

# Dabbling with Magic

## Costs and Consequences of Spell Use at Cugel-Level

A Background Article for DERPG

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Illustration of Spell Tome by Ralph Horsley

*(If your printer is good quality enough please print in Duplex mode to save paper)*



### Introduction

One of the players in my Cugel-Level campaign has cottoned on to how potent his PC might eventually become if he learns to master Magic, and he is pumping almost all of his Improvement Points (IPs) into raising this ability. This has led me to elaborate the Magic rules, and this article is a product of that process. The rules that follow apply only to those whose Magic rating is 7 or less. Once a PC's rating reaches 8, they are powerful enough to negate these silly hazards, and for such a person I will revert to using the standard rules on Magic as discussed in the *DERPG Rulebook* and *Turjan's Tome* (and standard effects in my House Rules).

*NB: These rules refer to Straightforward spells. Apply an extra penalty for any rolls related to learning or casting Complex spells, to illustrate their extra level of potency. (On top of any other penalties mentioned.) Complex spells should not be considered realistic things to deal with as a Dabblers.*

## Basic Training

Step 1 is to receive basic training as an apprentice, learning how to read magical annotations and terminology. Without this one is incapable of learning any spells or even of casting spells from a tome. In my campaign nobody started with any spells. I made this rule because it meant that finding some training as a magician had to occur in play. This put character development back in the hands of the Player, and the process added depth and opportunities for mirth to the game. In other cases a PC may already have 1 or 2 spells. If the GM can realistically state that they were learned by rote from a parent or as part of some employment then this PC is still lacking in essential training. If the PC has 3 spells or more then I reluctantly have to admit that they most probably were apprenticed at some point, and are therefore exempted from the requirement to undergo basic training. Basic training mechanics depend on whether or not one is apprenticed to an actual magician, or whether one is taking training (either private or at somewhere like Kaiin's Scholasticarium). The GM must of course work out how much such training costs (whether in terces, stolen items, feats of derring-do, or nefarious tasks). I must admit I like the idea in Robin Laws' *Kaiin Book*, that the Scholasticarium is so disorganized that some students never get asked to pay. (Though this would require Imposture or Stealth if attempted in my game.) Also, the PC must commit to 2-3 hours home study most days.

**Quality Training** – [PC enrolled in a quality weekly class at the Scholasticarium - and attends 90%. Or PC is apprenticed to a sympathetic and competent magician and performs basic chores in return for a similar amount of training over the week.] From the sixth week onwards (tenth week if Magic rating was 0 to start with) the PC can make a Pedantry roll at the end of each class or in the middle of each week. They have up to two re-rolls, and the objective is to roll an IS. Once this is achieved the PC is said to have mastered the ability to understand written magic (and is therefore now able to understand spells written in tomes, and attempt to cast them or learn them).

**Unexceptional Training** – [PC enrolled in a quality weekly class at Scholasticarium and attends 60-70%, or a mediocre class and attends 90%. Or PC is apprenticed to a sympathetic but barely competent magician *or* unsympathetic competent magician.] From the tenth week onwards (fifteenth week if Magic rating was 0) the PC can make a Pedantry roll at the end of each class or in the middle of each week. They have only one re-roll, and the objective again is to roll an IS (with the same results when this is achieved).

**Poor Training** – [PC enrolled in a quality weekly class at Scholasticarium and attends only 50% or thereabouts, or a mediocre class and attends 60-70%, or a poor class and attends about 90%. Or PC is apprenticed to a barely competent *and* unsympathetic magician.] From the fourteenth week onwards (twentieth if rating was 0) the PC can make a Pedantry roll at the end of each class or in the middle of each week. They have no option to re-roll.

Once this basic level has been achieved, the PC must upgrade their Magic rating if it is not now at least 3 points. (They may raise it only by 1 unless it was 0 or 1 to start with, in which case they may raise it by 2.) Until they do this, and pay the IP cost, they are not yet competent. Remember too that this is only basic competence, and in all honesty the PC has probably absconded with a primer of practical magic, which they refer to constantly as they continue to privately develop their learning. These rules require an unusual amount of stability for most Cugel-Level PCs. This is intentional: Cugel didn't study magic in the stories, though he was said to know some (presumably cantraps).

## Learning a Spell

Learning spells is not easy if you are still an apprentice, not even if you've successfully read them from a tome previously. The process of 'learning' is not just remembering the spell and its gestures by rote, but is actually fully 'comprehending' the spell at a significant esoteric level. Any Cugel-Level characters who already have spells had help from someone to learn them, and that other person was competent in Magic. So, to learn a spell from a tome requires the dabbler to study the spell in relative comfort and peace for a period of at least six hours. The **third** time the dabbler does this (and every six-hour study period thereafter) he/she is entitled to a single roll of their Pedantry in the hopes of rolling an IS. If they have previously cast this spell successfully from a tome then the first time they roll to try and score this IS they gain a bonus of 1. Also, if the Dabbler is assisted by a true Magician (who knows the spell in question) for at least two hours of any of these learning attempts then a PS will also indicate successful learning of the spell during that particular attempt.

*NB: Once a PC's Magic rating reaches 8 these restrictions are abandoned. From a rating of 8 and above the character is considered to be an actual Magician and can learn any spell in the manner indicated in the standard DERP rules.*

## Increasing your Magic rating

If a Player wants to add points to the PC's Magic rating, ask them what magical study their PC's undergone. If the PC has done no such thing then they cannot raise their Magic rating. In some games there is a gray area in between sessions - lasting days or weeks. If the PC has a tome or a relationship with a local magical training establishment or magician, then be prepared for them to claim that they used their time productively. Each such case should be ruled individually for realistic merit. In my game some scenarios pass directly from one to the next, and others have a period of time in which the PCs were travelling from one place to another, so such study would not have been realistic. Most notably it is not possible to increase your Magic rating beyond 3 unless you have undergone some basic training. (A sufficiently powerful artifact or Overworld blessing could stand instead of this training of course.)

## Casting an Encompassed Spell

For a PC to encompass a spell, he/she must have learned it. In my rules it takes Magicians only half as long to encompass a spell as it does to cast it. However, these rules are for Dabblers, so the standard rules remain. If timing is important make the PC roll Pedantry (using 'Enhanced Action' ruling) for each attempt, and on a DF the attempt fails. An encompassed spell fails for a Magician only if a DF is rolled, because once it's successfully encompassed it is there in your brain and the hard work is done. However, these are Dabblers (Magic 7 or less), and so the dice is rolled once for each casting of an encompassed spell. On a QF it simply fails, and the caster is momentarily disorientated. (In such a case they have not lost the spell, but may attempt to cast it again after a number of minutes have past equal to a figure gained by subtracting double their Magic rating from 20.) On a DF the caster suffers an effect from the *Spell Failure Tables* at the end of this piece, and the encompassed spell is lost from their sensorium.

## Casting a Spell from a Grimoire

**Standard DERP Rules** - Anyone who has been through the basic apprenticeship training **and** has a Magic rating of 3 or more can attempt to cast any spell from a Grimoire – rolling the dice until a success is obtained. (Those with a rating of 7 or less take a penalty of -1 on each roll, and those with a rating of only 1 or 2 take a penalty of -2. This is to show that Magic is especially dangerous if you don't go through the full apprenticeship.) You can pick up a book and spend a few minutes skimming the spell, then spend the 20 minutes required to read it out with the appropriate gestures. And then roll your Magic ability. Remembering to apply the penalty (and allowing only two re-rolls), if you roll PS/HBS it works as expected; if you roll an EF it simply fails. If you roll a QF or adjusted DF, consult the *Spell Failure Tables* later in this piece. If you roll a natural DF use any official 'Spell Failure' result in the spell description. If no Spell Failure result is listed, or if the spell matches the Magic specialty of the caster then treat the roll as a QF.

**Enhanced Action Ruling** – Alternatively abandon pools for a single dice roll: those with a Magic rating of 7 or less take a penalty of 1 on the roll, and those with only 1 or 2 rating roll at a penalty of 2. (Same results as above.)

## Spell Failure Table A (for non-attacking spells)

**1** - There is a loud report, and the caster is flung from their feet.

*(In this option only is the spell retained in encompassment, though as above cannot be attempted again for some minutes.)*

**2** - The spell works but in a form that is completely useless and non-damaging, conjuring some non-functional or incomplete product, attaching itself to the wrong target, or to the caster, or to one of the caster's friends, or simply working backwards. If this is all inapplicable there is a loud noise, and the caster is thrown spinning into the air, landing several yards away and losing 3 Health pool points.

**3** - There is a loud report, followed by a prolonged whizzing sound. The caster is spun around on the spot and if the ground is soft the force of their rotation buries them up to their knees. (If not they are flung to the ground.) In any case, the caster loses 1 Health pool point and is incapable of action for the next three rounds.

**4** - A loud report, a forceful blast of noxious smoke, the caster's face and hands are singed black, as is their clothing. Any headgear is blown off and hair is blackened and plastered backwards in an unseemly and amusing (for others) fashion. Any combustible or meltable item involved in the spell is damaged [Roll D6: 1-2 = *marginal*, 3-4 = *significant*, 5-6 = *destroyed*]

**5** - Spell appears to work, but then its effect abruptly nullifies after D6 rounds – accompanied by a rain of malodorous slime that coats everyone and everything nearby. If this is inapplicable then instead lines of electric blue force manifest all over the caster, causing him moderate pain and lasting for D6 rounds. On each round he loses 1 from his Health pool.

**6** - Special (Roll on Table A1)

## Table A1

- 1 - There is a loud report and a tremendous rush of air pressure pours from the caster's location. Any loose objects are thrown aside, any nearby unbraced people or items are knocked down, and the caster's non-magical clothes are shredded into rags. (A hat may survive, though will be flung several tens of yards distant.) Anyone nearby who fails an Athletics roll loses 1 Health (except for the caster, who is unaffected).
- 2 - A mischievous sprite or elemental manifests (presumably the very being whose power is evoked to motivate the spell). It appears as an insubstantial alien spirit and rushes about the area cackling with insane glee, snatches off the caster's hat and vanishes with it back to the Overworld. (If the caster isn't wearing a hat it instead shocks him with a bolt of force, that knocks him down and leaves him stunned and immobile for ten rounds.)
- 3 - The caster shakes uncontrollably for D6 rounds, emitting huge clouds of dark green smoke from every orifice. If this happens in an enclosed space for every round after the third time that this happens everyone present must make a Health roll. On any Failure a point is lost from their Health pool for partial asphyxiation of this unbreathable miasma.
- 4 - With loud sound effects a single magical item on the caster's person shatters/melts/crumbles (as appropriate) – roll randomly. If caster has no magical items he/she instead becomes brightly radiant, so bright that nobody can look at them directly. This effect lasts for D6 minutes.
- 5 - Spell appears to work, but then its effect abruptly nullifies after D6 rounds – accompanied by a huge shower of sparks sufficient to send everyone ducking for cover. If this is inapplicable then instead all magical items on the caster's person are violently repulsed. They will rip through clothing, or cause well-sealed and sturdy bags and pouches to tear from shoulders/belts and fly away for several yards. Anything fragile may break. If the caster has no Magical items at all then an energy shell of magical flame forms around him and pulses outwards in an instant. This expanding bubble sets fire to anything flammable within a number of yards equal to their Magic rating and burns anyone in that radius (loss of 1 point from their Health pool). Then it instantly fades to nothing.
- 6 - Caster activates a different spell from his sensorium, casting it either upon the target (if applicable) or on self. If no other spells held in sensorium instead the spell effect is so grossly distorted as to be useless (though won't cause anyone lasting harm). If this too is inapplicable caster conjures something from conjuration table – see below.

## Spell Failure Table B (for offensive/attacking spells)

- 1 - There is a loud report, and the caster is thrown backwards several yards, taking an Injury
- 2 - Caster is suddenly enveloped in a cloud of thick green fog. This will obscure vision in any small room or confined area, and takes D6 minutes to dissipate. The absolute only lasting result is that the caster is now stark naked (all non-magical clothes are melted away), bald (likewise hair and dead skin), and with their skin an unusual color - green. (Time heals each of these misfortunes)
- 3 - Ichor drops onto the caster from above in a great waterfall of sludge, coating them in repulsive stinking goo. Some suggest this is the voiding of madlings. The stench lasts for D6 hours or until after D6 vigorous bathings.
- 4 - An explosion of energy bursts forth around the caster, causing them an Injury and burning to rags and tatters any non-magical clothes - and immolating flammable belongings.
- 5 - Spell affects some non-crucial object rather than the target, damaging it significantly or even destroying it. If this is inapplicable. Those witnessing the former may assume the former possibility to have been meant as a 'warning shot'. If this is inapplicable, the caster conjures something (see Conjuration tables below).
- 6 - Special (Roll on Table B1)

## Bogus Spells

As well as having to deal with the problems outlined here when casting regular spells, weak spells and plain old dodgy spells have also been created throughout the aeons. These too can be accessible to PCs. In my campaign the first spells learned were highly imperfect, even dangerous. These were inspired by or taken directly from the few deliberately imperfect offerings in the *Scaum Valley Gazetteer*. (And referenced more fully in the free *Axomber's Crypt* scenario on the 'Violet Cusps' page.) Included at the end of this piece are several more of these bogus spells, which PCs may learn from 'ancient scrolls' and the like.

## Table B1

- 1 - Caster is held spread-eagled in the air for D6 rounds, whilst lines of force arc out of his toes, fingertips and main body joints. All nearby must roll Athletics every round or be struck. Each time they are struck they lose 1 point from their Health pool. The caster takes a loss of only 3 Health pool points.
- 2 - The spell backfires, striking the caster non-fatally. If this is inappropriate the caster is plucked from the ground, spun round and round end over end, then hurtles away in a random direction, taking 2 injuries on impact.
- 3 - The spell ricochets and strikes someone in range (non-fatally) other than the target (50/50 friend or foe if a choice exists). If no-one else is in range it strikes the caster instead (non-fatally). If this is inapplicable, the caster is instantly drained of all their Magic pool points and collapses unconscious for D6 rounds. (If the pool was already at 3 points or less instead they conjure something – see table below.)
- 4 - Another spell in the caster's sensorium is activated (roll randomly). If inapplicable, caster conjures something.
- 5 - Caster conjures something (see table below).
- 6 - A massive overapplication of the spell, presumably causing great destruction. If this happens at a moment when the PCs are facing dire peril then it might actually help them. If this is inapplicable, with a roar of force arcs of electricity scour the area for several long seconds. All must make an Athletics roll. IS avoids all damage. Each progressive rank higher indicates damage equating with a loss of 1 point from the Health pool.

## Conjuration Tables

Roll D6: 1/2 = Inanimate; 3/4 = Animate; 5/6 = Magical

### Inanimate

- 1 - A colorful bouquet of artificial flowers
- 2 - A long-line of colored silk handkerchiefs all tied together
- 3 - 3D6 eggs appearing in caster's mouth, one after the other
- 4 - Three packs of playing cards fountain out of caster's sleeves (or other clothing if no sleeves)
- 5 - Roasted haunch of juvenile erb; a bowl of custard; a small ivory carving of a keak
- 6 - A pretty silver mirror suitable for a lady; a silver statuette of a dog, a mermelant's jawbone

### Animate

- 1 - 2D6 doves appearing inside caster's trousers or jerkin
- 2 - A live infant pelgrane
- 3 - A rabbit inside caster's hat (if no hat inside trousers or jerkin)
- 4 - A frightened and angry half-man is summoned (roll randomly), appearing in a flash of light. Roll a D6 for how tough it is, with 6 being the highest.
- 5 - A poisonous snake (frightened)
- 6 - A wefkin (annoyed and confused)

### Magical

- 1 - A magical colored prism - stores a single cantrap (roll randomly) that is activated when the prism is broken
- 2 - A key that will open any lock (D6-2 charges, min of 1 charge)
- 3 - An amulet of clay displaying the face of Ethodia (heals the first injury that the wearer sustains, then crumbles to dust)
- 4 - A tuning fork that vibrates loudly when pointed at someone with an encompassed spell (change this effect when another is conjured)
- 5 - An amulet of pewter depicting the double-faced Yelisea, goddess of fate. The wearer may call upon Yelisea the first time he/she is in danger by grasping the amulet and saying this divinity's name backwards. There is a 50/50 chance whether this will result in the next three rolls being at a bonus of 1 or a penalty of 1. After this the amulet corrodes away.
- 6 - A minor magical item from Cugel's Compendium (move your finger through book from item to item until Player calls stop.) If you don't have CC, then perhaps choose something from the lists of divine items in the 'Deities of the Dying Earth' article which is free at the Violet Cusps page. [This item vanishes in D6 days]

# Spells of Less than Perfect Utility

*Some inspirations gained from Peter Freeman's excellent article "Turgubut's Fatal Statistics" (XPS Vol. 1 Iss. 2)*

## Introduction

Over the recent aeons many spells have been lost. Many magicians have sought these lost spells, and sometimes tried and recreate them from imperfect sources. On rare occasions (made numerous over long periods of time) a Magician had partial success, survived, and transcribed the spell, believing it to be useful (even if only for mischief) to do so. Due to greed and ineptitude (a potent combination) many such imperfect spells found their way into circulation. Sometimes this was deliberate (seeding false hordes of lesser goods with disadvantageous magic). Irrespective of such origins, treasure-hunting PCs are more likely to find these semi-perfected spells than to find regular ones. These 'bogus spells' will appear in one's, two's and three's on impressively ancient scrolls (sometimes accompanied by one of the less-useful but still legitimate regular spells so as to present a convincing aura of authenticity). They will also appear inside tomes of magic both small and (less often) large written in such a fashion that actual magical lore gained from their study is minimal. Note that dabblers do not have the experience to recognize such, and may spend days or weeks studying a tome and learning its few spells only to find that you (as GM) still do not allow them to raise their Magic rating. (Do not tell them why – roll secretly and then shake your head in a regretful fashion.) Eventually they may have the book assessed and learn of it's near-uselessness. The person describing this may be the first GMC to alert PCs to the fact that numerous bogus spells and tomes are present in the world. Always present a flowing description to the player to write down in their notes, something that makes the spell sound suitably impressive and erudite. The description always paints the spell in its most favorable light and never even alludes to the fact that it is imperfect. (Note that all of these spells are Straightforward. These spells do not carry the -1 penalty for having a Magic rating of 7 or less, because the penalty is inherent in their lack of refinement. [They are easy and flawed.] Ideally such spells will be encountered first, so Players won't know of the standard penalty. If they do, and ask why it isn't applied, just say that the spell is one of the ancient and highly perfected magics, unlike the majority of rambling spells known and recorded by the overly pedantic and comparatively incompetent wizards of recent aeons.)

## Banterwig's Bounty

**Range:** Near

**Duration:** Instant

**Origin:** Behemoth's Bounty (DERPG, p105)

**Description:** Creates a great feast out of thin air, always displayed to extravagant perfection in fine china and silverware.

[Notes: The accoutrements always vanish within a number of minutes equal to the caster's Magic rating x 5.]

1 – Feast appears in an advanced state of decay.

2 – 'Foodstuffs' are inedible to humans – bark, stones, cobweb, raw pelgrane's wing, fecal material...

3 – The feast appears and then vanishes after a number of seconds equal to the caster's Magic rating x 2.

4 – Appears without accoutrements; much spillage of soups, stews and beverages, some food may be salvageable

5 – The beverage is only a weak and insipid wine, and the food is all one type, something of a nearly indigestible nature such as old bread, liver of hoon basted in devil's pomatum, erb jerky, salted mug-fish, sheep's eyes...

6 – The spell functions as hoped for, with all the culinary delights one might expect.

## Attainment of Another's Visage

**Range:** Touch

**Duration:** Day

**Origin:** Enchantment of Another's Face (DERPG, p106)

**Description:** You physically resemble any person that you have studied intently for at least 10 mins in the last 12 hours. You can cast this upon another rather than yourself, but must overcome their Magic rating to do so if they are unwilling or unknowing. You do not gain mental knowledge, but gain raw control over any physical enhancements. This spell can also be used to resemble any being with at least 10% human plasm.

1 – The change is permanent, IE must be reversed by magic. (At the GM's discretion lasts for D6+4 days or other duration.)

2 – A swap is engaged. You look like your intended subject, but your subject also looks like you. If this results in the subject's death you take one injury and the spell ends at that moment.

3 – The target looks like you, but you do not change. If this results in the subject's death you take one injury at that moment.

- 4 – You instead take on the appearance of either (50/50) a close associate of the subject, or one of your own companions. Duration: 1-2 Your Magic rating x2 in minutes; 3-4 Magic rating x2 in hours; 5-6 Magic rating x2 in days.
- 5 – You take on the appearance of an exotic creature that has no obvious relationship with the spell or your actual intention whilst casting it: 1-2 A random species of half-man; 3-4 an archvult<sup>1</sup>; 5-6 a pretty wefkin. For duration see '4'.
- 6 – The Spell functions as hoped for, except that (unlike the claim made in its description) it lasts only for a number of hours equal to the caster's Magic rating – then abruptly ends. (This is the default duration for any options listed above without that.)

## The Prompt Summons of Pelgrane

**Range:** Near

**Duration:** Hours

**Origin:** The Prompt Call of Pelgrane (IT, p101)

**Description:** This spell causes a pelgrane to manifest from thin air before you, and respond to your commands.

- 1 – The pelgrane is adolescent, unable to fly more than a few yards unaided, and treats the caster as if the caster were its parent. (Unswervingly loyal, someone who will protect it, someone who will provide food.) It wails if neglected and follows the caster doggedly unless physically restrained. It will battle against physical restraints and subside in wailing tears if they prove too effective to overcome.
- 2 – As '1' but the duration is days.
- 3 – D6 pelgrane are summoned. If you scored an IS all of them are under your control.
- 4 – Pelgrane is particularly smart, realizes it has been summoned and pretends to obey – attacking the caster with intent to steal/devour/slay/escape at the first apposite opportunity.
- 5 – Pelgrane is angry and attacks even if the caster scored an IS.
- 6 – Pelgrane obeys if the caster has scored an IS. Otherwise it attacks. [If you roll this option, roll again. On a second '6' instead of the first option you've summoned an unusually large pelgrane. On its back is: 1-2: a surprised magician en route to an important rendezvous; 3-4: an angry witch dressed in the clothing of a woman of the wilds; or 5-6: a psychopathic dwarf.]

## The Nullification of Warp

**Range:** Near

**Duration:** Instant

**Origin:** The Liberation of Warp (DERPG, p107)

**Description:** Dispels all magic within ten yards. (Will not affect things that have previously been permanently changed, nor negate the effects of past spells already completed. Also doesn't affect any magical items on the caster's person or on the persons of anyone touching the caster when the spell is activated.)

[Notes: Charged magical items lose a charge, permanent magical items are deactivated for one minute, spells in current effect are ended, spells latent in sensoriums are unaffected.]

- 1 – With a loud report all metal objects are repelled from the caster vigorously. Anyone nearby who rolls a 6 is struck for damage. (Roll D6: 1-2 lose 1 Health pool point; 3-2 lose 3 Health pool points; 5-6 suffer an injury.)
- 2 – The surroundings of the caster become plastic and semi-living, floors, furniture, walls, doors – oozing, swelling and crawling in a most unwholesome fashion. This goes on for a number of minutes equal to the caster's Magic rating.
- 3 – With a fizz of heated air and a pathetic crackle of sparks all spells held in the caster's sensorium are wiped. If this is inapplicable caster's Magic pool is drained to 0. If this too is inapplicable because the caster is already on 0, then anyone with equal or less Magic rating to the caster who is in range (and has a Magic rating no more than 1 pt higher than the caster) has their Magic pool drained to 0. If this too is inapplicable the caster instead leaps and lunges uncontrollably for 2D6 rounds.
- 4 – Works only on magical items of the caster and companions in contact
- 5 – Works as described but affects any personal magical items of the caster and companions as well.
- 6 – Works as described.

## Summoning of the Loyal Servitor

**Range:** Near

**Duration:** Concentration

**Origin:** Spell of the Loyal Servitor (DERPG, p110)

**Description:** Calls a shimmering humanoid of significant strength to be your loyal assistant. It will remain for up to 20 minutes so long as you pay reasonable attention to it as it performs the tasks of physical labor to which you assign it.

<sup>1</sup> Archvults roughly resemble humans but have colored skin, feathers instead of hair, long colored fingernails. Let your imagination go wild. There is also a 50% chance that the PC still basically looks like themselves, but radically enhanced.

- 1 – Calls two identical servants who initially appear loyal and competent. However, once the task is begun they commence arguing bitterly over the nature of its performance or incidental details. It is possible to side with one and convince the other (against Contrary 8) to see it your way, but if this fails the target of your Persuasion attempt vanishes in a huff, followed instantly by his (suddenly contrite) associate. If it succeeds and the task is long then discord will surely break out again. If you harangue both servants at once they both become offended and depart instantly.
- 2 – Calls forth an argumentative servitor who is convinced that he knows better than you. If you can convince him otherwise (see above) he will reluctantly perform the task as commanded. If not he responds badly to your criticism and departs in a huff.
- 3 – Calls forth an exotically alluring servitor of the opposite sex that is only interested in couching. This being may be Persuaded (see above) to perform the task, or perhaps you may both simply retire to a private antechamber.
- 4 – Calls forth a confused and alarmed wind-stick devil (see DE Gazetteer) that charges around breaking things and knocking things (and people) over before escaping or vanishing. (Perhaps a different magical creature in subsequent rolls of this option?)
- 5 – Appears to work as described, but the servitor is incredibly dense and will make a right erb's ear out of even the simplest of tasks, at the least by treading on toes, or perhaps by being poor-sighted or hard of hearing.
- 6 – Works as described.

## The Instant Galvanic Thrust

**Range:** Near

**Duration:** Instant

**Origin:** Gilgad's Instant Galvanic Thrust (DERPG, p112)

**Description:** A mighty bolt of fatal lightning bursts forth from the caster's fingertips, slaying any normal living target.

- 1 – A tiny dart of wheezing energy strikes the target with a minor shock that subtracts one point from their Health pool.
- 2 – Appears to work. Knocks target down with only minor damage (subtract 1 from Health pool, and are stunned for 2 rds).
- 3 – Appears to work as normal, but rather than doing damage blasts away any non-magical body-coverings of the target. If this is inapplicable, instead of the bolt the spell produces an energetic spray of odorous slime that strikes the target harmlessly.
- 4 – Instead of a directed bolt, the spell activates as an uncontrolled burst of electric filaments flying outwards from the caster. Anyone within five yards of the caster takes a loss of 2 points from their Health pool from shock damage.
- 5 – Activates as normal but strikes somebody adjacent to the target. If this is inapplicable, destroys some significant item adjacent to the target. If this is inapplicable the caster instead suffers shock backlash, hair stands on end, clothes smoulder and they are thrown into the air, taking an Injury.
- 6 – Works as described.

## The Twelve-Fold Bounty

**Range:** Touch

**Duration:** Day

**Origin:** Brassnose's Twelve-Fold Bounty (DERPG, p105)

**Description:** This spell makes eleven copies of any object that can be comfortably held in one's hand: including vials of colored liquid, clockwork ornaments, even small unintelligent creatures. But it cannot replicate any special properties. These undetectable copies last for a full 24 hours after creation and then abruptly vanish.

- 1 – Replicates something other than target. Most likely things: any other nearby small object, the caster's hand, the last thing so replicated, a glass paperweight shaped as a rampant gid, a mildewed terce of great age, pretty snail or beach shells...
- 2 – Replicates appear in grossly malformed way. Roll again: on '5' or '6' original is also permanently damaged (as '3' below).
- 3 – Works nearly as described, but all replicants are malformed in some subtle yet obvious way, or perfect except for a glaring inaccuracy such as being the wrong color (bright green), wrong size, or wrong material (rubber, wood, ice, chocolate, clay...) Roll again. On a '5' or '6' the original item is permanently severely damaged (dead, badly broken, powdery and fragile...)
- 4 – Original item vanishes permanently and irrevocably, usually with an impressive clap of thunder and gout of colored smoke.
- 5 – As described. Roll for duration: 1-2 Magic rating x 1 in minutes; 3-4 Magic rating x 10 in minutes; 5-6 M. rating as hours
- 6 – Works as described.

## Endnotes

GMs should promote the concept that the chance of performing these spells correctly will improve in direct proportion to experience in casting them. Players should be led to believe that it is their own ineptitude that is at fault. [*If it appeals to you that experience makes it easier to cast these spells perfectly you could consider eventually making that so. Though how many casts the PC needs to make, and at what degree of success, before they are less likely to keep rolling ridiculous results will not be known to the Players.*] GMs are also encouraged to create their own list of finely-crafted ridiculous spells in this fashion and to send the best of these to the author via the contact details on the Violet Cusps page. These will be collated into a new article if sufficient arrive. The most ambitious might wish to create such an article individually, but should contact the author before doing so. NB: Not all DERPG spells lend themselves easily to such a conversion.