



Magical Footnotes

by Ian Thomson

A short series of magic-related rules extensions and suggestions. Recently salvaged final fragments of the ancient archives that were thought to have been entirely emptied by rogue clevenger!



Adapted from the last of the unused material originally created for The Dying Earth Bestiary (which was subsumed into the Dying Earth Compendium). This work came to form as an optional GM guide for use alongside the 'Footsteps of Fools' campaign arc as the PCs gained access to greater magical abilities, but is useful in any Turjanic or Adventurous Cugel-Level campaign.

- i) Advanced Rules on Using Magic against Non-Humans
- ii) Using Magic Against Preternatural Entities
- iii) Creating Gargoyle Retainers
- iv) The Nature of Wefkins

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i) Variant Rules on Using Magic Against Non-Humans

If a spell is not listed below either its effect was considered too obvious to mention or was overlooked.

Normal spells are designed to work against humans and also affect the mostly (80%+) human. (Not including half-men, but including many vat-creatures.) These restrictions will ideally be learned by PCs during play, rather than just parcelled out as pre-learned knowledge. Eventually spells can be altered through sufficient diligent research (DERPG, p93), or by a master of Mathematics (TT, p82). For example, an experienced or dedicated magician might seek to alter the 'Charm of Necroptic Inveiglement' so as to question deceased half-men.

- Astounding Oral Projection** (DERPG, p105) – Does not work on animals or half-men
- Archemad's Unlikely Self-Restraint** (TT, p84) – Works only against humans
- Balm of Local Compromise** (TT, p85) – Works only if both caster and target are fully-sentient
- Charm of Necroptic Inveiglement** (TT, p87) – Works only on human corpses
- Charm of Perceptual Disarray** (TT, p109) - Works only against humans
- Clambard's Remote Utterance** (SVG, p47) - Works only against humans
- Conversation with the Restless** (SVG, p62) - Works only against human spirits
- Curse of Insipid Desuetude** (TT, p109) - Works only against humans
- Curse of Lox** (DDE, p30) - Works only against humans
- Curse of the Undignified Ancestor** (TT, p110) - Works effectively only against humans
- Curse of Unwitting Merriment** (TT, p87) – Works only against humans
- Enchantment of Another's Face** (DERPG, p106) – Cannot imitate animals or half-men
- Enchantment of the Stilled Tongue** (TT, p89) - Works only against humans
- Formulary of Expedient Ambiguity** (TT, p90) - Works only against humans
- Imperceptible Intellectual Analyzer** (TT, p91) – If the target is not human, the caster must make a Perception success to read any thoughts. If the target is only semi-sentient, this roll is made at a Penalty of 1. (Spell fails if target not sentient.)
- Impropriatorious Tongue** (TT, p91) – Works only against the fully-sentient
- Javanne's Enervation of Will** (DERPG, p107) – Works only against humans
- Javanne's Irresistible Glamour** (DDE, p32) – Works only against targets that might normally lust carnally after humans
- Klopag's Inaccurate Recollection** (TT, p111) - Works only against humans
- Lugwiler's Dismal Itch** (DERPG, p108) – Affects any sentient creature, but not semi-sentients
- Master of Beasts** (TT, p95) – Works only on the non-sentient. (Rumors of its effectiveness against half-men refer to a much refined – and long lost – Complex version of the spell.)
- Mazirian's Irrational Hatred** (TT, p95) - Works only against humans
- Morbid Recollections of Faddar Jalgash** (SVG, p131) – Does not work for non-sentient subjects
- Pandaine's Cheery Doom** (TT, p100) - Works only against humans
- Pattern of Actual Proposal** (TT, p97) - Works only against humans
- Rhialto's Green Turmoil** (TT, p109) – Works only against humans
- Spell of Sudden Irritation** (TT, p 103) - Works only against humans
- Spell of the Seductive Frontier** (TT, p103) - Works only against humans
- Spell of the Twelve Unavoidable Questions** (TT, p115) - Works only against humans
- Yasbane's Displacement of Woe** (SVG, p55) - Works only from one human to another



ii) Using Magic Against Preternatural Entities

Many spells do not affect beings not resonant with normal physical principles. Including the: Acheronian, Basilisk, Clevenger, Cockatrice, Gargoyle, Harpy, Nymph, Sylph, Twk-Men, Wefkin & Wind-Stick Devil. As above, it is possible for magicians of sufficient skill to adapt spells. For instance, a version of Phandaal's Observational Confinement might be created to be wefkin-specific, though won't imprison any other preternatural entity. Some spells are clearly not adaptable. These include the overly ridiculous (Lugwiler's Dismal Itch), and the specific (Turjan's Thunderclap – affects corporeal ears; Alchemist's Curse – affects bone marrow; First Hypnotic – affects living target of earthly biology).

Living Targets

To the senses of earthly elementals powering regular spells, the following are **not** considered alive: Acheronian, Gargoyle, Nymph, Sylph, Wefkin (or Wind-Stick Devil if the GM portrays them as elemental rather than physical beings). Check each spell text for the word 'living' if unsure. (Because of this unusual differentiation, the gargoyle and wefkin have spells that they are uniquely susceptible to - mentioned later in this publication). The following spells will definitely not affect any of those noted in the paragraph above: Excellent Prismatic Spray, Agonizing Immolation, Felojun's Second Hypnotic, Charm of Forlorn Encystment. (Also check the list below – for further spells ineffective against beings mentioned above.)

Sensing Illusions

Some magical creatures can easily sense that illusions are false reality: Cockatrice, Nymph, Sylph, Wefkin, elemental Wind-Stick Devil. (Even 'Phandaal's Mantle of Stealth' and the 'Seventh Set's Web of Hiding' are ineffective against them.)

Mental Influence/Human Incapacities

All beings mentioned in the introduction are immune to all forms of mind control and to the imposition of physical illnesses and inconveniences such as the Dismal Itch. (If in doubt, the spell probably does **not** affect them.)

Dispulsion Magics

Spells that Dispel Magic have no effect on these creatures in their normal form, unless the creature targeted has been summoned via a magic item. If so, the Second Retrotropic will dispel it instantly with no resistance possible (back to the item if charges remain, and unable to be recalled from it for 15 minutes). Straightforward dispulsion spells (such as Calanctus' Instant Dispulsion) have that same effect if they overcome the target's Magic rating.

Specific Spells:

Alchemist's Curse (IT, p109) – Only affects basilisk and harpy

Calanctus' Instant Dispulsion (IT, p86) - Will not affect any of these creatures in their normal form, but beings that have been summoned via an item, will be dispelled (back into the item if charges remain) with no resistance

Clambard's Rein of Long Nerves (DERPG, p111) - Does not affect any preternatural beings

Curse of the Reluctant Dead (IT, p110) - Does not affect any preternatural beings

Curse of the Undignified Ancestor (IT, p110) - Does not affect any preternatural beings

Felojun's First Hypnotic (IT, p110) - Immune: Acheronian, Gargoyle, Nymph, Sylph, Wefkin, and Wind-Stick Devil

Second Hypnotic (DERPG, p107) Immune: Acheronian, Basilisk, Cockatrice, Gargoyle, Nymph, Sylph, Wefkin, & WS Devil

First Retrotropic (IT, p90) - Does not affect any preternatural beings

Gilgad's Instant Galvanic Thrust (DERPG, p112) – Immune: Nymphs, Sylphs, Wefkins, elemental Wind-Stick Devils

Interminable Interim (DERPG, p107) – Does not affect Nymphs, Sylphs, Wefkins, or elemental Wind-Stick Devils

Liberation of Warp (DERPG, p108) – Does not affect any preternatural beings

Literal Organic Expulsion (IT, p113) - Only affects basilisk and harpy

Lugwiler's Dismal Itch (DERPG, p108) - Does not affect any preternatural beings

Master of Beasts (IT, p95) - Does not affect any preternatural beings

Phandaal's Gyrotor (DERPG, p108) – Does not affect Nymphs, Sylphs, Wefkins, or Wind-Stick Devils

Phandaal's Observational Confinement (IT, p99) – Will not impede Nymphs, Sylphs or elemental Wind-Stick Devils

Second Definite Reduction (IT, p115) - Only affects basilisk and harpy

Shabat's Admonitory Bolt (IT, p115) - Only affects basilisk and harpy

Turjan's Thunderclap (IT, p105) - Does not affect Gargoyles, Nymphs, Sylphs, Wefkins, or Wind-Stick Devils



iii) Creating Gargoyle Retainers

Designing Your Gargoyle

When a magician is creating a gargoyle, the GM should refer to the section in 'Turjan's Tome' on constructing vat creatures (TT, pp119-124). As that information mentions, unless a magician has 'Vat Mastery' or an appropriate matrix, the attempt can create only one gargoyle.

Size

Small gargoyle (two-feet tall) - +2

Standard gargoyle (four and a half feet tall) - +4

Large gargoyle (five to six feet tall) - +7

Attack

Small gargoyle: Caution 1-5 points (+2 each)

Standard gargoyle: Strength, Speed or Cunning 3-8 points (+2 each)

Large gargoyle: Strength or Ferocity 5-10 points (+2 each)

Defense

Small gargoyle: Dodge, Sure-Footedness, or Vexation 1-5 points (+2 each)

Standard gargoyle: Dodge or Parry 3-8 points (+2 each)

Large gargoyle: Dodge or Parry 5-10 points (+2 each)

Persuasion

Small gargoyle: Glib or Obfuscatory 3-8 points (+2 each)

Standard gargoyle: Forthright or Intimidating 3-8 points (+2 each)

Large gargoyle: Intimidating 4-8 points (+2 each)

Rebuff

Small gargoyle: Obtuse, Wary, Lawyerly or Contrary 3-8 points (+2 each)

Standard gargoyle: Obtuse or Penetrating 3-7 points (+2 each)

Large gargoyle: Obtuse or Wary 2-6 points (+2 each)

Health

It costs 6 points for a small gargoyle, 8 points for a standard gargoyle, and 10 points for a large gargoyle. The final Health points it ends up with is calculated from this number, with the following adjustment to the 'Does it Live?' table.

IS: Health equals points spent, plus half again

PS: Health equals points spent, plus 2

HBS: Health equals points spent

Other Abilities (all optional)

Magic (resistance only): +2 per point up to a rating of 8 (large gargoyle up to 6 only)

Athletics: +1 per point up to a rating of 10

Concealment (small gargoyle only): +1 per point up to a rating of 8

Perception: +1 per point up to a rating of 8 (large gargoyle up to 6 only)

Quick Fingers (small gargoyle only): +2 per point up to a rating of 8

Stealth: +1 per point (small gargoyle - up to 7; standard gargoyle - up to 5; large gargoyle - up to 3)

Tracking (sense of smell): +2 per point up to a rating of 8

Wherewithal: +1 per point (small gargoyle - up to 5; standard gargoyle - up to 7; large gargoyle - up to 9)

Other abilities can be taught when the creature is alive and active, but cannot be in-built during the vat process.

General Traits

Compulsory: Bipedal (+4); Semi-Sentient (+5) OR Full Sapience (+10)

Bonus Options: Opposable Thumbs (+5); Prehensile Tail (+4); Speech Capable (+5); Flight - both wings and arms (+15)



Resistances

Only lesser gargoyles require Resistances. This is because only they might behave like PCs, or even conceivably be used as one. It could be entirely fitting for both magician and his gargoyle servant to be PCs in a quirky Turjan-Level game; or alternatively a lesser gargoyle might be obtained by one of the PCs (or even become one) in a Cugel-Level campaign. In game terms, magicians know that only small gargoyles are willful enough to be tempted from their duties by distractions. Gargoyles are not carnally inclined, therefore all gain 'Resist Rakishness Ω' at no cost. Additionally, they do not eat human food, subsisting on small creatures and other wild produce, so Resistance to Gourmandism is unlikely to ever be useful. Other Resistances can be incorporated into the creation of a small gargoyle at a cost of 2 per point for the first three points, 3 per point for the next 3, and 4 per point for the next three (up to a maximum of nine total Resistance points). If the GM so chooses, simply ignore Resistances altogether, and add another 6 points to the total available whilst designing the gargoyle.

Immunities and Natural Defenses

In place of immunities, a gargoyle has a stony substance. This grants it a +1 to its Health roll when resisting damage from non-magical weapons and mundane objects, and when taking damage from falls, being crushed, fire or acid. They are also immune to disease and to most poisons that affect biological organisms. All of this costs a total of: +25

Does it Try to Kill You?

IS/PS – Creature is a Diligent retainer

HBS – Creature is a Diligent retainer, but due to vat instability has one quirk suitable for a gargoyle [Footnote: limbs detach at inconvenient moments; suffers pain when climbing stairs; has very poor eyesight; is extremely gullible; poor memory for instructions; easily distracted; is extremely stupid; suffers pain when exposed to direct sunlight; or becomes inert several times a day and must be struck with force to become reanimated]

EF – Creature is a Diligent retainer, but has two quirks – one of which must be 'poor memory for instructions'.

QF – Creature has no loyalty for its creator and attempts to leave the premises as soon as possible. If fully sapient, it may pose as a willing servant for a while, as it looks for a means of egress. It has either two quirks or (50/50) none.

DF – Creature goes berserk, and does its best to slay its creator, OR (50/50 chance) creature is Diligent retainer but has four quirks.

Spells that A Gargoyle is Susceptible To:

The following regular spells affect the gargoyle as if it was a statue:

Bergi's Triumphant Compression,
Depurative Pulse,
Spell of Dissolution,
Tchanfen's Disintegrative Application,
Urturusz's Susceptible Perpetuity.

Being partially demonic, gargoyles are also susceptible to certain complex anti-demonic spells:

'Amberlin's Impediment to Evil' (DDE, p26);
Calanctus' Immanent Splendor' (DDE, p35 – affects them as if they are half-men);
'Virtuous Blade of Motholam' (DDE, p37 – by-passes the protection of their stony hide).

A gargoyle may attempt to resist any spell as normal.



iv) The Nature of Wefkins

"From behind tussocks water-wefkins called out to Cugel, using the sweet voices of unhappy maidens."

Introduction

Once upon a time an embryonic Dying Earth Bestiary contained expanded entries for all of the creatures mentioned in the glorious Compendium. Plus a swathe of fascinating appendices. A large chunk of this material went into the Compendium, certain parts went into Tooth, Talon & Pinion (a double issue of the Excellent Prismatic Spray magazine) and more appeared (and remain) on the Violet Cusps download page. A handful of creatures that were transferred to the Compendium were greatly abbreviated. The Wefkin was one of those and fits nicely in this document, as a creature of use to magicians.

Known Facts

Wefkins are mischievous imps that live in wild areas far from all habitations. They vary in detail wherever they are found across the Dying Earth, although their basic natures remain the same. Some individuals may have silver stands for hair; others might have a thatch of yellow will-leaves. Generally their skins are pale pink, blue, green or yellow, their eyes wide and softly glowing; and they range in height from around two feet to as much as four amongst the largest specimens.

Some wefkins seem to take on characteristics of the area that they inhabit. For instance, pine wefkins are usually green skinned, and affect green or brown leaf-like foliage for hair. Water wefkins from the moorlands of the interior are more likely to be reddish brown, & have something resembling thick low-growing furze adorning their craniums. Though they are uneducated, and have resisted all attempts to enter into discourse about their habits and origins, they can speak when they want to, and often try to entice travelers to come and spend time with them to ease their boredom. Though not overly violent by nature, water-wefkins in particular are not averse to crying out as if they are humans in distress – in order to lure the unwary from the path and into dangerous bogs. Forest wefkins, can do much the same, by calling to travelers, and leading them into the depths of the woodland - where the trees are too high and dense to find one's bearings.

Any species of wefkin evidences that most annoying of habits, common to various creatures of the wild – an attraction to shiny or interesting objects. It is all too common to open one's pack after an afternoon rest, only to find various items missing.

Scholarly Conjectures:

These may be contradictory and are designed as sources of inspiration, not the definitive overview.

Magical Defenses

Some believe wefkins to be creatures potent with spell-like abilities, but this is not the case. Rather, their form is one much favored by sandestins when these creatures must assume a recognizable shape for the purpose of interacting sensibly with magicians and their companions. Thus, popular lore fancifully equates the two beings. Normal wefkins are nonetheless highly resilient to the effects of ordinary spells.

Game Notes: Wefkins defend against regular Dying Earth spells at a boon or bonus of 1.

Pitiful Wretches

Wefkins are essentially weak creatures, and unlikely to physically attack humans - except in large groups under extremely unusual circumstances. A single good hit from any weapon will slay one instantly, thus they avoid human contact at all costs. To some degree their superior agility and capacity for concealment adjust for this weakness.

Game Notes: Increase Athletics to '1.5~'.

Resilient Creatures

Wefkins are not only tough as old boots, but are in fact made of a different substance to normal creatures, and so are difficult to damage with ordinary weapons.

Game Notes: Wefkins make Health rolls against damage from non-magical weapons at a bonus of 1.

Overworld Beings

Not creatures of this world, wefkins are made of webs of force that are valuable to magicians in certain experiments and vat formulas. Preparation is a horrendous undertaking, unravelling the terrified creature strand by strand.



Sources of Information

It is unclear whether wefkins are extremely long-lived, or whether they possess some kind of group-mind. Whatever the reason, wefkins of a certain area are aware of the comings and goings of residents in that area over the last few decades or even centuries. It is rather difficult to convince them to part with such information by any means other than offering them entertainments such as story-telling, juggling, dancing, singing or other performances in exchange. Note that they are not fond of verbose poetry, and may well deliver false information in return for a poor performance of any medium.

Telepathy

It is thought that many wefkins possess the innate ability to read the minds of those in their vicinity. This is not an in-depth process, revealing only such things as the person's name, destination, and the identities of their friends and any objects or people they are thinking about intensely. Wefkins may use this material as part of cruel deceptions.

Game Notes: It costs a wefkin 1 point from its Magic pool per each discrete snippet of information sought. If the wefkin can W/allop the target's Magic rating simply roll one dice (with no opposition possible). Such a target only becomes aware of the intrusion if the Wefkin rolls a DF. Wefkins must challenge the Magic rating of anyone with equal or greater rating than their own if they want information, and on a HBS or worse the target is aware of the intrusion. Any active magic protecting the mind (or opposing harmful spells) also resists this.

Natural Magic

Since it takes several Magic pools points and exhausts the creature such things are rarely observed. However, any adult wefkin can cause a discrete section of vegetation to move (for instance to obscure a path) and likewise a stream to temporarily divert in a way that still looks as if it was always in that spot.

Vegetative Nature

Wefkins are partly plant creatures. This means that many spells designed to affect living creatures will not affect them. (See notes earlier.) On the other hand it also leaves them oddly susceptible to certain spells: The 'Effective Vegetal Death' & 'Implacable Decay' both inflict an instant injury. 'Orthru's Wave of Destruction' kills any wefkin within 3 yards in the direction of the spell cast; causes two injuries to any within 6 yards, and one injury to any within 10 yards. (Wefkins may attempt to resist as normal.)

Game Statistics

Wefkin

Persuade (Charming) 1.25~[___], Rebuff (Pure-Hearted) 1.5~[___], Defense (Sure-Footedness) 1.5~[___], Health 6 [___], Magic (_____) 12 [___], Athletics 4 [___], Concealment 2~[___], Gambling 4 [___], Imposture (vocal tones) 7 [___], Perception 5 [___], Quick Fingers 2~[___], Stealth 10 [___], Wherewithal 0.75~[___]

Wefkin Adventure Hooks

Returning with a wagonload of loot before nightfall over a region not known for half-men or bandits promises to be no more than normally difficult. Spirits are high as the thieves set off. Alas, woodland wefkins spot the group and use their magic to assess the desires of the PCs. They make it their primary goal to delay and distract the characters so much that the wagon will have to be abandoned before nightfall. (They devise traps and temptations for the rogues, and sabotage the wagon, possibly even steal certain of more valuable/powerful items and flee with them.)

The adventurers need to **cross a vast area of marshland** to escape a terrible fate or reach a secluded location where someone is being held prisoner (before they are sacrificed by a demon-worshipper). The only feasible way to cross safely with speed is to engage the services of some creatures of the marsh. But what will they want in return?

A female magician (who initially appears to be a woodland witch – in the sense of an evil spellcaster – but isn't) dwells in the forest. She has information/skills/items that the characters desire, and since they assume her to be an enemy they decide upon a sneak attack. Unfortunately, they have not considered her wefkin minions, whose actions turn the well-planned attack into a ridiculous farce. Once the PCs are humiliated, and possibly captured, the 'witch' will laughingly open negotiations.

[Rhialto-Level] A bored sandestin has assumed the form of a pine-wefkin, and is wandering the region around your manse, making all manner of mischief. The scenario is an investigation – first of finding out what is going on (after a number of highly bizarre and slightly sinister incidents), identifying the type of miscreant entity, and then discovering who was so lax in their instructions to have lost control of their servant in this way.