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Deep Magic: 13th Age Compatible Edition



Synopsis

An Age of Wizardry! Magic is everywhere. Whether it is a hidden might wielded by a secret few or the energy that powers an entire realm, magic is a vital part of any fantasy world. And now its secrets are yours! Deep Magic: 13th Age Compatible Edition is for 13th Age Roleplaying Game players who want new options that allow them to bend reality to their wills and perform spectacular feats of sword and sorcery. This book offers an astounding variety of new magic options, including: 555 wizard spells, ranging from clever tricks to summoning the World Serpent itself to wreak havoc 4 new class talents that put wizard spells within the grasp of every class – play an arcane ranger, a spirit-calling barbarian, a time-warping commander or face-stealing trickster druid 30 new schools of magic, including the Cult of Ouroboros, the Red Inquisition and the Scholars of Dust, with guidelines for creating your own magical tradition 5 magical campaign options: post-apocalyptic vril magic, the mysteries of the ley lines, a class-warfare arcanopunk campaign option, and more! For GMs looking for new material, or players looking for character customization options, this massive tome is the book you’ve been dreaming of. Dive into Deep Magic!

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This conversion of Kobold Press’ Deep Magic book clocks in at 146 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page inside of front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page ToC, 1 page SRD (also containing some last pieces of advice), 1 page back cover, leaving us with 140 pages of content, so let’s take a look! Wait, didn’t I already review Deep Magic? Wasn’t the book bigger? Well, yes - but you see, 13th Age’s magic system is sufficiently different from PFRPG’s to warrant a revisit and a wholly distinct review in this case. First of all, spells work in completely different ways in 13th Age. Secondly, the fact that

they are much more closely tied to class abilities ultimately means that they are easier to balance, which is particularly relevant in 13th Age's more synchronous class-balancing approach. So, without further ado, how does this work? Well, first of all, wizards treat Deep Magic spells as regular spells - simple, right? Other classes deserve a closer look - via multiclassing, talents, etc., other classes can gain access to Deep magic talents and spells. Unless explicitly noted otherwise, non-wizardry-related class features and talents do not interact with Deep Magic spells - no momentum gains, for example, and neither do they trigger flexible attacks. The exception would be the occultist, who may utilize his multiclassing feat to cast Deep Magic spells and maintain focus. Recharge conditions are provided for the spells alongside a means of properly deducing recharge-durations, should something have slipped by editing. The pdf does something intriguing with the respective traditions introduced in Deep Magic - essentially, this book provides 30 magic schools (alongside the necessary information to create new ones yourself), which come with their own selection of 10 spells - the schools themselves go above and beyond the traditions provided in PFRPG's version of Deep Magic - in fact, these new schools imho do something the traditions in the PFRPG-version failed at - by virtue of granting access to spells that are not readily available for anyone and 13th Age's system-inherent restrictions, they do a better job at creating a distinct magical identity for the respective traditions - and balance the spells in a more distinct way. As mentioned before, this book grants access to magic via talents - 4 different ones are provided: Deep Magic Dilettante would be intended for multiclass characters. It requires you to be a multiclass character and have at least one talent in each class. The talent nets you one spell from your school at 1st level, +1 at 4th level and every 2 thereafter and the talent also nets you one cantrip they may cast sans mana cost. The talent (like the others) is provided with a handy progression table that makes it click at one glance. Wait..what? Mana? Yes, this book introduces mana. Each Deep Magic Talent provides a fixed amount of mana based on your level. Mana refreshes after a full heal-up only. Mana can be used to empower spells...and is slightly more opaque than I quite frankly like it to be: The text implies, for example, at one point that you need to empower school spells - which is not the case. Here's the idea: You choose a spell to empower and invest an odd (d'uhh) number of mana points into the spell, up to or less than your level. This investment allows you to then cast the respective spell at the level, with limitations on how often it can be used obviously remaining in effect. The process of investing mana in a spell is a standard action. A spell cannot be empowered multiple times, though, so that's a much required spamming cap. If the ramifications of this are not immediately apparent, let me state it for you - this acts essentially as a means that you get a further plus in flexibility. Not one that will break your game, at least judging from my playtest, but one that

will be noticeable. One reason for this retaining balance is that your casters won't get many mana points - 10th level characters end up with 20 of them if they're wizards with the talent or single-class characters that significantly invested in being able to access this material. At the same time, dilettantes or single class characters less inclined to invest in the system can gain partial access and scale mana "only" up to 10. It should also be noted that characters with the Deep Magic Wizard talent can empower faster etc. - but going into the meat of these talents would bloat the review - and in a nice note regarding Q&A, my version at least got rid of an ambiguity in the text in one of them - so yes, all in all a solid foundation to build the chassis of a whopping 555 spells on. One caveat: GMs using 13th Age for more gritty types of gameplay (it does work!) will want to be careful with mana - the added flexibility is somewhat noticeable and, while fun and fitting in high fantasy contexts, I'd advise in eliminating the mana component for more gritty gameplay. I'd also advise walking a player through the rules presented herein - while not bad in presentation, they do feel a slight bit more opaque than the rules presented in the core 13th Age-books. As mentioned, this massive book contains 555 spells - that's a huge array of material. The lower page count can be attributed, obviously, to the less engine-intense crunch-block 13th Age has for the presentation of the spells within. If you went through both versions, you'll also notice several spells uniquely presented herein - and quite a few have mutated to a point where this book can be considered its own distinct and unique entity - hence also this review. Now, this review would obviously bloat beyond usefulness, were I to go through the spells one at a time. So let's paint a picture in broad strokes instead, shall we? There are quite a few new cantrips herein - and they run the gamut from cosmetic to game-world logic-changing. What do I mean by this? Well, you can cause harmless bleeding of a target for a disturbing effect - cosmetic and useful for some bluffs you may want to pull off, but just that. Not having to breathe for level minutes on the other hand? Now this does feel a bit nasty - it changes the dynamics of underwater exploration and how the respective societies interact with the creatures and civilizations beneath the waves. A similar observation can be attributed to the dome of silence, which may be stationary, but as far as infiltrations and assassinations are concerned, this one can be quite powerful - personally, I'd have considered this a valid utility spell instead, perhaps with changing parameters at higher levels. On the absolutely awesome side of things, a proper representation of the concept of wizard duels via an easy cantrip is simply glorious and fits perfectly into just about every (high) fantasy setting - kudos! Fey-inspired quick hairdos are story-enablers and fun, but temporary transmutation of one metal into another can have some serious ramifications for how commerce works - if all wizards and casters can easily have access to this one, a waiting period upon purchases may be in order for most shopping trips. On the awesome

side: You can grow a freakishly large tongue which may wield your weapons - and no, no triple-wielding. You get the idea, I think -the visuals provided are pretty awesome and the concepts highly captivating - but I'd still advise GMs to carefully consider the implications of the integration of the respective spells on their world. Why am I emphasizing this? Because of the pretty singular vision that is suggested by how magic is presented in the core-books. The spells themselves, surprisingly, considering the decreased variety of variables spell's rules-skeletons have, cover a rather intriguing range and generally, they adhere to a per se pretty solid mathematical base line. Let's e.g. compare the acid-damage dealing core spell Acid Arrow versus Deep Magic's Abyssal Globule: Both are ranged spells that target one creature that's nearby or far away. Acid Arrow has a base damage of 4d10 acid damage + 5 ongoing acid damage, scaling up to 5d10, 8d10, 3d4x10 and 5d4x10, with ongoing damage increasing to 10, 15, 25 and 40 points respectively. Abyssal Globule has less variation in the damage range at higher levels : A hit provides 1d6 ongoing acid damage, which increases to fixed values of 10, 20, 30 and 60 fixed points of acid damage and ongoing damage scaling up to 1d8, 2d6, 3d4 and 3d8, respectively. The basic difference lies in Acid Arrow being a daily spell versus PD, whereas Abyssal Globule targets AC. The anal-retentive bastard in me is slightly annoyed by the attack line of all spells not adhering to the standard established in the base books, though this decision is justified by the opening of spells to multiple classes - if you cast via Cha, you'd obviously not attack via Int...so yeah. It couldn't have been done another way. Back to the damage comparison of the above spells - the new spell obviously has less variation in the damage, but a more reliable output if it hits. Now, as you know, PD is much easier to hit, making Acid Arrow still the option with more boom. On a miss, Acid Arrow can easily be regained and it still deals ongoing damage, while Abyssal Globule deals no ongoing damage at all, only character level damage. So yes, in conclusion, the spell maintains its identity - and comparison with the auto-hit Magic Missile yields similarly solid results. You're probably wondering why I chose the very first spell herein? I did so because this comparison exemplified the strengths of these spells...but also the weaknesses. To put it bluntly, the rules language is not as precise as it should be - The Miss-line of Abyssal Globule reads "Damage equal to your level" when it should read "Acid damage equal to your level." While this is a cosmetic glitch, it's still a deviation from the standard established in the core books and one with potentially rules-relevant repercussions. If you do not consider this problematic, what about the Champion Feat's text for the spell: "The spell also deals negative energy damage." I have literally no idea what this is supposed to mean. Does it mean twice the damage, half negative and half acid? Or does it mean that half of the spell's base damage is negative energy? The base rules provided by 13th Age do not feature such an ambiguity. While

the *intended* effect is pretty much apparent once you pick apart the numbers, I maintain that you shouldn't have to. Now if this looks bad, don't be too discouraged - while not perfect, the massive array of spells herein is not as flawed as Deep Magic's pathfinder iteration. While such glitches can be found, they remain less prominent and only rarely cripple a spell's respective usefulness or functionality. And, much like Pathfinder's iteration of Deep Magic, they breathe simply awesome visuals - from gory blood magic buffs that damage you (or your foes) while you maintain them to elemental variations of magic missile, the spells are intriguing. rather than subject you to spell-by-spell analysis, here would be some interesting things the spells do: There would be spells that either work once per battle OR at will whenever the escalation die is even, also sporting some choices regarding the action used to cast the spell. Quite a few spells can affect non-magical items, thus necessitating the provided rules for targeting items. It should also be mentioned that summoning, an option that is pretty limited in 13th Age, can be achieved to e.g. conjure forth a Sanguine Horror from your own blood - though thankfully, such summons do not overshadow other PCs. One exceedingly nice observation that very much gels with 13th Age's more fluid fluff would be a certain option to customize your spells beyond the mechanics - like that spell that turns you into a murder of crows? Well, you could just as well turn into butterflies, if your concept is more in line with this theme. In fact, theme-wise, 13th Age's mathematically pretty strict rules with their relatively loose fluff render the magic herein more magical - when they work properly. However, there also are quite a few instances, where the descriptive fluff could have used a more precise set-up: "You call forth many glowing glyphs that surround you. You can send a glyph streaking towards an enemy, making the following attack:" While it becomes evident from the spell that is to follow that the "many" glyphs remain until you miss (when the spell explodes in your face), this first caused me some confusion. Now this is me obviously being a nitpicky bastard, but still - it's minor points like this that render the otherwise inspired book slightly less comfortable to use. The book does not stop there, though - in fact, we have a whole chapter devoted to making the material your own - whether by emphasizing guild wars, games of political power, ley lines or the vril energy, magic items and respective customized suggestions for campaigns can be found within this chapter - with rather intriguing pieces of advice that help a GM determine some themes and whether a certain suggestion may be for his/her respective group - both with regards to the Midgard setting and without it. I thoroughly enjoyed this chapter, though the quirks of the magic items felt slightly less inspired than I would have liked. Conclusion: Editing and formatting are not perfect...that being said, they are significantly better than in PFRPG's version of Deep Magic. Whether that achievement rests of system-discrepancy or editor skills with the system is not something I can deduce - it

remains a fact, though, so kudos to Cal Moore and Wade Rockett. Layout adheres to a drop-dead gorgeous 2-column full-color standard and sports copious gorgeous full color artworks. The pdf comes fully bookmarked for your convenience - though spells are only bookmarked by spell level, not by individual spell, which renders electronic navigation less comfortable than I would have liked. ASH LAW (allcaps are not mine) delivers essentially not a classic conversion -that would not have worked due to system-discrepancies. Instead, we get a massive book of what amounts to a thematically-related, but wholly new beast. On the formal level, I was pretty impressed by the mathematical consistency of spells - even when there are overlaps between spells, their details remain diverse and allow for different tactical options. Here and there, the rules language could be more precise and arguably, some spells are slightly better than those presented in the core books, but the discrepancy never reaches a point where one can honestly complain or yell "ZOMG; OP!" The mechanical foundation of this book is solid. Now this book pretty much will be one to divide 13th Age-fans, at least that's how I perceived it. One of the strengths of 13th Age is the very elegant and synchronous balancing of the classes: No quadratic wizards and linear fighters here. This balance, though, was paid for by making magic, in spite of the borderline genius Vance's Polysyllabic Verbalizations talent for wizards, ultimately very limited and predictable. It's a system-inherent issue and arguably, not one that could have been avoided while maintaining this level of balance-control. Control. By adding a vast array of spells to the arsenal of your campaign, whether in traditions/schools, exclusively or not, you let go of a bit of this control...and experience a significant increase in flexibility. At the same time, what you get from this book is something I personally perceived as sorely lacking in 13th Age's core rules for spells: The feeling of actually using MAGIC. The unpredictable force, the versatile power to break the cosmos. Now here is the conundrum: Do you prefer a more controlled, but "safer" form of magic, one you can easily predict or one that sacrifices a bit of balance for a vast spectrum of variety. It should come as no surprise to you after reading my reviews of the core books that I belong in the latter camp - I prefer my fantasy full of options and am experienced enough to run the math for the spells and fix minor ambiguities. Novice GMs, on the other hand, may want to first get some experience before introducing this massive book. This is pretty much a game-changer book that radically changes a campaign - if used in full scope. Scavenging, guild-exclusive spells etc. obviously can be used to limit this impact. Characters not interested in magic (via the new talents) may, however, fall slightly behind in the power-curve provided by this book's new talents. When all is said and done, though, I consider this massive book a great way to make magic feel more epic, versatile and diverse in your 13th Age-game. Compared to the PFRPG-version, this one can be considered superior in its mechanical

execution and personally, I love it. At the same time, minor hiccups and glitches do feature herein and accumulate a bit, to the point where I can't bestow my highest honors on this book. My final verdict will clock in at 4.5 stars, rounded down to 4 for the purpose of this platform. Endzeitgeist out.

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