *meant* to be disadvantageous and thus “hard,” not minor roleplaying hooks. You can end up with these whether you like it or not!

As quirks in the first category are a “roleplaying-only” concern rather than a matter of rules, they’re lightly represented in Chapter 2. The primary goal of **GURPS Power-Ups 6: Quirks** is to establish fair “mini-disadvantages.”

QUIRKY EFFECTS

What minor drawbacks are fair? That can be tricky to nail down, but here are some *rough* guidelines:

Penalties to Success Rolls: -1 on the character’s rolls to act (e.g., attribute, skill, or active defense rolls) or to resist something (Will rolls vs. Influence skills, self-control rolls for disadvantages, etc.) – or on *allies’* rolls to assist him – in occasional circumstances.

Reaction Penalties: -1 to reactions toward the character from a small class of people, or at most 1/3 of the time (e.g., 5-6 on 1d).

Bonuses to Rivals’ Rolls: +1 to *others’* Influence rolls on the character, or on attempts to identify or notice him, in occasional circumstances.

Disadvantage Effects: *Qualitative* effects of full-sized disadvantages, infrequently or in rare circumstances. Think in terms of applying divisors (to adjust for frequency of appearance, people affected, self-control roll, etc.) and limitations sufficient to cut disadvantage cost to -1 point.

Social Inconveniences: Undesirable-but-minor social situations, significantly less serious than Dependents or Enemies, that arise on a 6 or less on 3d.

Extra Contingencies: Uncommon external effects (e.g., magnetism or True Faith) or dice rolls that most other people don’t need to worry about *do* matter for the character. For a quirk, this means an additional minor headache on rare occasions, not serious harm or incapacity.

Restricted Options: Required choices – much as for roleplaying-only quirks – worded in terms of actions, rolls, or rules options that are flatly forbidden but only occasionally relevant.

Extra Expenses: Lost or wasted cash equal to about 10% of the character’s income, as a lump sum monthly or in smaller chunks whenever the quirk crops up. The figure can be much higher for mandatory expenditures on *useful* things he gets to *keep*.

Extra Time: At least 10% more time to perform an occasional task, or a half-hour of study time unavoidably lost each day.
Extra FP Costs: +1 FP to perform an occasional task that costs FP already.

A quirk needn't work the same way whenever it comes up. It can cause several effects by turns; e.g., -1 to the character's own rolls *or* +1 to rivals' rolls . . . or -1 to one of several rolls, depending on specific circumstances . . . or lost time in one situation *or* -1 to a roll in another.

Effects should be harsher if the quirk matters extremely rarely (say, every couple of adventures rather than every few game sessions). Handle this by increasing their size or number. For instance, a modifier might become -2 to self *or* +2 to others, or -1 to self *and* +1 to others, or -1 to several things at once (attribute, reaction, *and* self-control rolls); extra time or money might increase to 20%. If the quirk is a few-times-in-a-career sort of thing or essentially voluntary (concerns a skill nobody *has* to learn, gives "penalties" in the form of refused bonuses, etc.), then even -5 to a roll, or +50% to time or expense, might be warranted! More serious drawbacks also suit critical failures on success rolls the quirk requires.

A quirk *can* give its possessor a small benefit that's the opposite of one of the above effects, somewhat like a perk. If so, the drawbacks should be larger. For instance, +1 to the occasional beneficial roll could justify -2 to something equally common.

For examples of these options and more, see Chapter 2. When in doubt, model your quirk on an existing one. Quirk design is an art, not an accounting problem – the goal is to create quirks that *feel* fair, not to make each one precisely as limiting as the next.

Enforcing Quirks

Roleplaying-only quirks are easily enforced. When awarding bonus character points (pp. B498-499), the GM asks, "Did the player roleplay this quirk when he could have?" If the answer is a straightforward "no," the GM subtracts a point from the award to send a message. If the player honestly forgot about the quirk, the GM might instead replace it with one that's easier to remember, or at worst spend the withheld point to buy it off; see *Changing Quirks in Play* (below). Conversely, if the player made a habit of deliberately ignoring or doing the opposite of the quirk, docking *two* points is warranted.

Mini-disadvantages require more judgment. The GM has to be fair about invoking the game effects, taking to heart words such as "minor," "occasional," "rare," "small," and "trivial." At the same time, he must ensure that the quirks come up, unless he *wants* them to be free points (that's fine . . . if it's intentional!). One principle in particular is vital:

Quirks Don't "Stack": Most modifiers add up and apply cumulatively. Quirks don't – they aren't worth enough points for this to be fair. The GM who drags in multiple unrelated quirks in order to saddle players with crippling penalties is acting against the spirit of the game as surely as the player who views those quirks as free points. Invoke quirks one at a time. If several seem applicable, go with the one that seems most *fun* right now and save the others for later, except in the special cases discussed under *Overlapping Quirks* (below) and *Intolerance* (p. 26).

Overlapping Quirks

Several quirks might spring from the same origin; e.g., Religious (p. 8) regarding a faith that expects temple contributions *and* a Vow (p. 9) to tithe, or a Code of Honor (p. 9) about being "gentlemanly" toward women *and* Willful Ignorance (p. 9) to the effect of "women are weak." Whenever possible, the GM should strive to enforce just the trait that best fits the circumstances. However, he has leave to "stack" the effects of such quirks when there's no doubt that they would all apply. A fair way to do so is to increase the odds of problems that depend on dice rolls; see *Odious Personal Habit* (p. 20) for a simple method.

If the GM foresees several quirks *always* cropping up together, he may ask the player to diversify more. If he allows the overlap, it's only fair to discuss the synergy before the PC enters play. This gives the player an opportunity to better differentiate the quirks, or to merge them into one that has a single effect for a range of triggers (compare *Idealistic*, p. 19) or different effects that cannot be triggered simultaneously (as in *External Mood Influence*, p. 18).

*Certain flaws are
necessary for the whole.
It would seem strange if
old friends lacked certain
quirks.*

*– Johann Wolfgang
von Goethe*

CHANGING QUIRKS IN PLAY

Quirks needn't be permanent fixtures. Like more serious traits, it's possible to add, remove, and tweak them to reflect character experiences and evolution.

Empty Quirk Slots

Declaring even the most minor character traits before the campaign begins doesn't suit every play style. Some players prefer to define their alter egos through roleplaying. Others like to adjust their characters on the fly to give them stronger "hooks" to the game world or other PCs. While full-sized disadvantages are tricky as late-breaking additions, raising thorny questions about why they didn't affect situations they should have, quirks are trivial enough to take time to emerge, making them the ideal tool for fine-tuning in play.

Is Five Enough?

Some players have difficulty remembering to roleplay more than a handful of personality traits. The GM may find recalling and enforcing several PCs' quirks even trickier, and isn't supposed to "stack" quirk effects (*Enforcing Quirks*, p. 5). Thus, there's an argument to be made that permitting lots of quirks would lead to most of them being forgotten or pre-empted, making them free points – in which case it would be less complicated to set a maximum and increase the campaign power level. The suggested limit is five. The rules do provide for exceeding that number (*Gaining New Quirks*, p. 7), but always in the context of genuinely troublesome mini-disadvantages that reduce point value. Nobody has to roleplay these; they're extra drawbacks for the GM to invoke.

Still, it's presumptuous to assume that gamers can't handle more than five quirks – especially when there's no rule against having more than five full-sized disadvantages, provided that their point value doesn't exceed the campaign's disadvantage limit. And some players might find "You can define five quirks, but *the GM* can hit you with any number later on!" unfair. The GM who agrees with any of this may allow more quirks.

Conversely, the GM of a campaign where quirks are unlikely to be roleplayed may set a lower limit. Good reasons for this include a focus on hack 'n' slash (in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*, for instance), a campaign that operates at a scale above that of individuals (as with *GURPS Mass Combat*), or a game where the players haven't created their own characters (e.g., at a convention) or are new to roleplaying.

Whatever the situation, it may be useful to impose more restrictive limits on roleplaying-only quirks than on mini-disadvantages similar to those inflicted by Fright Checks and injuries. The exact numbers are up to the GM, who might say, "As many as three quirks from *GURPS Power-Ups 6: Quirks* and up to two others that can be as vague as you like," "Five roleplaying-only quirks, but mini-disadvantages are restricted only by the disadvantage limit," or almost anything else.

Limits apply only to *concurrent* quirks. For successive ones, see *Changing Existing Quirks* (below) – and for a particularly balanced compromise between variety and manageability, try a Variable Quirk (pp. 21-22).

To support this, the GM might allow players to hold open some or all of their five "quirk slots" at character creation, to be populated later. Although the *Basic Set* counsels filling these with minor personality traits that occur in the course of roleplaying, that's merely a guideline. If a PC suffers physical stress during the campaign's early sessions – anything from drunkenness, through severe exhaustion, to torture or injury – it would be reasonable to add a physical quirk (p. 22-25) as a memento. Similarly, mental quirks could arise from psychological strain, and social quirks (pp. 32-33) from plot entanglements.

In particular, when PCs with unfilled slots experience traumas such as those noted under *Gaining New Quirks* (p. 7), the usual spectrum of quirks can result even if the rules don't *require* it.

When using empty slots, the GM is within his rights to set limits not only on the number of undefined quirks permitted but also on how many game sessions of grace are allowed. Waiting too long gives the GM carte blanche to specify the missing quirks. As these won't be traits the player has agreed to roleplay, they'll probably end up being ones with "hard" game effects, most often physical quirks. Alternatively, the GM may garnish bonus character points to pay off the debt, deleting empty slots at the cost of one earned point apiece. Either approach should give players an incentive to remember to define their quirks!

Changing Existing Quirks

Defining a quirk doesn't mean being stuck with it forever. People change, and that goes double for *interesting* people like the heroes of RPG campaigns. When a PC experiences life-altering events – whether good (marriage, achieving a career goal, receiving therapy, etc.), bad (such as accidents, betrayals, and the traumas mentioned in *Gaining New Quirks*, p. 7), or neutral-but-memorable (e.g., learning a previously hidden truth or being told a secret) – it can be fun to mark the occasion by altering a quirk.

The *Basic Set* recommends limiting exchanges to mental foibles, but that's hardly the only option. For instance, someone might see the mental quirk "Likes fast cars" turn into a Minor Handicap (p. 23) after a small-but-lasting injury suffered in a nasty automobile accident dampens his passion for speedy rides. It sometimes makes sense to change one physical quirk to another, too; e.g., that Minor Handicap could become Care (p. 22) or Minor Addiction (p. 29) as a consequence of medical procedures or drugs used to treat the injury. In short, players are encouraged to be creative – and the GM, to keep an open mind – when it comes to swapping quirks. Given the right events, nearly any quirk could supplant almost any other, provided that everyone agrees that the replacement makes sense.

If they all stood there and recited their histories and their quirks and their crimes and their deviations – there was no doubt in his mind that God himself would fall down in a swoon and tear his hair.

*– Hunter S. Thompson, **The Rum Diary***

Gamers seeking specific examples should see Chapter 2. Many quirks there suggest evolutions of this sort, particularly Variable Quirk (pp. 21-22).

Gaining New Quirks

Some rules permanently afflict people with new quirks; e.g., *Brainwashing* (p. B182), *Instant Learning* (p. B295), *Fright Checks* (pp. B360-361), *Drug Withdrawal* (p. B440), and *Fascinating Parachronic Disasters* (p. B532). When this happens, simply write the quirks on the character sheet and reduce point value accordingly. It is possible to end up with more than five quirks this way, and these *don't* replace existing quirks or fill empty "quirk slots." Most such quirks should be mini-disadvantages, since the player didn't ask for them and might not feel comfortable being told to roleplay differently.

On the other hand, if a PC weathers a trauma like this without acquiring any quirks – probably by succeeding at whatever resistance rolls the rules allow – the player may opt to have the character "give in" anyway. The same goes for comparably stressful events that don't involve rolling dice (e.g., a mild shock for which the GM requires no Fright Check). In that case, simply fill an empty slot with a suitable quirk or change an existing one to commemorate the event. This kind of voluntary fallout *doesn't* lower point value and cannot normally result in more than five quirks.

The Road to Recovery

When buying off a full-fledged disadvantage, it's most believable and least disruptive to do so gradually: reducing the problem to lower levels, making its self-control roll less severe, and so on. A reasonable final step is a quirk left behind after paying off all but one point. Unless the GM rules otherwise, such traits count as "gained in play" and *can* lead to more than five quirks.

Buying Off Quirks

Quirks acquired in play – including ones inflicted by the rules (*Gaining New Quirks*, above), the vestiges of more serious



problems (*The Road to Recovery*, above), and nearly anything else above and beyond the starting quirk limit – are really minor disadvantages. As usual with disadvantages, the GM may require in-game events, physical therapy, psychological counseling, etc. to justify getting rid of them; see pp. B291-292. If the GM agrees that you may do so, then simply pay a point and erase the quirk.

The same goes for physical and social quirks chosen during character creation. Once you've addressed the health issue, set the paperwork straight, or done whatever the GM says is required, you can buy off the quirk for a point. This is also true for mental quirks that are more mini-disadvantages than role-playing choices; suitable psychotherapy may "cure" these, if you have the points.

However, many starting mental quirks – especially of the pure-roleplaying variety – aren't actually "problems" to solve. They're part of what makes the character interesting! Buying off such personality traits is the player's privilege but rarely the best idea, as it will make the PC flatter and less intriguing. If such a quirk isn't fun, then it's time for the player and GM to sit down and discuss one that is; see *Changing Existing Quirks* (pp. 6-7).

Afflicting Quirks

In campaigns that feature superhuman abilities, questions about Afflictions (pp. B35-36) that deliver quirks may arise. In general, the Disadvantage enhancement is allowed for quirks that behave like physical or non-self-imposed mental disadvantages. Thus, exotic (pp. 12-13), mental (pp. 17-20), physical (pp. 22-25), and supernatural (pp. 33-34) quirks are *probably* fine if they suit the target; e.g., Residual Personality (p. 34) only affects shape-changers. The modifier is worth +1%, inflicts the quirk *instead* of stunning, and lasts a minute per point of failure on the resistance roll.

These guidelines prohibit convictions (pp. 8-9), preferences and aversions (pp. 25-27), and preoccupations

(pp. 27-30) that aren't watered-down versions of permitted mental disadvantages; disadvantage variations (pp. 9-12) on problems that aren't themselves allowed; looks and mannerisms (pp. 13-16) that aren't purely physical; skill quirks (pp. 30-32) besides Cognition Quirks; and social quirks (pp. 32-33). Anything that permanently alters character points is *definitely* off-limits, forbidding Point-Spending Quirks (p. 21) and Trivial Destiny (p. 34). Effects that summon objects, even temporarily, are also out, eliminating choices like Unwelcome Accessory and Cosmetic Eyeglasses (p. 13). Meta-game quirks (pp. 21-22) are left to the GM, who has the final say about *any* Affliction.

CHAPTER TWO

THE QUIRKS

GURPS Power-Ups 6: Quirks describes over 150 quirks, many of them lengthy and with examples. Since most people dislike big lists, these have been sorted by *type*. While the categories are somewhat arbitrary, the section intros suggest concrete rules differences – be sure to read them. To find a quirk by *name*, consult the index (pp. 35-36).

A few important notes on choosing quirks from this list:

- Many quirks are diluted disadvantages. If a quirk is described as a “minor,” “quirk-level,” or “trivial” form of a disadvantage, then that’s exactly what it is. No character can have both quirk-level *and* full-priced versions of a problem – choose one or the other.
- If a disadvantage forbids a trait (advantage, another disadvantage, etc.), then so does its quirk form.
- If a trait (advantage, disadvantage, racial template, “taboo traits” feature, etc.) forbids a disadvantage, then it also forbids that disadvantage’s quirk form.

Everything past this point is just a suggestion! Players are encouraged to dream up original quirks, and the GM is never required to permit the specific examples listed here.

Quirky Names

Quirks from earlier **GURPS** publications (perhaps 1/5 of this collection) retain their original names for consistency’s sake. The rest sport utilitarian or whimsical monikers. *There is no need to use these “official” labels!* Many quirks require the player to come up with a specific instance and name it. Consider doing so for *all* quirks – it helps bring the character to life. Just be sure to tack on a brief note summarizing any important game effects; e.g., “Follower of Snarsh (-1 reactions from orc philosophers).”

CONVICTIONS

A passionate investment in an *idea* – be it trivial or grandly cosmological – makes an excellent quirk. Those who understand such convictions can often exploit them; many of the traits below offer examples of this. The GM may require a skill roll before permitting such manipulation, if the quirk’s subject is sufficiently abstruse. This might involve Law or Philosophy for a formal code, Occultism or Theology for faith or superstition, or a Professional Skill or Savoir-Faire specialty for an outlook associated with an occupation. Weirder possibilities abound, such as Hobby Skill (B Movies) for someone who styles his life on bad action flicks!

These traits are self-imposed stances, not psychiatric foibles like those under *Mental Quirks* (pp. 17-20). Thus, you may freely replace them or buy them off if your experiences inspire you to revise your thinking.

Belief

You subscribe to a specific way of seeing the world. This might involve deities, the *absence* of deities, or manmade ideals.

Atheist

You neither believe in higher powers nor observe an organized religion. This quirk most often works like Shocking Affectation (p. 15), earning -1 on reactions from people with disadvantages or quirks suggesting faith (e.g., Religious). Unlike other Beliefs, it’s more a catchall than a unified school of thought, so only those aware of *why* you made this choice are likely to react especially well or receive bonuses to manipulate you.

Philosophical

You take a particular worldly philosophy seriously and strive to live according to its principles. People familiar with its precepts sometimes have +1 to manipulate you – or you might roll at -1 to resist their efforts, earn -1 on reactions from opposed movements, or suffer -1 to self-control rolls if submitting to a disadvantage would be consistent with your ideals. When dealing with the local philosophical community, you enjoy +1 on reactions from peers who share your quirk and from its leaders, where applicable.

Be specific. You might pick “Stoic,” “Secularist,” “Marxist,” “Postmodernist,” or any of hundreds of other things. *Political* philosophies count; quirks like “Anarchist,” “Die-hard Republican,” and “Monarchist” are entirely valid.

Religious

You don’t have full-fledged Disciplines of Faith, Fanaticism, Intolerance (Religious), etc., but you take your faith seriously. You’ll *try* to avoid work (including adventuring!) on holy days, respect the clergy, contribute to the temple, and so forth. You *always* pray when expected.

Attempts to manipulate you through this behavior (e.g., to surprise you by attacking during prayer) – including almost any Influence roll made by a priest of your religion – are at +1. Alternatively, the GM may give you -1 on your roll to avoid this, especially if that’s a self-control roll for a disadvantage that aligns with your beliefs (many faiths preach virtues such as Charitable and Honesty). However, clergy who know you well react to you at +1, as do other Religious people in your congregation.

Specify your belief system when you take this quirk: “Observant Jew,” “Devout Catholic,” “Cultist of Azathoth,” etc.

Code of Honor

A minor Code of Honor (p. B127) can be a quirk, especially if it qualifies on one or more of the following counts:

Casual. Codes of conduct that apply only to sports, hobbies, or leisure activities – bowling, camping, ice hockey, poker, roleplaying, surfing, etc. – are always quirks.

Diluted. Selected aspects of disadvantage-level Codes (Gentleman's, Chivalry, etc.) – e.g., exhibiting “gentlemanly” behavior toward all women – are quirks in a society that doesn't expect such conduct of you. Many mercenaries dilute the fight-or-die loyalty of Code of Honor (Soldier's) to “Stays bought.”

Low-risk professional. Code of Honor (Professional) is just a quirk if deviating from it carries no risk of legal action or losing the right to practice. Most informal Codes that amount to “do my job well” qualify; e.g., Code of Honor (Pizza Deliveryman's), unless you're Hiro Protagonist. Even a formal Code counts if straying from it brings no fallout worse than losing a single client or a little pay.

Narrow. The strictest Code is just a quirk if it almost never applies. “My word is my bond” *could* be a serious disadvantage – but if it holds only when you give your word to leaders of very high Rank or Status, then its value is -1 point.

Your Code must still *require* behavior from you to be worth a point. As with similar quirks, the GM can invoke this to justify the occasional small penalty; e.g., an honorable card-player might have -1 to notice cheating, while a “gentlemanly” fellow may earn -1 on reactions from some feminists.

Legalistic

Quirk-level Honesty (p. B138) – sort of. You must obey the *letter* of the law, though you may ignore the *spirit* to seek loopholes or suggest crimes to others, and you feel no obligation to keep your word unless contract-bound. To break a law outright, you must make a self-control roll at 12 or less; failure means that the consequences of disobeying worry you more than those of obeying, and you refuse.

This quirk is irrelevant in lawless settings!

Many quirks are adapted from disadvantages.

Superstition

You truly believe that one particular small ritual or omen is lucky or unlucky. Spell it out: “Four-leafed clovers are lucky,” “Smashing a mirror is unlucky,” “Women are bad luck aboard ships,” etc. This might even be *true* in a supernatural-tinged campaign – it doesn't have to be a Delusion (p. 17). This has no effect on your actions until it crosses your path on an adventure . . . at which point you'll spend more time looking for fateful coincidences than at what's in front of you.

This gives you -1 to DX, IQ, Per, and skill rolls (but *not* Will or active defense rolls!) until the Superstition proves true. If it concerns good luck, you have to succeed at “long odds” (a task where your final effective skill is 6 or worse) or score a critical success. If it's about bad luck, you must fail at a “sure thing”

(final effective skill of 14 or better) or roll a critical failure. Then the penalties vanish.

In a world where the Superstition is fact, all of this is in addition to its *supernatural* effects.

Vow

A trivial Vow (p. B160) – e.g., always hold to the letter or the spirit of a contract (not both!), never drink alcohol, or pay 10% of your income to your church (or donate 10% of your crime proceeds to charity, for that matter) – is a quirk.

A Vow to avoid something that most ordinary people couldn't or wouldn't do is also trivial; in fact, it's worth *nothing* unless it limits your career. For instance, “Never attack a dragon” would be reasonable for a fantasy knight, and “Never impersonate a law officer” would be valid for a con man, but not vice versa.

Willful Ignorance

You accept an erroneous bit of hearsay, folk wisdom, or a fictional “realism” as fact; e.g., “Blondes are dumb,” “Dogs can't look up,” or “A shotgun blast can knock down a man or clear an entire room.” You should roleplay this misconception whenever it would come up, but it *isn't* a Delusion (p. 17) – you're misinformed, not crazy – and the GM has options besides reaction penalties under suitable circumstances: he may “blindside” you by assessing -1 or +1 (whichever would inconvenience you more!) to some key roll. In the examples, a blonde might get +1 to almost any IQ-based roll made against you, a guard dog might receive +1 to find your hiding spot, or you might suffer -1 to hit with a shotgun when you burst in on a room full of bad guys.

DISADVANTAGE VARIATIONS

Disadvantages are grist for the quirk mill. Many traits in **GURPS Power-Ups 6: Quirks** are adapted from them, and a large fraction of those examples fall into the broad categories below. If you can't find the quirk you want, select the disadvantage that comes closest and keep reading . . .

Disadvantage Embellishment

A quirk can elaborate on how a full-blown disadvantage manifests. Additional detail is the most obvious possibility; e.g., “Particularly curious about intellectual puzzles” for Curious, “Says the exact opposite of the truth” alongside Compulsive Lying, or “Refuses to admit when the weather is bad” with Stubbornness.

Behavior that the disadvantage renders difficult but doesn't *forbid* is also valid, and often more fun! Someone with Truthfulness might have “Lies (poorly) about his past,” while an Indecisive person could suffer from “Tries to be a good leader – usually fails.” Such quirks suggest interesting triggers for your disadvantages.

Yet another entertaining choice is conduct to *avoid* the disadvantage. For instance, people with Secrets often follow many small rituals to avoid discovery, and the quirk “Carefully measures all his drinks” commonly accompanies real-life Alcoholism.

You may have up to one such embellishment per full -5 points of disadvantage value. Each quirk gives the GM an extra “hook” where your problem is concerned. If you don't play along, he may apply +1 or -1, whichever would be more inconvenient, to rolls that play on that shortcoming.

For example, if you always say the exact opposite of the truth, then someone who hears several of your lies might get +1 to Detect Lies – or you might suffer -1 to Fast-Talk with him. This is above and beyond your disadvantage's built-in effects.

Example: You could gild Charitable (12) [-15] with “Always tosses coins to beggars,” “Gives free lollipops to kids,” and “Helps the elderly across the street,” and in effect get an extra 3 points for your disadvantage. However, if you don't do those things whenever the GM places beggars, children, or old folks in your path, the GM may give such NPCs +1 to use Fast-Talk or Pickpocket on you, or reduce your self-control number to 11 where they're concerned.

Two common embellishments from fiction work slightly differently.

Appearance Change

Prerequisites: Antisocial disadvantage with self-control roll and Monstrous or better Appearance.

You have a disadvantage that, when you give in, causes your Appearance to drop by one level while you act out on it – whether because you sneer evilly or are under a curse. This embellishment is traditional for Bad Temper, Bully, and Sadism, but the GM may allow it for other problems where submission doesn't imply violence that would render reaction rolls irrelevant (ruling out Berserk, Bloodlust, and Uncontrollable Appetite).

Involuntary Ability Use

Prerequisites: Antisocial disadvantage with self-control roll and a suitable ability.

You have a disadvantage that, when you submit, causes you to activate a disturbing or destructive advantage: Alternate Form, Innate Attack, Terror, etc. This isn't grounds for Uncontrollable (p. B116); injury, Fright Checks, and other mental disadvantages *cannot* trigger your gift, and it *doesn't* have a mind of its own. It's just that when you give in to one specific problem, you reflexively make a show of power.

Easily Suppressed Disadvantage

A -5-point mental disadvantage with a self-control roll of 15 is worth -2 points. If the GM can “force” the problem on you only on a critically failed self-control roll (17 or 18), then it's just a quirk. While unpleasant *game-mechanical* effects (bad reactions, wasted resources, etc.) depend on the dice like this, you're expected to roleplay the *behavior* whenever appropriate. Failure to do so may result in “bad roleplaying” penalties.

Some examples, with suggested names:

Compulsive Carousing: “Enjoys carousing,” “Party animal,” “Social.”

Compulsive Gambling: “Enjoys Gambling,” “Likes bets,” “Likes games of chance.”

Compulsive Generosity: “Generous,” “Magnanimous,” “Munificent.”

Compulsive Spending: “Big spender,” “Displays wealth ostentatiously,” “Shopaholic.”

Compulsive Vowing: “Oath-taker,” or something colorful like “Swears by Allah's beard” or “Swears on his father's grave.”

Curious: “Inquisitive,” “Nosy” (p. 20), “Prying.”

Gluttony: “Fond of food and drink,” “Gourmand,” “Likes to eat.”

Incurious: “Staid” (p. 20), “Unquestioning.”

Loner: “Aloof,” “Keeps to self,” “Prefers being alone,” “Solitary,” “Uncongenial” (p. 20), “Unfriendly.”

Nightmares: “Bad dreams.”

Overconfidence: “Audacious,” “Bold,” “Confident.”

Pyromania: “Firebug,” “Likes fire.”

Selfish: “Conceited,” “Haughty,” “Pompous,” “Proud” (p. 20), “Snobby,” “Snooty,” “Status-conscious,” “Vainglorious” . . . this is a common quirk!

Selfless: “Altruistic,” “Humble” (p. 19), “Unselfish.”

Truthfulness: “Forthright,” “Ingenuous,” “Sincere.”

The GM might allow this option even for disadvantages that don't offer self-control rolls. Since such traits' point values assume a problem that's *always* inconvenient – not one that's resisted with a self-control roll of 12 or less – a self-control roll of 15 (not the 16 implied above) is fairest here. Alternatively, weaken the disadvantage in other ways; for examples, see *Congenial* (p. 17), *Determined* (p. 18), *Dorky* (p. 18), *Dull* (p. 18), *Insensitive* (p. 19), *Math-Shy* (p. 31), and *Responsible* (p. 20).

Extremely Limited Disadvantage

Any disadvantage is worth just -1 point if the situations, actions, or people that trigger it are uncommon enough that it affects you only once every few play sessions. It's good roleplaying to *talk* about or pointedly avoid discussing the problem (your choice). However, there are no game effects most of the time.

This isn't the same as Easily Suppressed Disadvantage (above), which rarely matters because you almost never give in. Your self-control roll here – for problems that allow one – is against 12. An Extremely Limited Disadvantage is a quirk because you rarely have to roll in the first place.

For disadvantages that come in levels, such as Shyness, the effect is that of the mildest form. However, the GM may ramp up the severity in especially intense incidents. If the trigger is *extraordinarily* rare (once every few *adventures*), the GM is within his rights to enforce a higher level whenever the quirk arises.

Examples:

Absent-Mindedness: You don't suffer the disadvantage's general effects, just the IQ-2 roll to remember *one particular thing*. Be specific: “Forgets to reload his guns,” “Leaves doors unlocked,” “Misplaces car keys,” etc.

Alcoholism: You overindulge under specific circumstances – bingeing and suffering the bad effects – but you *don't* have to roll in the presence of all alcohol, for withdrawal, or for long-term decline. You may link this to events (“Hits the bottle after killing”) or a type of drink (“Gets drunk on good wine”).

Amnesia: One specific memory is missing. Time limits like “Can't recall the summer of '67” are a common choice. For a memory that has been *replaced*, pick False Memory (p. 17) instead.

Bad Smell: At quirk level, this gives -1 to reactions around people who dislike a scent that you happen to like; e.g., “Always wears perfume.” An odor that identifies you to others is a Dead Giveaway (pp. 13-14). You can have both!

Bad Temper: Only toward those who comment on your baldness, height, weight, age, etc. (“Sensitive about her age”), point out a disadvantage (“Gets angry when treated differently due to One Eye”), level a specific criticism (“Dislikes being called a liar”), flirt with you (“Reacts poorly to flirtation”), and so on.

Bloodlust: Only when seeking vengeance against someone who seriously wounded you (“An eye for an eye”).

Bully: Only toward those who’ve wronged you in the past (“Holds a grudge”).

Callous: Only toward people under 12 years of age (“Bad with children”), only toward those over 65 years of age (“Bad with the elderly”), etc.

Compulsive Lying: Only about the time needed to do a task – a common quirk of starship engineers. At this level, your lying is more “fudging” or “bending the truth.”

Cowardice: Only concerning one narrow class of foes or dangers: “Afraid of masters of Western Dragon kung fu,” “Apprehensive of steep climbs,” etc.

Frightens Animals: Only affects one specific group, usually a single species: “Bad with dogs,” “Terrifies horses,” etc.

Gluttony: Only with respect to a particular class of foodstuffs: “Consumes vast quantities of cheese,” “Likes good ale,” “Sweet tooth,” etc.

Greed: Only regarding a particular treasure or form of payment (“Insists on being paid in gold”), only on the stock market, etc.

Honesty: You feel compelled to obey *specific* laws; e.g., “Always obeys traffic regulations,” “Stickler about customs law,” or “Won’t violate Pyle County ordinances.” This is too narrow to earn a reaction bonus.

Jealousy: Only where your current love interest is concerned, only with respect to one person whom you envy above all others, or only in one category (brains, speed, strength, wealth, etc.).

Kleptomania: Only when it comes to snatching one specific item about as broad as a Like (p. 26): “Pockets candy bars,” “Shoplifts rock ‘n’ roll discs,” “Steals knives,” etc.

Miserliness: Only when shopping for a particular class of things; e.g., “Haggles over vehicles,” “Buys the cheapest ammo,” or “Won’t buy expensive computers.”

No Sense of Humor: Only with respect to “lowbrow” physical humor and jackassery . . . or only regarding “highbrow” wit that requires a university degree to understand.

Odious Personal Habit: A -5-point Odious Personal Habit is a quirk if it applies only in rarified situations but offends *everybody* when it does emerge. Specify the condition: “Laughs like a hyena at jokes,” “Pedantic about spelling,” etc.

Overconfidence: Only toward unusual challenges (“Overestimates his skill at siege warfare”) or opponents with specific traits (“Underestimates those with Fanaticism”), or only regarding one specific task (“Overconfident driver,” “Overconfident sniper,” etc.).

Pacifism: Only toward a specific group (“Won’t fight fellow West Point graduates”) or expressed in a narrow way (“Uses less-lethal weapons whenever possible”).

Paranoia: Only with respect to a specific group: “Distrusts socialists,” “Doesn’t trust soldiers,” “Thinks snow-plow drivers are plotting against him,” etc.

Phobia: Almost any Phobia counts if only a tiny subset of things can trigger it; e.g., fear of weapons is a disadvantage (Hoplophobia), but fear of poisoned arrows is a quirk. Contrast this with Dislike (p. 26), which is far broader but doesn’t cause Fright Checks.

Selfish: Only concerning one specific facet of social dominance. The GM may insist that you have a hope in hell of achieving that goal – “Covets the throne” is a fair quirk for a Status 6 prince or even a Status 5 duke, but a Delusion (p. 17) for anyone else.

Sense of Duty: Sense of Duty to an individual is worth -2 points. Halve this to a quirk if it’s qualified with something like “when it suits my interests” or “in combat.” The GM is free to penalize earned points when you don’t put that person first under the specified circumstances, but you may favor yourself or someone else the rest of the time.

Shyness: Only around Attractive (or better) members of one sex.

Stuttering: Only around Attractive (or better) members of one sex.

Truthfulness: Only toward monarchs, presidents, and other national leaders.

Unluckiness: Only in a specific sphere: “Bad luck at gambling,” “Star-crossed lover,” “Unlucky at driving,” etc. General Unluckiness can have an *optional* theme, but this is a hard-and-fast one that doesn’t often arise; you aren’t generally unlucky.

Workaholic: Only on the clock – you take enough time off to avoid reaction penalties but always say “yes” to paid overtime, allowing your boss (played by the GM) to buy up to 4 hours/day of potential study time off you for extra wages.

*You have power over your
mind – not outside events.
Realize this, and you will
find strength.*

– Marcus Aurelius,
Meditations

Mirror-Image Disadvantages

While you cannot have two full-sized disadvantages that are opposites – because one obviates the other – you can take such a pairing as a *single* quirk. This doesn’t work like Manic-Depressive or Split Personality, where serious problems take turns afflicting you; that’s worth more than a point. In this case, you normally experience *no* bad effects . . . but in a situation where either disadvantage could apply, roll 3d. On 17-18, one facet gets out of balance (flip a coin or roll a die) and you suffer its effects, for good or for ill.

Good examples would be “Mercurial ally” (Chummy/Loner) and “Self-centered and altruistic by turns” (Selfish/Selfless). Although pairs of -5-point disadvantages such as these work best, that isn’t a strict requirement.

Mitigated Disadvantage

A disadvantage negated completely by treatments available anywhere in the setting at almost no expense and with negligible effort – conditions that go well beyond Mitigator (p. B112) – is just a quirk. This best suits backgrounds where ultra-tech or superscience has altered the drinking water or atmosphere, spread ubiquitous memes that cure mental conditions, etc., or where potent magic protects the whole world.

It's worth a point only if travel or imprisonment could isolate you from whatever masks your problem. Should that happen, the GM determines the condition's severity.

EXOTIC QUIRKS

These quirks are subject to the restrictions on exotic disadvantages (p. B120). Most have one of the following explanations:

- Hard-wired properties of a nonhuman racial template: alien, robot, undead, etc. In general, these can't be bought off or replaced.
- Superhuman powers. Quirks in other categories may qualify, too; see *Power Quirks* (below) and *Supernatural Quirks* (pp. 33-34). Only people with suitable gifts can have them, and the GM may make some quirks mandatory with certain abilities, though experienced users might eventually buy them off.
- Ultra-tech, especially nanotechnology and cybernetics. The GM may allow – even *require* – ordinary humans to possess such quirks if they have suitable tech “built in.”

Affected by Magnetism

Unlike beings composed of meat, rock, pure energy, etc., you're affected by influences such as junkyard magnets and magnetic super-powers. This implies many small side effects; e.g., you always set off metal detectors.

This quirk is for characters made of ferromagnetic metals: robots, vehicles, and so on. It's more than a 0-point feature (unlike most “Affected by” traits) because magnetism has widespread technological applications.

Cannot Float

You always sink in water. This is most applicable to machines, but might also afflict fantasy races or result from a curse.

Nano-Fever

This is hot flushes and fatigue caused by two or more different sorts of nanomachines working and possibly interacting in your body. You become feverish whenever the GM rules that multiple varieties of nano must operate in concert, and will lose 1 FP per active nano type in excess of a GM-defined “safe level.” Fatigue Points lost in this way cannot be regained until the situation ends. Deactivating or removing the nanobots will end the bout of nano-fever.

Obvious

You stand out to one particular sense at all times, giving enemies +1 to Sense rolls or you -1 to Stealth rolls, depending on the circumstances. This is effectively a “half level” of Noisy (p. B146), generalized to senses other than hearing. A good example common to many animals would be “Musk,” affecting the sense of smell.

Pressure Intolerance

Your lungs and other organs can handle a narrower range of atmospheric pressures than an ordinary human's. Referring to *Atmospheric Pressure* (pp. B429-430):

Power Quirks

GURPS Powers describes “special effects” that amount to 0% modifiers for individual superhuman gifts as “quirks.” It also notes that exotic capabilities may have trivial drawbacks, giving the wielder a small penalty or his opponents a modest bonus when he activates them. These, too, are termed “quirks.” Neither sort of “quirk” is worth a point, as abilities are *expected* to have such features.

However, when advantages are grouped into a power, the entire assemblage might demonstrate a foible that's neither specific to one ability nor triggered by use – a full-time oddity that the wielder cannot avoid simply by not using his gifts. Serious drawbacks are grounds to incorporate a Nuisance Effect (p. B112) into the power modifier. Anything less is a quirk.

Examples:

- Aches and Pains (p. 22), Can Be Turned By True Faith (pp. 33-34), Compulsion (pp. 27-28), Damned (p. 34), Name-Bound (p. 34), Supernatural Dislike (p. 34), Supernatural Features (p. 34), Trivial Destiny (p. 34), and nasty mental quirks suit dark powers involving something like black magic or evil, representing costs to the user's body, mind, or soul.
- Bulky Frame (p. 22), Cannot Float (p. 12), Clumsy Runner (p. 22), Dead Weight (p. 22), and Overweight (p. 23) befit supers with density-control powers.
- Eavesdropper (p. 28) is apropos for powers such as ESP and telepathy, provided that the intrusion is noticeable.

- External Mood Influence (p. 18) tied to the sea or the weather is a classic for people with water or air powers, respectively.

- Hungry (p. 23), Shaky Hands (p. 24), and Twitchy (p. 25) are common among super-speedsters.

- Obvious (above) is widespread among supers: a soft glow for light powers, an audible hum for sound powers, and so on.

- Photosensitivity (p. 24) and Sunburns Easily (p. 24) often accompany powers involving darkness or vampirism.

- Slightly Unusual Biochemistry (p. 24) and Tests Positive for (Condition) (p. 25) could result from any power with biological origins.

Such traits are as physical or as mental, and as mundane or as supernatural, as the associated powers. They're also *part* of the power, shut down or amplified alongside it. Sometimes the power-user can buy them off as he gains experience with his gifts – but not always!

Not all Power Quirks fit into existing categories. If a Nuisance Effect is easily avoided, the GM may permit it only as a quirk. For instance, somebody with fire powers might have to roll vs. Will to avoid igniting anything Highly Flammable or Super-Flammable (p.B433) on contact. Since he never *has* to handle ether, dry tinder, etc. – and gets a Will roll even then – “Spontaneous combustion” is just a quirk.

Low-Pressure Intolerance: Treat “thin” as “very thin,” and “very thin” or less as “trace.”

High-Pressure Intolerance: Treat “dense” as “very dense,” and “very dense” or more as “superdense.”

These quirks are almost always racial, and only allowed in campaigns where PCs are likely to visit places that have such atmospheres.

Unwelcome Accessory

Your body incorporates a troublesome Accessory (p. B100) that you *cannot* control or (easily) remove, and that occasionally interferes with your actions. It shouldn't be potentially lethal, like a bomb you can't defuse; if you could build it as a full-fledged disadvantage, do so. Save this quirk for inconvenient and embarrassing gizmos. Some examples:

- A defective Accessory with consequences equivalent to another quirk; e.g., a broken bullhorn that gives Loud Voice (p. 16), faulty nanotech that periodically causes Nano-Fever (p. 12), or a flickering light that renders you Obvious (p. 13). Any busted gadget might hang there as Dead Weight (p. 22), require Care (p. 22) to avoid *real* problems, or malfunction badly enough to lead to Aches and Pains (p. 22) or Minor Handicap (p. 23).

- An article that enemies could use against you. Something like a big handle might give them +2 to ST rolls if they grapple you and +2 to Knot-Tying if they tie you up.

- Anything that would be illegal or immoral and that doesn't do *you* any good: a gun that's hopelessly broken, an embarrassingly large sex toy that you cannot conceal, etc. Model the effects on Distinctive Features (p. 14) or Shocking Affectation (p. 15).

- Something that interferes with your equipment, such as a magnet that throws off *your* compass or a jammer that blocks *your* radio.

LOOKS AND MANNERISMS

These traits affect others' impressions of you – what they notice and how you come across, especially at first. Some would be equally at home under *Physical Quirks* (pp. 22-25), while others are mental in character, but that's negotiable. Someone might don Cosmetic Eyeglasses and affect a Loud Voice out of habit, and bring both foibles along if his mind were placed in a new body; another person might have the same traits as genuine quirks of physiology. Specify this when you take the quirk!

For quirks affecting how others react to your social position rather than to how you present yourself, see *Social Quirks* (pp. 32-33).

Bad Posture

You slouch and stomp around. This gives -1 to most applications of Sex Appeal. You also have -1 on all rolls made against Acrobatics, Combat Art, Dancing, Skating, Sports, etc. to impress others using physical grace, but *not* for practical uses such as Acrobatics for dodging or Skating for transportation.

This *isn't* a physical quirk, but a bad habit you haven't bothered to remedy.

Dress Codes

Unless your race doesn't wear clothing, merely dressing doesn't count as a quirk. As everybody has preferences, neither do habits such as “Wears black” (or blue, pink, or any other color) or “Tucks in his shirt.” To be worth a point, a sartorial preference must take the form of one of these quirks:

- Dead Giveaway (below). *Examples:* “Always dresses like a kandi raver, complete with glowsticks”; “Wears a jester's outfit covered in bells.”

- Epitome (p. 14). *Example:* “Always dresses traditionally.”

- Expensive Habit (p. 28). *Examples:* “Clothes horse”; “Dresses like James Bond.” If your race normally goes naked, “Wears clothing” *does* count – you'll end up spending money on something you don't need!

- Overcautious Habit (p. 30). *Example:* “Never takes off his armor.”

- Risk-Taking Behavior (p. 30). *Examples:* “Never wears a helmet”; “Wears a cape, even though opponents could grab it.”

- Shocking Affectation (p. 15). *Examples:* “Dresses skimpily”; “Wears the robes of the Baby-Sacrificing Necromancer Lords.”

- Stereotype (p. 16). *Example:* “Dresses like hip-hop artists in music videos.”

- Token (p. 16). *Example:* “Always wears a lucky hat.”

You must *always* dress this way to claim a quirk. Anybody might have a fancy suit, traditional clothing, ninja pajamas, etc.; what makes you special is that you insist on wearing it! At a minimum, your preference should be serious enough to force associates to make regular Disguise rolls to undo its effects.

Dress implied by convictions (pp. 8-9) – e.g., the uniform of a soldier with Code of Honor or the vestments of a Religious priest – *isn't* a separate quirk unless it's remarkable even among those who share your outlook.

Cosmetic Eyeglasses

This cinematic quirk is common in action fiction: You wear glasses that don't seem to *do* much. If they're knocked off, you suffer the effects of Nearsighted or Farsighted (see p. B123) for long enough to affect *one important action*. Then the problem conveniently vanishes until after the action is over, whereupon you'll don another pair and go on like nothing happened.

If you leave off the glasses to avoid future incidents, the GM can penalize you for bad roleplaying. The whole idea is to give the GM a “hook” for starting an action scene, with you at a small penalty. Don't take the quirk if you'd rather not face that!

A small upside is that quite a few people have Preferred Looks (Glasses) – they think glasses make the wearer look smart, even sexy. You automatically benefit from this.

Dead Giveaway

You have a habit that would be harmless if it didn't betray your efforts to be cautious or deceitful; e.g., “Bites fingernails when nervous,” “Cracks her knuckles before a fight,” “Gestures to cast spells, even when unnecessary,” “Hums subconsciously,” or “Wears Chanel No. 5.” Treat this as Obvious (p. 14) in situations where it would compromise concealment or surprise, or as Distinctive Features (p. 14) when it would mark you as a specific, known individual.

What makes this one quirk rather than two is that it isn't "always on." Either it's tied to an activity, such as spellcasting or fighting, or an ally could help you avoid it (remind you not to do it, offer you different clothing, etc.) without wasting appreciable time or rolling against a skill like Disguise. If both Distinctive Features *and* Obvious penalize you constantly, take those *instead*.

For a supernatural variant, see *Spell Signature* (p. 34).

Dishonest Face

You look untrustworthy. This is unrelated to your attractiveness, reputation, or how skeezy you *really* are! People who don't know you tend to pick you out of a crowd as a potential criminal or troublemaker; you'll always be the person spot-checked by lawmen and security staff unless they're truly choosing at random. You have -1 to Acting when your goal is to "act innocent."

This is the opposite of Honest Face (p. B101); you cannot have both.

Distinctive Features

You have an uncommon physical feature – e.g., "Brilliant blue hair," "Dueling scars," "Facial tattoo," or "One ear" – that makes you stand out in a crowd. If you have several small peculiarities that *collectively* make it hard for you to blend in, record "Memorable Face" instead (this is the opposite of the Forgettable Face perk from *GURPS Power-Ups 2*). Whatever the explanation, this gives -1 to your Disguise and Shadowing skills, and +1 to others' attempts to identify or follow you.

Easily Mistaken Sex

You're often mistaken for a member of a biological sex different from the one with which you identify. This can mean turning the wrong heads . . . or being barred from gender-segregated activities and places (from restrooms to religious spaces). In casual situations, conversation or a closer look clarifies matters at the cost of embarrassment – should you need that person's help later on, you have -1 on reaction or Influence rolls. *Inside* a space segregated by law or custom, an unfavorable reaction roll might bring consequences as severe as arrest or assault.

If your Appearance is above Attractive, either swap its two reaction modifiers or add Androgynous (p. B21). For instance, a woman who would qualify for Very Beautiful (+6 from people attracted to female features, +2 from those attracted to male ones) might instead have Very Handsome (+6 from people attracted to male features, +2 from those attracted to female ones) or its Androgynous analog (+4 from everyone). Such good looks are *especially* troublesome in flirtatious situations. Would-be romantic interests who confuse your sex, get corrected, and aren't attracted to your actual sex ignore your Appearance bonus *and* react at -1, giving the net effect of a larger penalty.

All of the above assumes that the other party *cares* about your sex. People with Broad-Minded (p. 17) or inclusive varieties of Alternative Sexuality (p. 26) won't care. Even extremely conservative individuals may have Preferred Looks (p. 26) that favor you, or exhibit Literal-Minded (p. 19) or a variety of Philosophical (p. 8) that accepts "you are what you look like." In any of those cases, your quirk has no effect at worst, earns you a small bonus at best. In the absence of such a mitigating trait, though, people who display Chauvinistic (p. 17) or the sorts of quirks or disadvantages that cause bad reactions to Alternative Sexuality *always* react badly if they notice you.

As an upside, you have +1 to Acting, Disguise, Fast-Talk, etc. to convince people that you're a member of the sex you resemble, when convenient.

Epitome

You always dress, speak, and otherwise behave like an ideal member of a reasonably well-defined group: Canadians, necromancers, yuppies, etc. Whenever those people are subject to prejudice, you're included – and you suffer a *further* -1 on reactions from the bigots because you exemplify everything they dislike!

If you aren't actually a member of that group, there are further effects. Your behavior gives you +1 on rolls to impersonate or pass as such a person. Should someone who's the genuine article discover that you're a sham, though, he'll react at -1 to what he views as mockery. This assumes that you at least make an effort. If not, see *Stereotype* (p. 16).

Fashion Disaster

In social situations where it's important to dress nicely – fancy clubs and restaurants, formal ceremonies, etc. – and you cannot fall back on a uniform or the assistance of an ally with Fashion Sense (p. B21), you invariably pick an unfortunate outfit: -1 to reaction rolls. The GM may extend this penalty to applicable Influence skills, most often Savoir-Faire or Sex Appeal.

This is the opposite of Fashion Sense – you cannot have both!

*These people are
absolute hell, they look
like fashion victims.
– Oscar de la Renta*

Inappropriate Manner

Prerequisite: At least a point in the relevant Influence skill (which this quirk *can* pay for).

You constantly use an Influence skill without realizing it. This is often inappropriate, so you'll be making many Influence rolls at -1 to -10 (GM's call), and likely failing and suffering "Bad" reactions. See *Influence Rolls* (p. B359).

You can try to suppress this tendency if you don't want to make an Influence roll or would like to use a *different* skill. The GM rolls against your unmodified "problem skill" while you roll against Will (for no Influence roll) or the desired skill (to try something else). If you tie or beat the GM, you catch yourself in time; when using a skill, use your margin for the Influence roll, too. If the GM wins in the Contest against yourself, he starts with the margin on the problem skill roll, subtracts any inappropriateness penalty, applies an *extra* -1 for your awkward behavior, and uses that for an Influence roll.

There are six mutually exclusive kinds of Inappropriate Manner:

Aristocratic: You're always flashing your Savoir-Faire (High Society), making those of merely average Status uncomfortable.

Oilily: You use Fast-Talk without thinking, leaving others with the impression that you're untrustworthy.

Pushy: You can't shut off your Intimidation, even when that might earn you a punch in the face (or worse!).

Salacious: You constantly ooze Sex Appeal, which is *highly* inappropriate much of the time (though it still garners a "Very Good" reaction when it works). Merely dressing suggestively is different; see *Shocking Affectation* (below).

Scummy: Your Streetwise skill shows in your walk and talk, causing clerks to follow you around shops and cops to pick you for "random" questioning. If this is a matter of looks, not manner, take Dishonest Face (p. 14) instead.

Wishy-Washy: You're always using Diplomacy, and come across as a pushover when a little aggression is warranted. You *don't* get the better of your result and a reaction roll if there's so much as -1 for inappropriateness!

Similar quirks could exist for other skills the GM allows for Influence rolls. If you always use Acting to be what other people expect you to be, repelling those who value honesty, you have *Phony*. Perpetual Savoir-Faire (Military) – "Sir, yes, sir!" and salutes all the time – would be appropriate around servicemen, patriots, and anybody who likes being called "sir," but antiauthoritarians, pacifists, and their ilk would find your *Martial* quirk highly inappropriate. And so on.

Interviews Badly

You do poorly when formally interviewed. This gives -2 to all skill rolls you make to impress your interviewers, follow-up rolls the GM makes to see if you closed the deal or got the job, and the rolls under *Finding a Job* (p. B518).

This penalty is already worse than the -1 from most quirks because these situations are rare in most campaigns. If they don't come up *at all*, Interviews Badly isn't a valid quirk.

Mind-Numbing Magnetism

Certain qualities, while well-regarded in small doses, grate on many people: Cheerful, Enthusiastic, Gallant, Jovial, Optimistic, Pensive, Playful, Precise, Romantic, Talkative, and so on. In a social situation, tell the GM whether you're "turning on the charm"; it's good roleplaying to do so as often as possible. This is a gamble – and as *you* think your trait is a virtue, you're blind to whether this is wise, so you don't get any kind of roll to test the waters first.

If the GM decides that your outlook matches the circumstances (e.g., Romantic at a poetry reading or Talkative at a cocktail party for powerful businesspeople), you receive +1 on reaction and Influence rolls in that scene. If your audience isn't appreciative (e.g., Romantic at a frat party or Talkative at a funeral), your first such roll is at -1 and all later ones suffer a cumulative -1, to a floor of -4, as you grow progressively more annoying.

You *can* shut up to avoid mounting penalties. In a large group, you also can delay the progression by switching conversation partners – but this merely puts off the cumulative penalty by one roll, after which you'll be regarded as "flighty" or "shallow" and suffer growing penalties anyway. Either way,

you're unlikely to end up getting the information or aid you seek, whether because you aren't asking or because you're speaking with the wrong person.

Shocking Affectation

Conduct that elicits -1 to reactions from a small class of people (e.g., priests, high-Status "gentlemen," or the elderly) is effectively a -5-point Odious Personal Habit with its point value divided by 3, as for a Reputation with such a class (p. B27). Treat this as a quirk that earns minor snubs, or stares and whispers, from those affected. It might concern your style of dress, manner of speaking, or beliefs as expressed through your actions – be specific!

Some affectations give small bonuses but cause even larger penalties. For instance, "Skimpy dresser" might grant +1 on Sex Appeal rolls and to reactions from lechers, but -2 on reactions from individuals with prudish disadvantages or quirks.

Something *really* obscure (e.g., swearing in the name of an ancient demon that a tiny handful of sages know about) is worth a point only if it produces a *terrible* reaction – at least -3.

These general cases and the more specific ones below are all examples of Extremely Limited Disadvantage (pp. 10-11). For a habit that rarely matters because you can keep it in check rather than because most people don't care, see *Odious Personal Habit* (p. 20).

Amoral

Your affectation is eschewing religious or traditional values in favor of a personal moral code or *no* moral code. This earns -1 to reactions from individuals with quirks or disadvantages favoring faith or tradition. It's a common Disadvantage Embellishment (pp. 9-10) for Callous and Selfish.

Missing Disadvantage

Lacking a Code of Honor, Disciplines of Faith, Sense of Duty, or Vow disadvantage that's expected of someone of your social station is a common Shocking Affectation. The affected group is your peers. Give the quirk an appropriate name: "Ungentlemanly," "Faithless," "Ignoble," etc.

Taunting

Your affectation is mocking or insulting people who demonstrate a specific attribute or behavior; e.g., "Finds big moustaches silly," "Likes to taunt Musketeers," or "Thinks those who use guns instead of fists are wimps." You can't resist getting in a dig when the opportunity arises! The effect is a reaction roll at -1 from those you taunt; if the GM has already determined the NPC's reaction, use the *worse* of the two. This won't matter *in* combat, but can lead to a fight even when you don't want one.

Villain-Worshipper

Your affectation is admiring a justifiably reviled person – someone with -4 or worse to reactions due to *personal behavior* (including Reputation, but never cosmetic features such as Appearance and Bad Smell). You get -1 to reactions from anyone that individual has wronged, directly or indirectly, personally or as part of a group. Your "hero" needn't be alive! "Hitler was great" would be a Shocking Affectation today, over half a century after Hitler's death.

Speech Mannerisms

Speaking oddly is grounds for *many* interesting quirks.

Distinctive Speech

The way you talk makes you easy to identify. You might have a distinctive accent, a fondness for particular expressions or quotations, quirk-level Disturbing Voice (p. B132) or Stuttering (p. B157), or an incontrovertibly sesquipedalian vocabulary – be specific. Whenever somebody is searching for *you in particular* and you can't avoid speaking, you suffer -2 on rolls to pass as someone else and others have +2 to attempts to identify you.

This is twice as bad as Distinctive Features (p. 14) because it doesn't mark you until you open your mouth.

Fast Talker

This doesn't mean you're good at Fast-Talk – you just talk *too fast*. You have -1 to rolls against Administration, Leadership, and similar skills when speaking complex instructions (not when barking one-word orders), and give others -1 to their rolls to understand you, most often IQ rolls like those on p. B24.

Forbidden Word

Quirk-level Cannot Speak (p. B125). There's one *important* word that you can't utter, whether due to a psychological aversion or a supernatural curse. To make this relevant, the GM may have it crop up as a password, assess penalties to others' rolls to understand you as you pussyfoot around the concept, or have enemies exploit this as a way to identify you.

Inaccessible Idioms

You possess an ordinary voice – an exceptional one, if you enjoy the Voice advantage – but you're out of touch with how ordinary people *really communicate*. This is common among those who've grown up in enclaves or been imprisoned for a long time . . . not to mention old-timers, cold-sleepers ("One *million* dollars!"), time-travelers, and immortals. When you must "sell" an idea, typically using Diplomacy, Fast-Talk, or Propaganda, you roll at -1 unless your audience shares your background.

Involuntary Utterance

Being unable to avoid a vocalization is a verbal version of Dead Giveaway (pp. 13-14), working like Distinctive Features (p. 14) and Obvious (p. 12) by turns. This could be a trivial Neurological Disorder (p. B144) or a symptom of a serious condition like the zombie plague ("Braaains!").

Loud Voice

You may *think* you're whispering into the throat mike or speaking *sotto voce*, but you aren't – others can hear every word! This is a disadvantageous form of Penetrating Voice (p. B101) [1]. You get the benefits of that perk, but as you can't turn it off, you *also* have a level of Noisy (p. B146) [-2]: -2 to Stealth whenever you must coordinate with allies by voice while being sneaky, or +2 to eavesdroppers' Hearing when you're conversing normally and don't wish to be overheard. It all adds up to a quirk.

Third Person

You don't seem to know the word "I"! You habitually call yourself by your name or an alias. The GM may occasionally assign -1 to others' reactions or rolls to understand what you're talking about. This is especially suited to silly campaigns.

Stereotype

You always dress, speak, and otherwise behave like a clichéd member of a group with a reasonably strong identity: African-Americans, jocks, Spartans, wizards, etc. Whenever you interact socially with a member of that group, you must roll against the *lower* of Acting or Disguise (both default to IQ-5). Success means you seem amusingly eccentric; failure gives -1 to all reaction and Influence rolls, and critical failure gives -2.

If you're actually *good* at this, use Epitome (p. 14) instead. You can't have both.



Token

You have a prized possession that comforts you, be your investment in it emotional or superstitious. The actual quirk name should identify the item: "Always chews on a pipe," "Carries a lucky charm," "Has a favorite hat," etc. This article need not be valuable, but it has to be *yours* – no generic items! It *can* be (and often is) Signature Gear.

If your Token goes missing, you'll be distracted: -1 on all IQ, Will, and Per rolls, skill rolls based on those scores, and self-control rolls, save for those that specifically concern recovering your possession. Signature Gear will find its way back to you in a day or two, erasing the penalties. For anything else, roll vs. Will daily; success lets you get over the problem, at which point you must buy off or replace Token.

While a sneak thief can get the upper hand this way, no penalties apply if your Token is clumsily snatched, knocked from your grasp, etc. in plain view. You'll simply make it your mission to get it back . . . If it's *broken* in your sight, immediately replace Token with another quirk – probably a somewhat dark one.

MENTAL QUIRKS

This is a catchall category for minor personality traits and psychiatric problems that don't fit neatly beneath *Convictions* (pp. 8-9), *Looks and Mannerisms* (pp. 13-14), *Preferences and Aversions* (pp. 25-27), *Preoccupations* (pp. 27-30), or *Skill Quirks* (pp. 30-32). Most are simply examples of *Disadvantage Variations* (pp. 9-12).

All of these quirks go with the mind rather than the body, where important. They can be changed or bought off over time, but the GM might require psychotherapy or a major psychological shock before allowing this.

Attentive

You tend to stick to one task until it's done. You get +1 when working on lengthy tasks, but -3 to *notice* any important interruption!

Broad-Minded

Quirk-level Xenophilia (p. B162). You get along well with other races and species, and unusual looks rarely bother you. Anyone who seems to be foreign or alien gets +1 to manipulate you (for PCs, this often affects the rolls under *Influencing the PCs*, p. B359) and gives you -1 to rolls against Per and Detect Lies, for Empathy, etc. to divine devious actions on their part. You enjoy +1 on Fright Checks when meeting strange creatures, however.

Careful

Quirk-level Cowardice (p. B129). You're naturally cautious, always on the lookout for danger. You should dedicate extra time and money to preparations before venturing into danger. If you don't, only to find yourself caught unprepared in a situation where someone with full Cowardice would have to make a self-control roll, your tentativeness gives you -1 to DX, IQ, Will, skill, and self-control rolls (but *not* Per or active defense rolls!) while you stick around.

Chauvinistic

An extremely low level of broad-based Intolerance (p. B140). You're always aware of differences in sex, skin color, etc. even if you don't actually react poorly to others. Thin-skinned individuals might occasionally react to you at -1 as a result.

Congenial

Quirk-level Chummy (p. B126). You like company and you work well with others. You always choose group action over individual action. When alone, roll 1d before you attempt any IQ-based task. On 5-6, your rolls for that task are at -1 because you feel unhappy and distracted.

Equally good names for this quirk would be "Extrovert," "Friendly," and "Outgoing."

Cyclothymic

Quirk-level Manic-Depressive (p. B143). Your moods swing between *mild* mania and depression. Roll 1d daily. On 1-3, the day brings Mind-Numbing Magnetism (p. 15) such as Enthusiastic, Optimistic, or Talkative. On 4-6, you have a quirk-level

Odious Personal Habit (p. 20) like Depressing, Melancholy, or Pessimistic.

Decisive

While you don't suffer from Impulsiveness, you take charge and render judgment the moment you learn the details of a situation. When working in a team of which you aren't the legitimate leader, teammates' reactions toward you – and their self-control rolls for Bad Temper and Selfish where you're concerned – are at -1. The *actual* leader has -2.

On the upside, if you *are* the leader, your underlings' loyalty checks (p. B519) under pressure are at +1.

Delusion

You may take a completely trivial Delusion (p. B130) as a quirk. This doesn't affect your everyday behavior and isn't likely to be noticed by casual acquaintances. However, you must *believe* it and act accordingly when the subject arises – there's *no* self-control roll! This merits the occasional -1 on reactions.

Examples: "The Earth is flat"; "The Pentagon controls the Boy Scouts and the health food stores"; "Socks cause diseases of the feet"; "UFOs really exist."

Two special classes of quirk-level Delusions are common among adventurers.

Delusional Competence

Rather than having Incompetence (p. 31) at a skill and knowing it, you believe you're an expert at a skill you lack. You must buy off this quirk in order to spend points on that skill. Someone who has Incompetence (Navigation) *can't* learn Navigation and rolls at -4 on his default. Someone with Delusional Competence (Navigation) *won't* "waste time" studying Navigation – and while he enjoys his unpenalized default, he lies or refuses to talk about his imaginary skills.

Any failed skill roll that affects NPCs – be it for a test, a job application, or practical use – is reasonable grounds for a reaction roll or a loyalty check (p. B519). When someone with Delusional Competence tries his default and fails, his lying and defensiveness about his proficiency give an *extra* -1 on these rolls, or -2 if he critically failed.

Like Incompetence, this affects *all* specialties of a given skill and isn't permitted for skills that aren't relevant to the campaign.

False Memory

You have a fake memory that covers for a real one. This is trivial, obscuring a single, relatively minor incident; e.g., you missed a test, your third-grade teacher's name was Ms. Weishaupt, or you owned a tin model of the Roswell saucer as a kid in 1937.

To make this Delusion relevant, the GM may have it crop up unexpectedly. It might trigger alarm bells while you're being interviewed for a security clearance (-1 to rolls to pass the test), make you look crazy around old acquaintances (the usual -1 on reactions), or worsen a scary situation (not causing a Fright Check, but giving -1 to one that affects everybody). If the GM can't think of a way to use the memory, it isn't a valid quirk.

For more severe versions, see *GURPS Horror*, p. 24.

Determined

Quirk-level Stubbornness (p. B157). You know what you want and do your best to get it. Roll 1d whenever you must reach a compromise with others. On 5-6, you're a bit too assertive and suffer -1 to reactions.

This quirk could also be called "Ambitious" or "Persistent."

These quirks can be changed by psychotherapy or a psychological shock.

Disciplined

Quirk-level Pacifism (p. B148). You won't ever start a fight, but that's it. If someone else picks a fight with you or your allies, or your legitimate leader orders you into battle, *none* of Pacifism's drawbacks apply – you have no penalties, may take the offensive and use deadly force against anyone on the other side, and suffer no regrets afterward.

In an IQ 1-5 beast, this is better termed "Docile." The animal will let people poke and prod at it, but it won't *attack* unless hurt or driven into battle by a handler.

Disorganized

It's around here somewhere . . . but no, you *don't* have a system. Now where is that?

When the GM assesses a time requirement to organize personal possessions – find your research notes, pack your camping gear, rummage through your pack or pockets, etc. – you need longer. If dice determine the necessary time, add +1 per die; e.g., 2d seconds becomes 2d+2 seconds. Flat times increase by 30%.

This doesn't affect the time to *use* gear rather than *prepare* it. You require no longer than anyone else to drink a potion, pick something up, ready or sheathe a weapon, write a note, etc. However, this does affect the time to don your armor, which is a rat's nest of straps and buckles, small bits wedged inside larger ones.

Distractible

Quirk-level Short Attention Span (p. B153). You are easily distracted, and don't do well on long-term projects. You're at -1 when rolling to accomplish long tasks.

Dorky

Quirk-level Oblivious (p. B146). Roll 1d whenever you attempt or resist an Influence roll. On 5-6, you're just uncomfortable enough to have -1 on your roll. Feel free to call this "Nerdy" or "Dweeby" instead!

Dreamer

You have -1 on any long task, because you tend to spend time thinking of better ways to do it, rather than working.

Dull

You aren't quite Hidebound (p. B138), but you tend to stick with tried-and-true methods. Roll 1d before undertaking any

task that requires creativity or innovation (Artist, inventing, etc.). On 1-3, you're fine – but 4-5 gives -1 on that effort, and a 6 gives -2.

Alternative names for this quirk include "Boring" and "Unimaginative."

Easily Frustrated

Quirk-level Low Self-Image (p. B143). If at first you don't succeed . . . you lose self-confidence. When the GM assesses a penalty for repeated attempts (p. B348), you suffer an *extra* -1. If the task can be repeated indefinitely without penalty (e.g., trying to hit an opponent who keeps defending), then after *three* failed attempts you have a flat -1 on all later attempts. These penalties vanish once you succeed.

Easily Influenced

You resist one particular Influence skill at -1 *and* other people get +1 to use it on you. Lots of quirks work this way for *all* such skills under specific circumstances; these ones affect just one skill, but all the time. They're valid for PCs only if the GM enforces *Influencing the PCs* (p. B359).

Born Goon: You're easily impressed by tough guys and mobsters. The affected skill is Streetwise.

Cooperative: You seek compromise in all things. The affected skill is Diplomacy.

Credulous: You tend to believe what you're told. The affected skill is Fast-Talk. This could be seen as quirk-level Gullibility (p. B137).

Desirous: You're easily seduced. The affected skill is Sex Appeal. This isn't the same as Flirtatious (p. 28) – you *can* have both!

Posh: You have trouble resisting proper high-Status manners. The affected skill is Savoir-Faire.

Timid: You're conflict-avoidant, prone to caving in to threats. The affected skill is Intimidation. (This is a level of Fearfulness, p. B136, without Fright Check penalties.)

If you *use* such a skill all the time, that's Inappropriate Manner (pp. 14-15).

External Mood Influence

You don't suffer from anything as severe as Lunacy (p. B143), but your moods mirror some changing aspect of nature – be specific. This can be cyclic (like tides or the moon's phases) or random (like the weather), fast-changing (like the sun's movement across the sky) or slow (like the seasons). Then pick a set of mental quirks that you acquire, one at a time, in response to current conditions. All of this counts as a *single*, complex quirk.

Example: Someone might exhibit Congenial (p. 17) in summer, seeking to share fair weather with others; Distractible (above) in autumn, preoccupied by thoughts of coming winter; Uncongenial (p. 20) in winter, desiring to be left alone like a bear in its den; and Dreamer (above) in spring, thoughts turning to summer rather than any business at hand.

This might be a quirk of psychology, but many fantastic beings are *supernaturally* attuned to phenomena that govern their moods.

Forgetful

You often forget some of your abilities or equipment, and thus fail to use them when they would be a good solution to a problem. This is only a quirk because it leaves the choice of when and what to forget at the player's discretion, rather than slowing play down with extra dice rolls. On the other hand, the GM can certainly encourage a player who loses track of what's on the character sheet to take this quirk!

Glimpses of Clarity

Quirk-level Flashbacks (p. B136). You occasionally recall things from your past (or a *past life*, if you're reincarnated or undead) – and not *helpful* things. When you encounter a former home, estranged loved one, old photograph, etc., the GM will roll 3d. On a 6 or less, you're distracted and at -1 on all rolls to do anything (including DX, IQ, skill, and active defense rolls) for the next 1d seconds.

Humble

You tend to put the concerns of others, or of the group, before your own. As p. B164 suggests, this is Selfless (p. B153) as an Easily Suppressed Disadvantage (p. 10).

Idealistic

You invest emotionally in your views of how certain things (name them!) *should* be, and respond irrationally when confronted with the fact that this isn't how they *are*. You get +1 to reactions from people who share your ideals but -1 from those who hold the opposite view, which tends to cancel out. What makes this worth -1 point is that if reality thwarts an idealistic action, you suffer from an Extremely Limited Disadvantage (pp. 10-11) befitting the situation.

Example: Lena lives in a sexist medieval society and is Idealistic about feminism and class equality. She gets +1 to reactions from strong-minded women and the poor, -1 from conservative men and landowners. If she cannot convince the baron to accept her into his army, or fails at an attempt to emancipate serfs, she might briefly suffer a bout of Bad Temper.

This is one quirk no matter how narrow or extensive your ideals. You may also have a specific Belief (p. 8) to accompany it. If this still doesn't feel like enough points, take a full-blown Delusion (p. B130) or self-imposed mental disadvantage (p. B121) *instead* of quirks.

Imaginative

You are a font of ideas, and are more than willing to share them with others! They may or may not be *good* ideas, of course . . .

If the GM desires a game effect, then when you participate in planning with a group, they must decide whether to listen to you. If they do, roll 1d:

- 1 – Inspiration! Roll at +1 for the affected task.
- 2-4 – Nothing special. No modifier.
- 5 – Bad idea, giving -1.
- 6 – *Colossally* bad idea, for -2.

This only becomes evident *when the dice are rolled*. It averages out to a slight penalty for allies who listen to you.

Impatient

Quirk-level Impulsiveness (p. B139). You dislike inaction. You can force yourself to sit through talk and debate rather than haring off to do something, but you're at -1 on all rolls for such "boring" tasks as Diplomacy to negotiate peace and Tactics to plan battle (though not to Diplomacy to defuse tensions at gunpoint or Tactics *in* battle!).

Insensitive

Quirk-level Callous (p. B125). You have no specific penalty to interact with others, but you tend to behave uncaringly. If you ever *fail* at an Influence roll – or at an attempt to treat or assist someone with Psychology, Teaching, a medical skill, or anything similar – then in addition to the usual bad effects, the subject will blame your insensitivity and react to you at -1 thereafter.

Layabout

Quirk-level Laziness (p. B142). You don't work very hard. Whatever your profession, you earn 10% less monthly pay. Feel free to explain this as lost commissions or bonuses, tardiness penalties, fewer shifts worked, or unpaid gaps between low-end jobs.

Literal-Minded

Quirk-level Clueless (p. B126). If you *can* assume a literal meaning, you will, missing figurative intent. For instance, "That went right over your head, didn't it?" causes you to glance upward, and "You don't have a clue, do you?" elicits a response like "Not yet, but we've only just started the investigation." This rarely causes bad reactions, but rivals get +1 to attempts to make you look unsophisticated or dumb, and you have -1 to use Acting, Savoir-Faire, Sex Appeal, etc. specifically to come off as suave (but *not* in general).

Methodical

You have a "system" for everything you do. If a long task *could* receive a bonus for taking extra time (p. B346), you must work slowly enough to claim at least +1 (double time) or suffer -1 for breaking your system. This doesn't affect split-second adventuring activities, only jobs where labor is measured in *days*, like major Carpentry or Research projects.

There's one small upside: If a task – long or not – could get time bonuses, you can go up to +6 for 60x the usual time (most people can do no better than +5 for 30x as long).

You cannot have both this quirk and Disorganized (p. 18).

Nostalgic

You aren't *necessarily* Hide-bound or even Dull – you may be quite willing to try new things.

However, you favor the familiar. You'll pick the trusty service revolver over the newfangled Glock pistol, or your granddad's sword over a shiny new one, and suggest that meetings be at old, established places, even if that means paying more, having less security, or sleeping under leaky ceilings.



Whenever the GM assesses a penalty for unfamiliarity (see *Familiarity*, p. B169) with an item, place, or procedure, you take an *extra* -1. However, your sincerity about familiar things give you +1 to rolls to “sell” others on them – literally (as with Merchant skill) or figuratively (e.g., an Influence roll with Streetwise to convince Big Vito to meet at Hotel Fleabag, not the nice new place).

Nosy

You’re always poking your nose into corners and everyone else’s business (which is likely to result in a small reaction penalty once in a while). Per p. B164, this is Curious (p. B129) as an Easily Suppressed Disadvantage (p. 10).

Odious Personal Habit

Any -5-point Odious Personal Habit (p. B22) is just a quirk if you can roll to keep it in check. Roll 1d whenever you interact with others. On 5-6, you get -1 to reactions.

Give your problem an evocative name. Examples from **GURPS** supplements include Abrasive, Argumentative, Bitter, Blunt, Crude, Cruel, Cynical, Depressing, Fatalistic, Fickle, Foul-Mouthed, Gloating, Ironic, Melancholy, Mouthy, Pessimistic, Prickly, Sanctimonious, Sarcastic, Scornful, Smug, Tactless, Treacherous, and Vindictive. Many quirk-level disadvantages boil down to this; e.g., Depressing, Fatalistic, or Melancholy might describe trivial Chronic Depression, and lots of choices could sum up minor Bully or Sadism.

If you have two or more such traits, roll just *once*, expanding the range on 1d by one per additional quirk: 4-6 for two, 3-6 for three, 2-6 for four, or 1-6 (constantly!) for five. Dedicating all five quirks to such problems amounts to selecting a painfully detailed -5-point Odious Personal Habit.

A quirk-level Odious Personal Habit that *cannot* be avoided on a die roll is either an Extremely Limited Disadvantage (pp. 10-11) and only apparent under specialized conditions, or a Shocking Affectation (p. 15) and only offensive to a narrow group. You may specify *two* of a roll, rare circumstances, or a small subset of people, but then the quirk causes -2 to reactions. If all three apply, it gives -3.

Perfectionist

You insist on things being “just so.” *Your* work is perfect, naturally . . . but if another person uses your tools, tinkers with your project, or otherwise upsets your plans, you feel the need to fix it. This might add 10% to a task’s base time or earn -1 to reactions from the other party (GM’s decision).

Personality Change

Quirk-level Split Personality (p. B156). You suffer from a full-blown mental disadvantage, but only in circumstances that are normally under *your* control; e.g., Bad Temper when you stay up too late, Bully when you drink too much, or Pyromania when you cast your Create Fire spell.

Proud

Individual success, wealth, or social standing concerns you greatly. As suggested on p. B164, this is Selfish (p. B153) as an Easily Suppressed Disadvantage (p. 10). NPCs with this quirk react at -1 to orders, insults, or social slights.

Responsible

Quirk-level Guilt Complex (p. B137). You take your obligations seriously and accept blame when things go wrong. If someone who plays a significant role in your life (as defined by the disadvantage) suffers a mishap that’s clearly your fault, you’ll have -1 on all DX, IQ, Will, Per, skill, and self-control rolls for the next day.

Responsive

Quirk-level Charitable (p. B125). You’re able to imagine the feelings and motivations of others – and all other things being equal, you’re inclined to help them. Anyone who seems to be weak or in trouble gets +1 to manipulate you (for PCs, this often means the rolls under *Influencing the PCs*, p. B359) or gives you -1 to rolls against Per and Detect Lies, for Empathy, etc. to divine devious actions on their part.

Secretive

Regardless of whether you have *actual* Secrets, you act as though you do. Whenever you can use a “concealment skill” such as Acting, Camouflage, Disguise, Holdout, Smuggling, or Stealth (learned or by default) without drawing immediate comment, you will. When this forces someone to roll dice (against Per, Detect Lies, Interrogation, Observation, Search, etc.) merely to learn something that he has every right to know – and that most people *wouldn’t* hide – that NPC will react at -1 under the circumstances.

Serious

Quirk-level No Sense of Humor (p. B146). You rarely laugh at jokes, and suppress playfulness to “get the job done.” You have -1 to Carousing. As well, roll 1d whenever you engage in relaxed social interaction (*not* business or life-or-death struggles); on 5-6, you’re a wet blanket and suffer -1 to reactions.

The opposite of this trait, Playful, is a kind of Mind-Numbing Magnetism (p. 15); you can’t have both.

Staid

You’re likely to ignore matters that don’t immediately affect you. As p. B164 implies, this is Incurious (p. B140) as an Easily Suppressed Disadvantage (p. 10).

Suspicious

Quirk-level Paranoia (p. B148). Your trust is hard to earn. Even the best-intentioned people must make an extra effort to rise above suspicion: presenting ID cards or photos, providing references, passing little tests, or winning Quick Contests of IQ with you (they can use a relevant skill if higher – Diplomacy in all situations, Diagnosis if they must convince you that you’re ill, Forensics to validate clues, and so on). Otherwise, you’ll believe them only after a grilling that earns you -1 to reactions . . . and the GM is free to have those who waste excessive time and money react at -1 regardless.

Uncongenial

You prefer to be alone. You always choose individual action over group action. Per p. B165, this is Loner (p. B142) as an Easily Suppressed Disadvantage (p. 10).

META-GAME QUIRKS

If the GM wants, quirks can wax “meta,” affecting players’ options when it comes to buying abilities for characters or spending bonus points to influence outcomes – or even changing which rules apply to individual PCs. While most quirks demand relatively little GM oversight, these ones *definitely* need to be cleared with the GM.

Extra Drawback

One specific, *detrimental* optional rule that isn’t used campaign-wide applies to you; e.g., you require practice to keep your “edge” when the GM isn’t enforcing *Maintaining Skills* (p. B294), or you need extra time to stand in armor even though *Changing Posture in Armor* (p. B395) isn’t standard. Such things don’t *have* to be meta-game constructs – those two examples could represent bad retention or being unfamiliar with armor.

Drawbacks affecting cinematic or supernatural capabilities should be specialized by ability. For instance, in a campaign where the GM doesn’t require material components for spells, it’s a quirk to need them to cast Fireball (needing them for *all* spells would be a Magery limitation!). To claim such a quirk, you must have at least *two* points in whatever it limits.

The GM must take care to forbid potentially lethal choices. For example, *Bleeding* (p. B420) is an optional rule, but being subject to it in a campaign where it’s otherwise ignored is *bad* – that’s similar to lacking Injury Tolerance (No Blood) when everybody else has it, and more like a -5-point disadvantage than a quirk.

Point-Spending Quirks

If certain conditions *require* you to spend character points on one of the options from p. B347 or **GURPS Power-Ups 5: Impulse Buys**, that’s a quirk. You get your points’ worth as usual, but you’ll find long-term growth slowed by mandatory short-term purchases.

Below are two examples. In both cases, you must specialize to a particular ability that requires a success roll. You *can* make an obscure choice to avoid excessive payouts – but if the GM *requires* a roll, you have to roll.

Successful at (Ability)

Whenever possible, you’ll spend any points necessary to buy success on the roll for a particular ability. For example, if you critically fail on a Traps roll but have Successful at Traps, you’ll make it a success by spending 3 points (if you have them).

Unbelievable at (Ability)

Similar to Successful at (Ability), except that whenever you succeed with a particular ability, you’ll spend the points required to buy a *critical* success. (You *don’t* have to spend points to ensure success in the first place, though!) This is less limiting

at lower skill levels, because you’ll rarely roll a success and have to pay to upgrade to a critical success.

It’s possible to combine the Successful and Unbelievable quirks. This means you’ll always spend the points needed to turn *any* roll for the ability into a critical success.

Rules Exclusion

Many optional rules change how **GURPS** works in particular situations. The majority are *campaign* options – either everybody uses them or nobody does. However, if the GM allows such a rule in the campaign but *you* are excluded, that’s a quirk.

Examples include being unable to invoke *Buying Success* or *Player Guidance* (both p. B347), lacking one of the possibilities under *Extra Effort in Combat* (p. B357), not enjoying the protection of a specific option in *Cinematic Combat Rules* (p. B417), and having no access to an advanced rule from a book like **GURPS Martial Arts** or **GURPS Thaumatology**. You cannot take a quirk that affects abilities you lack; e.g., you must be a wizard with spells to claim a point for being denied

a spellcasting trick. Even if you do have the right capabilities, the excluded option must be something the GM allows at no extra point cost to *all* PCs with such gifts or training.

The GM has the final say, and may forbid anything that would get the PC killed. For instance, being excluded from *Flesh Wounds* (p. B417) might be fine in a cinematic-but-non-violent campaign, but would be a death sentence in a **GURPS Gun Fu** game!

Taboo Traits

As part of a racial template, a taboo trait (p. B452) is a 0-point feature. However, if you cannot acquire a set of related advantages that other members of your race *can* and often *do* gain in play, the GM may allow you to call it a quirk. For instance, somebody who’s worthless with languages might take “Taboo Trait (Languages)” and only ever know his native language.

This quirk amounts to quirk-level Cannot Learn (p. B125).

Variable Quirk

Many quirks have variable effects, particularly Cyclothymic (p. 17), External Mood Influence (p. 18), and Mirror-Image Disadvantages (p. 11). However, these are all *fixed* traits that act like one of a small set of predefined quirks in response to specific game-world triggers. The GM may opt to permit more dramatic fluctuations.

If the GM agrees, a player may select one “Variable Quirk” and work with the GM to define how often it changes (most often every session or every adventure) and what traits can occupy the “quirk slot.” Examples include the mental quirk of the week of the funny man in a comedy of errors, social quirks that serve as “hooks” in an episodic campaign with weak overarching continuity, and serial Unwelcome Accessories (p. 13) for a robot whose efforts to solve design problems create new difficulties. In effect, the player has advance permission to invoke *Changing Existing Quirks* (pp. 5-7) at specific junctures in the campaign arc.



It should be obvious why this is a meta-game quirk: its trigger is a new game session, episode, or storyline – probably one that focuses on the quirk! It's a great way to enable players to try out lots of quirks without having too many at once (see *Is Five Enough?*, p. 6).

PHYSICAL QUIRKS

These are physical disadvantages that are only mildly or rarely limiting. They don't require roleplaying, but give specific, minor penalties in play. Contrary to the **Basic Set**, physical quirks *can* be replaced, bought off, and dropped into empty "quirk slots"; they simply demand stronger rationalizations than mental ones. See *Changing Quirks in Play* (pp. 5-7).

Aches and Pains

Chronic Pain (p. B126) is worth just -1 point if it's Mild (-2 to DX, IQ, and self-control rolls), occurs on 6 or less on 3d on any given day, and lasts for only an hour. A trivial ache like this is effectively a quirk; give it a name like "Achy knee" or "Coffee headaches."

Allergy

You have some sort of allergic reaction to a substance. This is annoying but rarely dangerous. If exposed to the cause of your allergy, make a HT roll. Failure means you become miserable and suffer coughing or sneezing (p. B428), or itching (same game effect), for a number of minutes equal to the margin of failure.

Examples: Hay fever causing red eyes and sneezing; food allergies causing hives (could be quirk-level Restricted Diet, p. B151); insect bites causing severe itching.

Treat *severe* allergies that can lead to injury or death as full-fledged Susceptible disadvantages (p. B158). *Exception:* A dangerous reaction to a substance so rare that an adventurer might encounter it just once or twice *ever* is still just a quirk.

Bowlegged

You're bowlegged. This doesn't normally affect Move, but you have -1 to Jumping skill. This quirk may elicit -1 to reactions from those who think it looks funny.

Bulky Frame

You're squarely built, almost to a fault. You have -1 on any task that involves fitting or squeezing into something, including nearly all Escape rolls, DX rolls to negotiate narrow openings, Disguise rolls to pass as someone who lacks this quirk, Armoury rolls to adjust armor to fit you, and even Merchant rolls to shop for clothing. This is above and beyond any modifiers that a person of your height and weight would have *without* Bulky Frame.

Care

Quirk-level Maintenance (p. B143). *Either* you require an expert to perform a minor medical procedure or repair every three months, *or* you need monthly work that even a non-expert

could do for you. While Care is almost trivial, missing it spells HT loss and incapacity as surely as missed Maintenance!

Clumsy Runner

Whether due to poor balance or the inertia of high body weight, you "handle" poorly at a run. When running at speeds faster than half of your Basic Move – Move 3+ for the average man – you suffer -1 to rolls against DX and DX-based skills such as Acrobatics and Jumping to keep your footing (for instance, after suffering knockback) or perform stunts. This is cumulative with the -2 that Move and Attack (p. B366) gives such rolls, where applicable.

Combat Hesitancy

Quirk-level Combat Paralysis (p. B127). You're no more likely than anyone else to "freeze up," but you aren't quick to "thaw." You're at -1 on rolls connected to surprise (p. B393); initiative rolls (if you're the leader) and IQ rolls to *recover* from mental stun.

Dead Weight

Perhaps you're Overweight, Fat, or Very Fat and it's telling – or maybe your build is average, even Skinny, but you have bad muscle tone. Whatever you *look* like, you have Basic Lift/2 lbs. of encumbrance that you can't put down. This scales up with Basic Lift from both ST and Lifting ST; the only way around it is to lose the quirk.

Dull Taste or Smell

While you don't suffer from No Sense of Smell/Taste (p. B146), you have problems in this regard. There are three options:

Dull Smell: -2 to Per and skill rolls for smell.

Dull Taste: -2 to Per and skill rolls for taste.

Dull Smell/Taste: -1 to Per and skill rolls for smell *or* taste.

Easily Winded

This is a lesser version of Unfit (p. B160) that gives no penalty to HT rolls; you can't have both. When you expend FP for vigorous activity – e.g., climbing, digging, fighting, hiking, lifting, running, or swimming – add 1 FP to *your* cost. This has no effect on FP lost to attacks, cold or heat, dehydration or starvation, extra effort, missed sleep, or special abilities.

Fatigues Easily Under Loads

You aren't built for carrying loads. Paced running *or* flying (p. B354) – choose one – costs you FP equal to your encumbrance level (minimum 1) every minute. A successful HT roll reduces this cost by 1.

High Rejection Threshold

Your body strongly rejects tissue transplants, cybernetic parts, undead limbs, and so on. If a roll is required for this, you have -3 where failure means rejection or +3 where success means rejection (as in **GURPS Bio-Tech**). If no roll is required, you must still *fail* a HT roll or the implant won't "take."

This quirk is allowed only in settings where PCs can acquire such modifications.

Hungry

This is a mild form of Increased Consumption (p. B139), for those who have neither that trait nor Reduced Consumption. You require an extra meal per day, which you can make up with snacks that increase the weight and cost of your provisions by just 10%. Leaving this out *still* counts as missing a meal, though!

Limited Colorblindness

You don't have *total* Colorblindness (p. B127), but one of several varieties that cause trouble with specific colors. Before using a skill where color matters (Artist, Chemistry, Tracking, etc.), roll 1d. On a 6, those colors happen to be involved, giving you -1 to skill.

Among humans, this variant is orders of magnitude more common than the total form!

*You've got smokers cough
from smoking, brewer's droop
from drinking beer*

*I don't know how you
came to get the Bette Davis
knees*

*But worst of all young
man you've got Industrial
Disease*

*– Mark Knopfler,
“Industrial Disease”*

Limited Hearing Loss

You don't suffer from Hard of Hearing (p. B138), but frequency extremes cause you difficulty. The following cases are mutually exclusive:

High-Frequency Hearing Loss: This most noticeably affects your ability to perceive consonant sounds and thus comprehend speech – especially in noisy surroundings. You have -1 to Hearing rolls when significant background noise is present or several people are talking at once. Even in quiet surroundings, you're at -1 to hear the sounds of small animals (cats, mice, many insects), squeaky equipment, etc.

Low-Frequency Hearing Loss: You have difficulty detecting such sounds as running engines, factory machinery, and large appliances; explosions and thunder; and onrushing trains and elephant stampedes! If you can't use vision, you must rely on vibrations in the ground. You also have trouble with the calls of large animals: cattle, moose, etc. You're at -2 to Hearing to detect all of these things.

In a cinematic campaign, the GM may permit humans with HFHL to buy Subsonic Hearing [5] and those with LFHL to buy Ultrahearing [5] to emulate some of the more far-fetched claims surrounding people with these disorders.

Minor Handicap

You may take most mundane physical disadvantages at quirk level; for instance, you could use a watered-down version of *Lame* for a “bum knee.” Difficulties rarely crop up, but are genuinely inconvenient when they do. If you have this kind of handicap, the GM may give you -1 to attribute, skill, or reaction rolls, as appropriate, in situations where it would logically interfere; e.g., a generic minor eyesight problem might give -1 to Vision rolls (*not* DX, combat rolls, etc.) if you don't take an extra second to focus.

Missing Teeth

Your mouth is a mess! If you have blunt teeth (like a human), you don't have many left. You cannot “hang on” as a grapple after you bite, and gumming your meals takes 30 minutes extra each day, shaving half an hour off possible study time.

If your race normally has Fangs, yours are snapped off and jagged, and count only as Sharp Teeth. If you ought to have Sharp Teeth, yours are worn-down and considered blunt. See *Teeth* (p. B91) for what this means.

In cultures with good dental care, this trait is considered unappealing; consider taking below-average Appearance as well.

Missing Toes

You're missing enough toes – perhaps thanks to frostbite or a land mine – that you're even worse than most humans at performing fine motor tasks with your feet. Whenever you try, take whatever DX penalty the GM assesses and add *another* -5! This also acts as Distinctive Features (p. 14) if your bare feet are visible, but that's easy to avoid.

Neutered or Sexless

You're missing sex organs that someone of your race, sex, and age would normally possess – or perhaps you're a genuinely sexless being that only *looks* like someone of a particular race and sex. This might qualify you for Social Stigma, Unnatural Features, or reduced Appearance in some settings. However, there are minor benefits: you are immune to seduction and will never accidentally become a parent.

This is more than simple sterility (which is a feature worth 0 points).

Overweight

You have approximately 130% of the average weight for your ST. You get -1 to Disguise – or to Shadowing, if you're trying to follow someone in a crowd. However, your extra fat gives you +1 to Swimming rolls, and +1 to ST when you resist knockback.

Pain-Sensitive

Quirk-level Low Pain Threshold (p. B142). You don't suffer extra shock or easier knockdown in combat, but you must make a Will roll to avoid crying out if you suffer more than 1 HP of injury. You also have -1 to resist physical torture and on Will rolls that *anybody* would have to make for pain.

Photosensitivity

Your eyes are unusually light-sensitive. You have -1 to HT rolls to resist dazzling effects (flash-bang grenades, Flash spells, etc.). If you suffer even -1 to Vision due to bright light, add another -1; if the total penalty reaches -10, you're effectively blind.

You cannot have both Photosensitivity and Protected Vision (p. B78).

Poor Night Vision

Quirk-level Night Blindness (p. B144). In light dimmer than torchlight (-3 to Vision), you have trouble seeing. When darkness penalties are -4 to -8, yours are -1 worse (-5 to -9); if they're already -9, you're effectively blind.

You cannot take Dark Vision (p. B47), Infravision (p. B60), or Night Vision (p. B71) alongside this quirk.

Restless Sleeper

Quirk-level Light Sleeper (p. B142). Use the rules for that trait, but you have trouble falling asleep only on a *critical* failure on the HT roll. For characters with HT 7+, this amounts to an Easily Suppressed Disadvantage (p. 10).

Shaky Hands

Perhaps you have a trivial Neurological Disorder (p. B144), or maybe you're nervous or drink too much. Whatever the reason, you suffer -1 on any DX-based roll to do fine work using the skills listed under High Manual Dexterity (p. B59), and to Fast-Draw skill. This is quirk-level Ham-Fisted (p. B138); while it affects the same tasks, it's too subtle to give a penalty to social rolls.

Sleep of the Dead

Like someone with Deep Sleeper (p. B101), you can fall asleep in all but the worst conditions, sleep through most disturbances, and never suffer any ill effects due to the quality of your sleep. However, your IQ roll to notice disturbances and awaken is at -4, and you must roll at this penalty even if you have Combat Reflexes.

Sleeptalker

You occasionally talk in your sleep. When somebody else is present, roll 3d. On 6 or less, you divulge some secret or embarrassing truth. This is mumbled or shouted, though; unless the dice come up 3-4, the listener must make a Hearing-2 roll to make sense of it.

If you talk to yourself while *awake*, that's a Dead Giveaway (pp. 13-14) instead. You're unlikely to say anything important, but you won't be very good at Stealth.

Sleepyhead

You have a "half level" of Extra Sleep (p. B136) – that is, you need 30 minutes more sleep than usual. For a human, this means 8.5 hours of sleep, giving you a 15.5-hour day. The GM may opt to ignore this *most* of the time but invoke *Missed Sleep* (pp. B426-427) when an adventure calls for a sudden wake-up call. Otherwise, this quirk's main effect is to subtract half an hour from daily study time.

Slightly Unusual Biochemistry

While your needs aren't as bizarre as those of someone with Unusual Biochemistry (p. B160), you must still be careful. When you receive a drug intended for your species, roll 1d; on a 6, that particular substance simply doesn't work. Drugs that circumvent this quirk are available at twice the usual cost.

Slow Reflexes

You have -1 to Basic Speed for the sole purpose of determining your place in the turn sequence (p. B363). This is only a quirk because if you take Enhanced Dodge [15/level] and Basic Move [5/level] out of Basic Speed [20/level], "who acts first" isn't worth very much (mathematically, 0 points!).

Sunburns Easily

If you're exposed to direct sunlight, roll against HT once per hour to avoid suffering -1 to DX for a day thereafter.

Susceptible to (Item)

One level of Susceptible (p. B158) to a *class* of things encountered only occasionally in the environment – such as intestinal disease or ingested poison – is worth -1 point and gives -1 to HT rolls to resist. If the GM wishes, -1 to *any* DX, IQ, HT, Will, or Per roll made to resist a narrow group of effects is a valid quirk. For supernatural abilities, this category must be about as wide as a power (e.g., Susceptible to Telepathy) or a college of magic (e.g., Susceptible to Mind Control Spells).

Exceedingly narrow, rare, or low-risk categories might be valid quirks if the penalty is more severe (-2 to -5); see the examples below, *Name-Bound* (p. 34), and *Spell Susceptibility* (p. 34).

Acceleration Weakness

You are susceptible to the bad effects of extreme acceleration, and get -3 to HT rolls to avoid them.



Nervous Stomach

You have -3 to HT rolls to avoid illness (typically in the form of attribute penalties or vomiting) brought on by rich or spicy food, strong drink, etc.

Substance Intolerance

One specific drug with potentially unwelcome consequences (hallucinations, reduced Will, unconsciousness, etc.) affects you more strongly than usual. You have -2 on HT rolls to resist its effects – although for a substance less widely used than, say, alcohol or marijuana, the GM may rule that -3 to -5 to HT is needed for a valid quirk.

For a specific example, see *Alcohol Intolerance* (p. 29).

Temperature Intolerance

Your temperature “comfort zone” is 10°F smaller than the norm. For humans, who normally have a zone between 35°F and 90°F, two versions are common:

Cold Intolerance: Your “comfort zone” is between 45°F and 90°F.

Heat Intolerance: Your “comfort zone” is between 35°F and 80°F.

These traits are mutually exclusive with Temperature Tolerance (p. B93) – but it’s possible to take both quirks for a zone between 45°F and 80°F!

Tests Positive for (Condition)

You test as having some sort of disturbing condition, though this is invisible and you aren’t contagious (where applicable). Common possibilities include “false positives” for infectious diseases, genetic markers for bloodlines hated or feared by people likely to test you, and misleading magical auras. Typical consequences are some combination of blackmail (if the condition is embarrassing), quarantine (if it’s dangerous), or abuse (if it’s loathed).

This quirk is valid only in settings where technology or superhuman gifts can confirm it – and only if the GM intends to incorporate such testing into adventures. Tests Positive for Zombie Plague would work in a zombie apocalypse, and Tests Positive for Demonic Ancestry would fit most fantasy, but few things would qualify in nonmagical, low-tech worlds.

This amounts to Social Disease (p. B155) as an Extremely Limited Disadvantage (pp. 10-11).

Thin Skull

Humans and most other creatures with heads get DR 2 (Partial, Skull, -70%; Tough Skin, -40%) [2] *for free*. An implicit DR 1 (Partial, Skull, -70%; Tough Skin, -40%) [1] would be a relative -1-point disadvantage. Thus, if your skull has a mere DR 1, that’s a quirk.

This *can* be a perfectly mundane trait. It might result from prior injury or a condition that causes bone loss.

Tiny Hands

Your hands are unusually small. You have -1 to ST for the sole purpose of assessing penalties for insufficient ST to use weapons; e.g., ST 11 and Tiny Hands would let you wield a broadsword (ST 10) just fine, but give you -1 to use an axe (ST 11). This never affects melee damage!

The GM may assess other small modifiers as appropriate – say, -1 to ST to break free when your hands are grappled, but +1 to Escape skill against handcuffs.

Tone-Deaf

You can’t distinguish pitch well or at all. This *doesn’t* penalize your base skill level with Musical Instrument and Singing, or give you Incompetence (p. 31) at those things – if you play from sheet music, using an instrument tuned by someone else, you’re fine. However, you’re at -4 to “play by ear” or tune an instrument, and to all uses of Group Performance (Conducting).

Twitchy

You’re constantly on edge. In any situation where either variety of surprise (p. B393) would apply, roll vs. DX. A roll of 14+ fails regardless of your score.

Failure means you startle. If you’re holding something, you drop it; if you aren’t, you knock something over (coffee, meet keyboard), tumble from your chair, or suffer another effect worthy of Klutz (p. B141). Critical failure is *bad*: you jerk the trigger of your gun (9 or less chance of shooting a friend – or your foot), strike your head for 1 HP of injury and must roll vs. HT to avoid knockdown, etc.

This is in addition to any surprise effects. However, the surprise itself needn’t affect you. You might have Combat Reflexes and avoid mental stun . . . but nerves are nerves, and you momentarily “spaz out.”

PREFERENCES AND AVERSIONS

In the eyes of many people, nothing defines someone so strongly as what he loves and loathes, adores and avoids. Such inclinations are classic quirks! Unlike *Mental Quirks* (pp. 17-20) – which are broad and often vague personality traits – preferences and aversions concern *specific* activities, people, and things.

Observing someone, interviewing him or his close associates, etc. is likely to reveal these kinds of quirks. If they aren’t obvious at the moment, the GM might require a skill roll to gather information (using Interrogation, Observation, etc.) and/or analyze it (often against Psychology or Intelligence Analysis). Success opens up the possibility of taking advantage of the subject by dangling the object of his preference or aversion in front of him, or placing him in a situation where his predictable behavior works against him.

Optionally, the GM may permit exploitation of *any* psychological quirk, although fuzzier ones like Disciplined (p. 18), Dreamer (p. 18), and Staid (p. 20) might *always* require observation and a skill roll first.

Admiration

Inordinate fondness for an established NPC or even another PC – it must be someone who would appear in the campaign – can be a quirk. The person with the quirk has -2 to resist all Influence rolls attempted by the individual he admires (use *Influencing the PCs*, p. B359, as applicable) and on self-control rolls for disadvantages where this paragon is concerned (Gullibility means falling for his lies more easily, Impulsiveness leads to hasty agreement with his decisions, etc.). An NPC with this quirk also reacts at +2 toward his idol.

The two most common examples are *Crush* (the admirer has a romantic interest in the subject of his quirk) and *Hero Worship* (the admirer strives to emulate that person in all things).

Dislike

You can have any Phobia (pp. B148-150) – or Squeamish (p. B156) – at the level of a mere “dislike.” Dislikes don’t *have* to be diluted disadvantages, though. There’s a whole world full of things to dislike: carrots, cats, neckties, violence, telephones, telephone solicitors, income tax . . .

If you dislike something, you must avoid it whenever possible, but it doesn’t actually *harm* you as a Phobia would. The game effect is that someone who knows about your Dislike can distract you with it (e.g., if you don’t like cats, he might have Muffy in the room when you visit), gaining +1 on his rolls or giving you -1 to yours in the encounter, which most often influences social interactions. You might get the occasional -1 in other circumstances, too – if everyone must attempt a Fright Check for horrifying wailing, “Dislikes loud noises” could give you -1. Dislikes directed toward *people* amount to quirk-level Intolerance (below), and typically earn reaction penalties from the affected group instead.

Repeated, traumatic exposure leads to immunity, however. An enemy *can* blare your Dislike to the world, but if several rivals in rapid succession taunt you with it, you may replace it with another quirk; e.g., an Extremely Limited Disadvantage (pp. 10-11) such as “Sadism toward the idiot who did this.”

For vampires with garlic aversions, faeries who avoid iron, etc., use Supernatural Dislike (p. 34) instead.

Alternative Sexuality Quirks

If the individuals to whom you’re sexually attracted – or the acts you get up to in private – place you in a minority in a society where this isn’t grounds for a full-fledged Social Stigma, you may claim a quirk. It’s worth a point because even if you don’t experience widespread discrimination, you’ll suffer up to -3 to reactions from certain people if they find out. The usual suspects are those with moralistic and religious varieties of Fanaticism and Intolerance (even at quirk level).

Taking such a quirk means that you’re “out” as gay in a predominantly straight society (or vice versa), exclusive about gender and/or activity in a pansexual one, asexual in a remarkably promiscuous one, or something similar. In a setting with multiple sapient species, openly preferring a species different from your own may count, whether you’re a human who pursues Martians or a god who lusts after mortals. For a “closeted” sexuality, take a Pretense (p. 33) that transforms into this quirk once you “come out.”

The issue of whether this is a learned preference, an inborn mental quirk, or a hard-wired physical trait is a sensitive one. The choice is left to the player. For instance, cross-dressing because that’s your sexual identity is an Alternative Sexuality quirk, but doing so strictly as a matter of fashion – independent of how you conduct your love life – is a Shocking Affectation (p. 15).

Intolerance

Intolerance (p. B140) is merely a nasty quirk if you rarely encounter the target group. Ethnicity, nationality, religion, sex, social class, and species aren’t your only options. For instance, “Can’t stand drunks” is a quirk unless you work at a drinking

establishment, as is “Dislikes communists” in a place with no appreciable communist presence.

Intolerance assumes *unwarranted* prejudice. If a group treats almost everyone poorly enough to justify near-universal fear or loathing, then being more negative toward them than usual is just a quirk, however often you encounter them. The salient difference between a person with “Hates cannibals” and one without is who the cannibals eat first . . .

In either case, all the rules for the full disadvantage apply. They just don’t come into play often.

Broad-based quirk-level Intolerance is Chauvinistic (p. 17). You *can* combine this with the above options. If you do, any resulting reaction penalties are cumulative – an exception to quirks not “stacking.”

Like

If you like something, you’ll seek it out whenever possible: gadgets, kittens, shiny knives, ceramic owls, fine art . . . whatever. This doesn’t have to be a thing – perhaps you never miss a chance to cook, read, or snap photos, or to watch (or *play*) a particular sport. Yet another possibility is to invert a Phobia (pp. B148-150) to get a quirk-level “mania.” Whatever the case, this isn’t a compulsion, just a preference.

If the GM desires a game effect, people aware of your Like might bribe or influence you with it, gaining +1 to their attempt or giving you -1 to resist. You may earn the occasional -1 on your own merits, too, whether that penalizes a skill (such as Merchant when hunting for bargains, if you’re fond of something pricey) or a reaction roll (e.g., “Likes rock ‘n’ roll” leads to *loud* rock ‘n’ roll, and “Likes shiny knives” is genuinely unsettling).

While Likes are always specific, it would be reasonable to treat Hedonist (p. 28) as a broad-based exception.

Preferred Looks

You find a particular ethnic background, hair color, build, or other trait inordinately appealing. Word this interestingly: “Digs girls in glasses,” “Likes musclemen,” “Sucker for redheads,” etc. In your eyes, the Appearance of these gods or goddesses increases by a level. This aids suitable Influence skills they use on you – *especially* Sex Appeal. To make this worth a point, the GM shouldn’t miss an opportunity to use *Influencing the PCs* (p. B359) around such people.

You can instead *dislike* certain looks, perceiving the Appearance of those who have them as one level lower. You may try to hide this, but your quirk means that you’re bad at it – your preference is effectively a Shocking Affectation (p. 15) where such people are concerned, earning -1 to reactions from them.

Preferred Tactics

Due to training, honor, or personal preference, you favor a particular move in combat. Examples include “Always circles opponents,” “Kicks more often than he punches,” and “Prefers spells to weapons.”

You should strive to make this true as soon as the opportunity arises; in the examples above, you might take a Move maneuver when you could attack, kick on two turns in a row, or Concentrate on a spell at sword's point. When you do, the GM will give you -1 to *one* active defense or resistance roll against an opponent who could have noticed your predictable or ill-suited choice. This will remind you of your bad habit, and you'll either curtail it or be less "telegraphic"; you won't suffer the penalty again until the next fight.

If you don't submit to your quirk as soon as you have the chance, your heart won't be in it. Foes will get +1 on *all* active defenses and resistance rolls against your efforts until you do! (Thus, it's better to be predictable as soon as possible.)

*I may chance have some
odd quirks and remnants of
wit broken on me, because
I have railed so long against
marriage: but doth not the
appetite alter?*

– William Shakespeare,
*Much Ado
About Nothing*

Self-Imposed Limit

You aren't generally risk-averse, but there's a particular line you dislike crossing. If a rule lets you *voluntarily* accept a variable penalty, you won't willingly cross the halfway mark in that area. This quirk is permitted only if there's a range of options with an upper limit and your aversion would affect more than one skill or attribute.

Examples:

Dislikes haste. You'll never go all the way to 90% off the usual time for haste (see p. B346), which gives -9; at most, you'll shave off 40%, for -4 to skill.

Strikes with precision, not speed. One can normally reduce combat skills to 10 with Deceptive Attack (p. B369). You won't ever go that far. Someone with Karate-16 could take -2, -4, or -6, but since -3 is the halfway mark, *you* would stop at -2.

Won't carry a load. Encumbrance ranges all the way up to Extra Heavy, giving -4 to Dodge and certain skills, but you'll only go as far as Medium (-2).

Soft Spot

You like a specific, reasonably narrow group of people enough that it's a problem for you when they're genuine enemies. While there's no effect in combat against them, you

have -1 on all rolls to realize that they're up to no good in social situations, or to convict or punish them. Superiors who notice this (make a Per roll) react to you at -1 in matters of trust, giving you -1 to rolls for promotion.

However, you get +1 on all rolls to argue the case of your favored group, and +1 to reactions from those people if they learn that you've done so.

Example: A WWII British soldier with Soft Spot (German Soldiers) believes that his enemy counterparts are mostly "good chaps." He suffers -1 to Interrogation vs. German prisoners, -1 to Intimidation when shouting at them, and -1 on any roll for promotion as a military policeman or intelligence officer. However, if he "goes to bat" for mistreated prisoners, and it's his word against a Callous guard's, he's at +1 in the Quick Contest. Should a prisoner hear of this, he'll react to the sympathetic soldier at +1.

In a situation without a clear enemy, you can also use this quirk to indicate respect for a group to which *you* belong; e.g., a policeman with Soft Spot (Blue Brotherhood) might overlook misconducts by fellow cops. In that case, it's usually a disciplinary division or *external* authorities that will react badly. Call this a Code of Honor (p. 9) if you prefer, but don't take it twice.

PREOCCUPATIONS

A preoccupation is an obsessive preference. The advice under *Preferences and Aversions* (pp. 25-27) for handling the discovery and exploitation of quirks still applies. The difference is that here the emphasis is on the *behavior* as much as the *thing* – all of these quirks could be seen as facets of an "addictive personality."

Collector

You have a trivial Compulsive Behavior (p. B128) when it comes to collecting a particular class of things, whether that's taxidermized cats, comic books, or vintage sports cars (Wealth permitting). It's good roleplaying to spend extra time and money on this activity, but you never *have* to do so unless tempted with a rare collectable. Then roll 3d. A 17-18 means you must give in – although for a "Holy Grail" (e.g., mint-condition, 1939-original *Detective Comics* #27 at 10% of the estimated auction price, which is still well over \$100,000!), the GM may lower the self-control roll to 15.

Compulsion

You have a very minor form of Compulsive Behavior (p. B128) that isn't covered by another quirk like Collector (p. 27), Easily Suppressed Disadvantage (p. 10), Expensive Habit (p. 28), or Hoarder (p. 28). In a situation that's unlikely to arise – or, alternatively, not likely to *matter* – during the average game session, this can compel you to specific, minor action without allowing a self-control roll.

This quirk is characteristic of many supernatural creatures; e.g., the ghost with "Must ring any church bell he sees on a Sunday" or the golem with "Observant of Jewish ritual law." If such a being is kept from fulfilling its Compulsion, it suffers from Unluckiness (p. B160) until this is remedied. This is often a Disadvantage Embellishment (pp. 9-10) on Reprogrammable (p. B150).

However, many ordinary humans have odd habits such as “Doodles,” “Picks up any dropped coin he sees,” or “Constantly checks the time.” Being prevented from doing this triggers a temporary mental problem that would be worth -10 points: Bad Temper (12), Confused (12), etc. Choose this when you specify the quirk.

This might seem severe, but it shouldn’t come up often. The GM may opt to roll 3d each game session and work it into events on a 6 or less.

Daily Ritual

You engage in something like an exercise regimen or meditation each day. Nobody *requires* this of you, but you’ll never willingly skip it. The net effect that you have half an hour less time each day for study (though the GM may let it count as half-speed study of Sports, Meditation, etc.). If forced to go without, you’ll feel out-of-sorts for an hour around when you would normally engage in that activity: -1 to IQ, IQ-based skills, and self-control rolls.

If missing your daily ritual would anger a god, cost you your powers, etc., then it’s a full-fledged Disciplines of Faith or Vow disadvantage, not a mere quirk.

Eavesdropper

You make a habit of listening in on conversations and glancing sideways at what others are doing. Roll a Quick Contest with your target(s) whenever you have a chance to do this. You may use basic Per, Lip Reading, or Observation. They may use Per or Observation – and if several people are involved, use the *highest* score among them.

If you *win* you may learn what’s going on, which is rather dull most of the time; the GM is free to say, “Boring chatter.” A tie means nothing happens. If you *lose*, the other party notices you before you learn anything and the GM will make a reaction roll at -1, though consequences worse than scowls or a terse “Mind your own business!” are rare.

This is just a quirk because it covers an activity that most adventurers engage in. The difference here is that you can’t opt out – you don’t even know you’re doing it.

Expensive Habit

A basically harmless, even good habit is a small drawback if it costs excessive money or time. Specify one moderately narrow category – clothing (*not* armor), dining out, gift-giving, lodging while on the road, transportation, etc. – where you insist on “the best.” If it’s something money can buy, you’ll always spend *at least* twice as much whenever you purchase that thing. If that doesn’t fit the habit or you lack sufficient funds, you’ll invest double the time instead.

For instance, “Buys the latest fashions” means paying 100% extra for trendy clothes, while “Impeccably groomed” leads to taking twice as long to make yourself presentable if you foresee social interaction (buying overpriced hair products or makeup would be good roleplaying, too!). Other examples include “Always travels first class,” “Drives expensive cars,” and “Insists on five-star hotels.”

This can be a headache if applied to essential adventuring gear – but if you have the money, why not? “Prefers fancy weapons” or “Decorates armor” means adding gems, precious metals, custom tooling, etc. sufficient to double the cost of

your favorite toy. If you insist on *spare* or *more functional* gear, that’s an Overcautious Habit (p. 30).

Leaning toward expensive tastes in *all* things is Compulsive Spending as an Easily Suppressed Disadvantage (p. 10).

Flirtatious

Quirk-level Lecherousness (p. B142). You go out of your way to interact with people who attract you. You might be coy or brazen, but you *don’t* have to make a “pass.” In the presence of an appealing member of the sex you find attractive, you’re distracted and at -1 on rolls for the task at hand, unless that’s impressing whoever caught your eye.

This trait isn’t the same as Salacious (p. 15) or Desirous (p. 18), which concern active manipulation by you or by others. Flirtatious is a *passive* tendency – you’re compelled to look, not to seduce or submit, and may well regard flirting as innocent but seduction as sinful!

Hedonist

You seek pleasure. This *isn’t* a cocktail of Easily Suppressed (p. 10) and Extremely Limited (pp. 10-11) varieties of Compulsive Carousing, Compulsive Spending, etc. – you would happily pass up a lame party or expensive-but-boring things to experience genuine pleasure. Those who offer pleasure get +1 to influence you *or* give you -1 to resist partaking.

Other names include “Epicure,” “Sensualist,” and “Sybarite.” Students of *traditional* Hedonism or Epicureanism should take Philosophical (p. 8).

Hoarder

You have a minor Compulsive Behavior (p. B128) or Obsession (p. B146) concerning a particular useful commodity – usually ammunition, food, or fuel. It’s good roleplaying to acquire reserves of this stuff whenever possible, but you never *have* to do so unless genuine shortage looms. Then roll 3d. A 17-18 means you must give in, and the GM may lower the self-control roll to 15 if the crisis is dire or the chance to stock up is especially good.

As an upside, you’ll almost always have a supply of something genuinely useful on hand!

Ill-Advised Hobby

A hobby that could endanger or inconvenience you without being a full-on Addiction or Secret is a quirk. While there’s no specific game effect, the GM can use it to cause *physical* or *social* trouble for you whenever it fits the story (or on a roll of 6 or less on 3d in a given play session, if it hasn’t mattered for a while). You’re welcome to buy off or replace the quirk after each incident . . . but some people never learn!

Examples: “Breeds tigers” (your pets could attack you or someone else, escape, lead to costly permits, etc.), “Eats fugu” (a poisonous fish that’s *usually* prepared to be safe), “Likes kinky porn” (all fun and games until an enemy blackmails you), and “Reanimates corpses for fun” (leaves you tired from casting Zombie spells, and walking dead aren’t exactly popular).

Even normal hobbies sometimes count as “ill-advised” for *adventurers*. Below is one of the classics.

Record-Keeper

Many people keep a journal, photo album, or other record of events in their life. This is unwise if you engage in crime, black ops, undercover investigations, or similar – what if someone were to steal, copy, or just get a good look at your memoirs? If you have a quirk like “Keeps a journal” or “Photographs his work,” the GM has leave to introduce events that make this a problem for you once in a while. Documentation secret or secure enough that this could never happen isn’t worth a point!

Minor Addiction

You may take Addiction (p. B122) as a quirk if you’re dependent on a substance that works out to 0 points under the rules. There’s no need to record the mechanical details. A smoker whose habit is casual rather than highly addictive might have “Smokes cigars”; a devout coffee drinker, “Coffee addict”; and a stuntman with an old injury, “Pops over-the-counter painkillers.” Such quirks are more colorful and concise than fussy notation like “Addiction (Tobacco; Cheap; Legal),” “Addiction (Caffeine; Cheap; Legal),” and “Addiction (Pain pills; Cheap; Legal).”

Physiological dependency is a physical quirk, while psychological dependency is a mental one. Not all psychological dependency involves drugs. Someone who becomes irritable when deprived of pornography, soap operas, video games, etc. – or who blows excessive time or money on such things – might follow the rules for Daily Ritual (p. 28), Expensive Habit (p. 28), or Ill-Advised Hobby (pp. 28-29) but note Minor Addiction on his character sheet, if the player likes the sound of that better. Just don’t count it more than once!

As with full-fledged Addiction, alcohol presents a special case; see *Minor Alcoholism* (see boxed text).

Obsession

You may take an almost-rational and not especially unusual Obsession (p. B146) as a quirk, to reflect a minor goal. For instance, you hope to get just enough money to buy your own farm (or boat, or spaceship, or castle), you dream of starting a band, you want to visit a hard-to-reach country (or *planet*), or you seek a specific job.

“Almost-rational” and “minor” are relative. If you’re a wealthy 17th-century French nobleman, “Hopes to save enough to buy a farm” wouldn’t count – you could buy a farm outright! “Dreams of joining the Musketeers” would work, though. For a poor *métayer* (sharecropper), the farm would be a fair Obsession; becoming a Musketeer would not.

A quirk-level Obsession mainly affects choices (roleplay it!), but if others learn of it, they get +1 to attempts to manipulate you using it or give you -1 to resist or detect such manipulation (GM’s choice). For instance, Greed (12) alongside that Obsession about owning a farm means rolling at 11 or less to resist shady deals involving farmland.

Alcohol-Related Quirks

No intoxicant is as storied as alcohol. Drunkenness and alcoholism are fertile ground for quirks, provided that the gaming group is comfortable with stories that include these themes. Specific examples appear below, and several other quirks could be adapted to the cause: drinking can exacerbate Nervous Stomach (p. 25), trigger Personality Change (p. 20), and eventually cause Shaky Hands (p. 24); a common Vow (p. 9) is never to drink alcohol; and Alcoholism can be Extremely Limited (pp. 10-11) and support all manner of Disadvantage Embellishments (pp. 9-10).

The GM should review *Alcoholism* (p. B122) and *Drinking and Intoxication* (pp. B439-440) before allowing these quirks. Similar traits might exist for other intoxicants.

Alcohol Intolerance

Alcohol “goes right to your head.” You become intoxicated much more quickly than normal. You get -2 on any HT roll related to drinking.

Former Alcoholic

You used to have Alcoholism, but you’ve shed the addiction so successfully that you *don’t* have to roll to resist booze if it’s offered – you really have learned to handle things. However, being teetotal is sometimes socially inconvenient, and you may get slightly twitchy or terse in the presence of drink (-1 to self-control rolls).

Friendly Drunk

Whenever you’re *tipsy* (p. B428), instead of applying the -1 to IQ to your Will when you resist Influence rolls, apply the same -2 you have on self-control rolls. When you’re *drunk*, Will to resist others’ manipulations is at -4 rather than the usual -2. The deeper you are into your cups, the more trusting you are of others – even relative to other drunks.

Horrible Hangovers

You suffer an additional -3 to any penalties the GM assesses for excessive drinking the previous evening, and add three hours to hangover duration.

Minor Alcoholism

By the book, Alcoholism is worth -15 or -20 points. Yet countless fictional characters drink too much with few effects beyond joviality. In a larger-than-life campaign, the GM might permit a cheap, legal Addiction without the special -5 points for “insidious” or the assumption that the drinker *always* drinks to incapacitation (although booze has its usual effect if he does!) – it mostly leads to spending too much on liquor, an Expensive Habit (p. 28). Give the resulting quirk a euphemistic name like “Hits the bottle,” “Likes his drink,” or “Lush” to distinguish it.

Sleepy Drinker

Booze makes you fall asleep. Whenever you drink, you must make a Will roll alongside each HT or Carousing roll. Failure means you fall asleep, and will stay that way until awakened or you get a full night’s sleep.

Feel free to word this as “Daydream,” “Dream,” “Goal,” “Hope,” “Want,” “Wish,” etc. to distinguish it from a pathological Obsession that requires self-control rolls.

Overcautious Habit

Adventurers often cultivate habits that they feel will help them avoid trouble. When these are unequivocally *good*, they're Standard Operating Procedure perks (see **GURPS Power-Ups 2**). Not all such practices are without downsides, however. One that comes with a significant drawback counts as a quirk.

One common downside is a situational -1 to reactions. For example, “Never stands in front of a door when opening it” lets you avoid the occasional trap, but at the expense of -1 to reactions when greeting visitors or police. “Meets all questions with a blank stare” might force others to contest your Acting with Detect Lies even when you didn't specify that you were being circumspect, but also gives -1 to reactions in casual conversation.

Drawbacks need not be social. Rare penalties avoided by accepting equal-sized but slightly more common ones are fine, as are completely qualitative downsides that occur more often than the upsides. Some examples:

Careful planner. You're exempt you from the occasional -1 for missing items or haste when putting plans into action, but mission prep takes you twice as long without giving you the corresponding +1 (to Intelligence Analysis, Tactics, etc.) for extra time.

Carries backup weapons. Like Blackbeard the pirate with his half-dozen pistols, you always carry spare weaponry. Having extra weapons is the benefit, but you must spend twice as much on armaments to ensure this, and then carry their weight. Details are up to you; you might accompany a \$600 sword with a cheap sword worth \$240, a \$40 hatchet, and two fine large knives worth \$160 apiece . . . or word this as “Carries two swords in case one breaks” (\$600 for a second sword).

Clean freak. You reflexively clean, disinfect, and polish. You receive +1 to HT rolls against contact disease, and never leave gratuitous fingerprints or suffer social penalties avoidable by grooming, but you display visible disgust that elicits -1 on reactions from those who do dirty work, anyone who hasn't had time to tidy up, and the sick.

Doesn't trust banks. You carry or hide all your money. You'll never have to hunt for an ATM or wait for a bank to open, and you won't be at the mercy of bank robbers, but you stand to lose *everything* if you're mugged or your hideout burns down.

Never raises voice. You avoid -1 to reactions from NPCs who dislike loud people, as well as Stealth penalties for speaking to coordinate with allies when skulking about, and you give eavesdroppers -1 to Hearing – but others have -1 to hear your cries for help, and you're at -1 to Intimidation, Leadership, Public Speaking, etc. in noisy situations.

Sharpens weapons at every opportunity. Your cutting weapons avoid -1 to damage from blunting but have +1 to odds of breakage as their edges wear thin.

As with all quirks, it's bad roleplaying to try to weasel out of the drawbacks. For an indisputably good habit, buy a perk!

Practical Joker

Use the rules for Trickster (p. B159), but replace the need to fool *dangerous* foes with a propensity to play jokes on friendly

acquaintances whom you believe will “appreciate” the humor and laugh with you. Not all of them will, of course – even Allies might react at -1 or worse after such an episode! When you need to resist this urge, your self-control roll is 15.

This amounts to Trickster (15) (Accessibility, Only on harmless people, -80%) [-1].

Risk-Taking Behavior

A desire to use your skills or resources in high-stakes situations – even when no one is asking you to take the risk, or the approach isn't absolutely necessary – is a valid quirk because it exposes you to needless dangers. Good examples are “Hires criminal thugs,” “Likes to drive fast,” “Prefers to walk point on patrol,” and “Prone to using explosives.” When the act in question is unavoidable or the risks are trivial, this is a pure role-playing matter. However, if your favorite activity is just one possible solution to the problem at hand, and not the least-risky one, you must either act on your impulse (just as if you had Impulsiveness) or argue interminably (treat as Stubbornness) – your choice.

*The desire for safety
stands against every
great and noble
enterprise.*

– Tacitus, *Annals*

Tattletale

You're a schoolyard-grade stoolie. You won't get anybody into *real* trouble – such as with a violently jealous spouse or the law – but if you can reveal a minor indiscretion in a way that embarrasses someone or makes you look good, you will. You only *have* to do this on a roll of 16-18 on 3d, but it's good role-playing to do so more often. Think of this as Honesty (15) (Accessibility, Only for trivial things, -80%) [-1].

Trademark

A quirk-level Trademark (p. B159) takes almost no time to leave, cannot be used to trace your identity, and can be overlooked when inconvenient.

SKILL QUIRKS

These traits limit skills or groups of skills. Any quirk might give occasional penalties to skill rolls, but these ones represent full-time flaws in specific areas, most often due to inadequate instruction or an “anti-Talent.”

Unless the GM rules otherwise, changing or removing these quirks requires remedial education. Skill-affecting quirks that *can't* be “cured” this way have been placed in other categories.

For instance, Delusional Competence (p. 17) and Inappropriate Manner (pp. 14-15) usually call for psychotherapy or public embarrassment, College Incompetence (p. 34) and Rule of 15 (p. 34) often demand supernatural remedies, and buying off Point-Spending Quirks (p. 21) is a matter of getting the GM's permission to spend one *extra* point.

Can't Read Music

Prerequisite: At least one point in Singing or Musical Instrument.

Like languages, music can be read and written. In societies that have written music, learning to sing or play an instrument normally includes learning musical notation. A musician can sight-read a new piece with a Singing or Musical Instrument roll at -2. One with the quirk Can't Read Music can only learn new pieces by ear. Musicians from cultures without musical notation *always* have this quirk, and need to memorize tunes.

Cognition Quirks

You have difficulty understanding and manipulating a specific kind of information. In all cases, you may compensate for the skill penalty by taking extra time (p. B346). These traits differ from both the associated full-sized disadvantages and Incompetence quirks (p. 31) in that they don't prevent you from learning the penalized skills. You might even have a Talent for them that you can "activate" by replacing your quirk!

Math-Shy

Quirk-level Innumerate (p. B140). You suffer -1 on all rolls for quantitative tasks, notably Mathematics, sciences such as Astronomy and Physics, non-administrative uses of business skills such as Accounting and Finance, and many applications of Engineer.

Mild Dyslexia

Quirk-level Dyslexia (p. B134). You suffer -1 on rolls involving text: nearly all uses of Writing, most applications of Research, written Poetry, any roll the GM requires for book-learning, and tasks that require charts, forms, manuals, and the like (if such documentation is *optional* and gives a bonus, you suffer no penalty but receive no bonus). You cannot learn the Speed-Reading skill.

Symbol-Shy

Quirk-level Non-Iconographic (p. B146). You have -1 on all rolls involving abstract images and symbols, including most applications of Cartography, Heraldry, and Symbol Drawing; computer or magical skills where symbols are concerned; and any task where you must use a digital readout or a map (if such gear merely gives a bonus, you suffer no penalty but get no bonus).

Incompetence

You're *inept* at one specific skill. You cannot learn that skill, and your default is at an extra -4. You cannot be incompetent in a single specialty of a skill; if you're incompetent with Guns, for instance, you're incompetent with *all* guns. The GM may disallow Incompetence if the skill would be irrelevant to a given character, or is unlikely to play a role in the campaign.

Wizards may have a special form of this quirk; see *College Incompetence* (p. 34).

Lazy Skill

Prerequisite: At least one point in the affected skill.

You have the wrong idea about how one of your skills works. Pick an attribute that's *lower* than the one that normally controls that skill (if you don't have such a score, this quirk isn't valid). When *you* use that skill, it's based on the chosen score, giving you an effective penalty. Some examples:

DX-based skills often move to ST for people who lack finesse ("Escape based on ST"), or to IQ as they overthink what should be reflexive ("Karate based on IQ").

IQ-based skills for crafts sometimes slip to ST for people who like hitting things ("Carpentry based on ST"), or to DX for those who believe that enough jiggling can substitute for technique ("Lockpicking based on DX").

HT-based skills end up based on DX for those who are more frenetic than athletic ("Swimming based on DX"), or on IQ when people believe that it's better to be a wit than fit ("Sex Appeal based on IQ").

Will-based skills end up HT-based when practiced by people who equate willpower with shouting loudly ("Exorcism based on HT") or tolerating pain ("Power Blow based on HT").

Per-based skills that involve close examination are prone to being reduced to poking and patting with DX ("Search based on DX"), while long-ranged ones lead many people into the trap of using IQ to guess at what's there ("Observation based on IQ").

This affects *routine* skill use but doesn't override a GM- or scenario-mandated roll based on a specific attribute (see p. B172). For instance, if an adventure calls for a Per-based Lockpicking roll, your roll is Per-based even if you have "Lockpicking based on DX."

Be sure to specialize by skill *and* attribute, as in the examples. If you ever improve the controlling attribute to the point where this quirk is no longer disadvantageous, you must replace or buy off the quirk and base the skill on its proper attribute.

Overspecialization

Prerequisite: At least one point in the affected skill.

You're so specialized in an area that you've forgotten general principles. To take this quirk, you must have a skill that allows *Optional Specialties* (p. B169) and possess such a specialty. The skill is still a step easier for you, but the general version defaults to it at -5, not the usual -2, and this extra -3 also reduces related skill defaults.

Example: Chemistry is IQ/H, but you may learn Chemistry (Analytical) as though it were IQ/A. Normally, general Chemistry defaults to Chemistry (Analytical)-2, while Metallurgy, which defaults to Chemistry-5, defaults to Chemistry (Analytical)-7. With Overspecialization (Analytical Chemistry), general Chemistry defaults to Chemistry (Analytical)-5, while Metallurgy defaults to Chemistry (Analytical)-10!

The GM may opt to limit each character to one Overspecialization, which must be in a skill that's central to his role in the campaign.

Show-Off

You must specialize in a skill with clear non-adventuring uses (which eliminates combat skills, though not Sport or Art versions). Your quirk affects all specialties of the skill. When using the skill in a safe and stress-free situation, you'll introduce enough stress and danger to keep things "interesting." This prevents you from ever receiving positive task difficulty modifiers (p. B345). People endangered by your action – and authorities who witness it – will react at an extra -1, although impressionable fools and adrenaline junkies *might* react at +1.

Examples: Show-Off (Driving) means you suffer no *extra* penalty when engaging in a high-speed car chase, but receive no *bonus* when driving down an empty street, because you'll do so by steering with one knee while speeding! If you have Show-Off (Guns Sport) and are shooting at a familiar course with range markers (normally +4), you'll use exaggerated actions and flashy movements that eliminate the bonus, though you may still aim, use rangefinders, etc. – and in a shooting competition, referees will react to you at -1.

*I hate a guy that does
a lot of show-off tricky
stuff on the dance floor.*
– J.D. Salinger,
The Catcher in the Rye

SOCIAL QUIRKS

Unlike most quirks, these are imposed from without. Somebody dislikes you or wants something from you, or *would* act that way if the truth came out. In most cases, changing such traits requires you to negotiate with others – you can't simply wake up and decide that you no longer owe a favor, or that no one will treat you differently after you reveal a secret.

Social quirks are "story hooks" that cause fewer disruptions than full-blown Duties, Dependents, and Enemies, and that don't force the GM to puzzle out how NPCs react to a group of PCs with mixed Reputations and Social Stigmas. Although quirks that aren't foibles of mind or body might seem odd, they're often better characterization aids than "traditional" quirks.

Checkered Past

Your past was a bit rough and isn't a closed book. Be specific: "Former mercenary," "Ran with a gang," "Took lots of lovers," etc. The GM will use the mechanics for Secret (p. B152) to determine when this comes up. Each time it does, a suitable NPC from back in the day (e.g., a fellow merc or gang member, or an ex-lover) reenters your life.

This turn of events won't cause massive inconvenience – at worst, -1 on reactions from "proper" folk who see you together, or to rolls for jobs or promotions, until you deal

with the hassle. Murder is an option, but a bit extreme. An expense equal to 10% of monthly income or 1% of campaign starting wealth, or a small favor such as an all-day road trip or an introduction to your boss, will do. Anything bigger would be Favor Owed (below).

In effect, this is a disadvantageous 1-point Claim to Hospitality (p. B41): others come looking for your hospitality, but don't return it.

Complicated

Some aspect of your personal life is ridiculously busy or complex: "Has a long string of boyfriends," "Perpetually on the phone," "Promises to be in two places at once," etc. The GM can use this to throw social curves your way when that fits the story (or just on a roll of 6 or less on 3d in a given game session). Common effects include angry NPCs, missed messages and obligations, phone calls at inopportune moments, and expensive last-minute gifts and taxi rides.

If you iron out this wrinkle, you might buy off the quirk – but it's more fun to replace it with Checkered Past (p. 32) if old complications haunt you, Methodical (p. 19) if you react by getting *too* organized, or a Trivial Reputation (p. 33) among those you offended.

Favor Owed

You have a one-off obligation that you can't escape (if you *could*, it wouldn't be a quirk!). Create a Dependent, Duty, or Enemy with an appearance roll of 6 or less and a final value between -5 and -9 points. Duty on 6 or less is worth just -2 points, so it will have to be either Extremely Hazardous or Involuntary.

Each game session, the GM will roll 3d. On 6 or less, you must honor the terms of your disadvantage until you discharge it. Dependents always need help, Duties come with tasks or missions, and most Enemies want hush money or unwilling favors. This due must be *serious*: a side quest, cash equal to 50% of your starting money, etc.

After you do the favor, you're off the hook – the quirk vanishes and your point value goes up by one (a "bonus character point" for your little adventure).

Grudge

You're on chilly terms with a medium-sized group – city department, spirits of one specific forest, everybody who works for a particular corporation, etc. – who *should* be neutral, even friendly toward you. This gives you a minor Rival (see *Enemies*, p. B135) rather than a reaction penalty (that would be a Trivial Reputation, p. 33).

Day to day, this group leaves you alone. Members don't seek you out; you may even interact with them socially. However, should you ever require their *professional* services and they know *you* are asking, they'll avoid helping if that's legal, respond slowly if it isn't. The fire department won't let you die in a fire, but they won't save your house!

Grudge guarantees an automatic "Bad" reaction on commercial transactions (if held by a corporation, every shop in a small village, every pub in a large city, etc.), requests for aid (for a group like city guardsmen, firemen, or spirits), or requests for information (if the group's commerce or assistance involves information) – specify which. It has no effect on other reactions. Reactions predetermined as part of a plot, and those of mind-controlled NPCs, may override your quirk.

Hated by (Group)

You belong to a segment of society toward which another, tiny group of people react at -1. A good example would be hailing from one sept of a clan that's hated by another sept of the same clan. This is effectively a -5-point Social Stigma with cost divided by 3, much as for a Reputation with such a class (p. B27).

If the hateful group is *really* small, such as people with a specific quirk of their own, then this is a valid quirk only if it results in a *seriously* bad reaction – at least -3. For an example of this, see *Alternative Sexuality Quirks* (p. 26).

This is another example of an Extremely Limited Disadvantage (pp. 10-11). If the bad reaction is due to something specific to *you* rather than the group to which you belong (e.g., that clan sept hates you because you stole from them), use Trivial Reputation (below) instead.

Red Tape

You've been denied one specific social privilege: driver's license, firearms license, passport, etc. This *isn't* because you're underage, a criminal, or anything similar – that would be a full-fledged Social Stigma (p. B155). It's the result of a persistent filing or computer error affecting one specific dispensation. If you remedy this, you must replace or buy off your quirk.

To be worth a point, the privilege must be one that would be handy to have on your adventures, the lack of which means . . . *more* red tape. The GM is free to reject irrelevant quirks, like "Cannot get a fishing license" in a campaign of international intrigue.

Trivial Reputation

Rather than do the detailed calculation under *Reputation* (pp. B26-28), just treat -1 to reactions from a specialized group of people (e.g., "Priests of St. Thomas' Church") as a quirk.

Trivial Secret

Not every Secret (p. B152) explodes into -10 to -60 points in disadvantages if found out. If the replacement traits would be no worse than -5 points, it's just a quirk. Several examples appear below. Treat these like any Secret (appears in play on 6 or less on 3d, offers a chance to cover it up, etc.) except as noted.

Dual Identity

Quirk-level Secret Identity (p. B153). Your true identity isn't a secret – anyone who wants to learn it can do so. Yet you maintain two separate identities, probably at some expense. This especially suits the super who has a code name and dresses distinctively in his "heroic" identity, but who wants to be treated "just like everybody else" in his "civilian" one.

Positive Secret

You want to hide something that most people would admire, such as an achievement or a privileged background; e.g., you're wealthy, a college graduate, or a medal winner. This is because you worry that others will brand you a snob or hound you for handouts or interviews. As the truth is essentially *good* (barring the reactions of the envious few), it merely becomes another quirk if revealed – the value doesn't double. For instance, you might become Humble (p. 19) to downplay it or Uncongenial (p. 20) to avoid people who ask about it.

Pretense

You deny a truth about yourself ("Pretends not to have Hard of Hearing"), maintain a facade ("Tells people he's a mage"), or pay lip service to a belief, usually a religion or a philosophy ("Claims to be Christian, but doesn't actually practice"). However, this isn't a sign of Compulsive Lying, Delusions, or similar mental problems, even at quirk level. It's a calculated face-saving mechanism, a Secret maintained less because others would care than because *you* care.

If this kind of Secret is revealed, it *doesn't* double in value. Instead, you acquire a replacement quirk such as Bad Temper regarding your exposed Pretense (an Extremely Limited Disadvantage, pp. 10-11) or a Trivial Reputation (above).

A Pretense must be something that most people wouldn't care about if revealed. A whopper such as "Is actually the king in disguise," "Impersonates a police officer," or "Lies about his faith in a fundamentalist state" would be a full-blown Secret!

Secret Powers

You have a superhuman ability, like psi powers, and fear society's reaction, which should be relatively mild (if it isn't, you have a *serious* Secret). The GM decides what the consequences are, most commonly Hated by (Group) (above) or Trivial Reputation (above), and definitely nothing worse than a -5-point disadvantage.

SUPERNATURAL QUIRKS

These quirks concern matters such as chi, psi, magic, and higher powers. Standard explanations are:

- Curses. A curse might inflict many other quirks besides those below – for instance, Distinctive Features (p. 14), False Memory (p. 17), or Forbidden Word (p. 16) – or show up as Tests Positive for (Condition) (p. 25). Casting off cursed quirks traditionally calls for a quest.

- Drawbacks of supernatural abilities. Quirks in other categories may qualify, too; see *Exotic Quirks* (pp. 12-13) and *Power Quirks* (p. 12), and also Involuntary Ability Use (p. 10) and Personality Change (p. 20). The GM decides what shortcomings accompany what gifts, and whether they can be removed with practice.

- Racial traits for faeries, werewolves, zombies, etc. Again, other quirks may count. Magical races often suffer from Appearance Change (p. 10) tied to racial disadvantages, odd Compulsions (pp. 27-28), and External Mood Influences (p. 18); zombies have Glimpses of Clarity (p. 19) regarding their former lives, and Involuntary Utterance (p. 16). Racial quirks are normally permanent.

Neither Superstition (p. 9) nor Token (p. 16) qualifies, however – these are about *belief*, and any supernatural side would be a separate quirk or disadvantage.

Can Be Turned By True Faith

You're an abomination against the gods or the natural order, which enables people with True Faith (p. B94) to "turn" you. This can have major drawbacks when it happens, but True Faith is a rare gift that requires its user to do little in combat but pray; invoking it effectively takes him out of the fight while denying you one target. Thus, this trait is just quirk-level Dread (p. B132) of an exceedingly rare thing within a yard.

It imposes no special susceptibility to *ordinary* prayer, religious symbols, holy water, etc.; for that, take full-strength Dread.

College Incompetence

Prerequisite: Magery or similar broad spellcasting ability.

The GM may allow a wizard to take Incompetence (p. 31) with respect to a whole *college* of spells, but never for a single spell – that’s too narrow to be meaningful. Nobody can have Incompetence with more than one college. If a spell also falls under another college, the GM decides whether the wizard can learn it. This depends mostly on the extent to which it fits with the prohibited college’s “style.” It should usually be possible to learn a spell that’s part of *several* other colleges, however.

Damned

This is as bad as it sounds: You’re going straight to Hell when you die. Until then, the only effect is that fortunetellers dramatically recoil from you on occasion. Thus, it’s just a quirk. The *game* effect is that you cannot be resurrected, meaning that it’s only worth a point in a campaign where someone of your ilk is likely to be raised from the dead (e.g., *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*).

Name-Bound

You have a “true name” which can be incorporated into supernatural spells and rituals of summoning, binding, and control, giving you -5 to resist. Severe susceptibility to such a broad category is just a quirk because this name is initially known to *no one* (not even you, if you wish!).

Residual Personality

Prerequisite: Ability to change forms.

Quirk-level Split Personality (p. B156). You’re a shape-changer whose *other* form bleeds through a bit. You display all of its mental disadvantages – personal and racial – at quirk level.

If you take this quirk on your *base* form, all your forms may share it. However, it *can* be particular to one form; e.g., a werewolf could display slightly lupine behavior in human form. If you have more than two forms, specify which personality bleeds through in each case.

The GM may also allow this quirk to people who’ve been possessed, brainwashed, etc.

Restricted Casting Style

Prerequisite: Magery.

If more than one “style” of magic is generally available in the campaign, all the offered varieties use the same type of Magery, *and* many mages actually use more than one kind, then being constrained to make a *single* choice at character creation is a quirk.

Rule of 15

Prerequisite: At least one applicable skill at 16+.

The Rule of 16 (p. B349) applies a level sooner for one class of resisted supernatural skills, such as Entrhancement skills, skills

acquired through Trained by a Master, or spells of one college. You still roll against your full level, but are capped at 15 for the purpose of overcoming resistance.

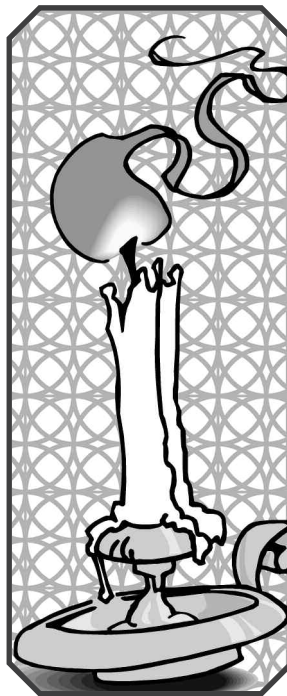
Spell Signature

Prerequisite: Spellcasting ability.

This is a supernatural Dead Giveaway (pp. 13-14), and uses the rules for that quirk. When you work magic, you produce a minor side effect that’s unique to you; e.g., the sound of phantom laughter, the scent of flowers, or glowing eyes as you cast. This isn’t a habit you can break, but part of your supernatural makeup.

Spell Susceptibility

You’re susceptible to a specific, resistible magic spell among the hundreds known. You resist that one spell at -5.



Supernatural Dislike

Many supernatural beings exhibit quirk-level Dread (p. B132) or Revulsion (p. B151) toward a substance: colorful thread, garlic, silver, wax candles, etc. Whenever that thing is within one yard *and* detectable to your senses, you must make a Will roll or a HT roll – specify which when you take the quirk. Failure means discomfort, giving -1 to DX, IQ, Per, and skill rolls (but *not* Will or active defense rolls!). These penalties end instantly if the distance increases to greater than a yard or you can no longer perceive the object of your Supernatural Dislike.

Mundane characters should use Dislike (p. 26) instead.

Supernatural Features

Supernatural Features (p. B157) that manifest only under easily remedied conditions *and* that require close or extended examination to detect are just a

quirk. No Reflection, No Shadow, and Pallor are visible to anyone – but No Body Heat requires close contact, so “No body heat except after feeding” is a valid quirk for a vampire who can steal blood or life force. Other examples would be “No pulse except after feeding” and “Temporarily ages a year per day without feeding” (observers would need days, even weeks to notice this).

Such quirks still give -1 on reaction rolls and +1 to rolls to deduce the possessor’s secret *if* they’re noticed.

Trivial Destiny

You have a very minor, negative Destiny (p. B131). This quirk causes a single critical failure when the GM feels that would be genuinely inconvenient – e.g., when using your best skill to solve a serious problem – after which it vanishes, raising your point value by one. In effect, you gain a character point for agreeing to let the GM hose you *mercilessly* at a time of his choosing. The nature of such a Destiny is secret; it emerges when the GM chooses to reveal it.

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