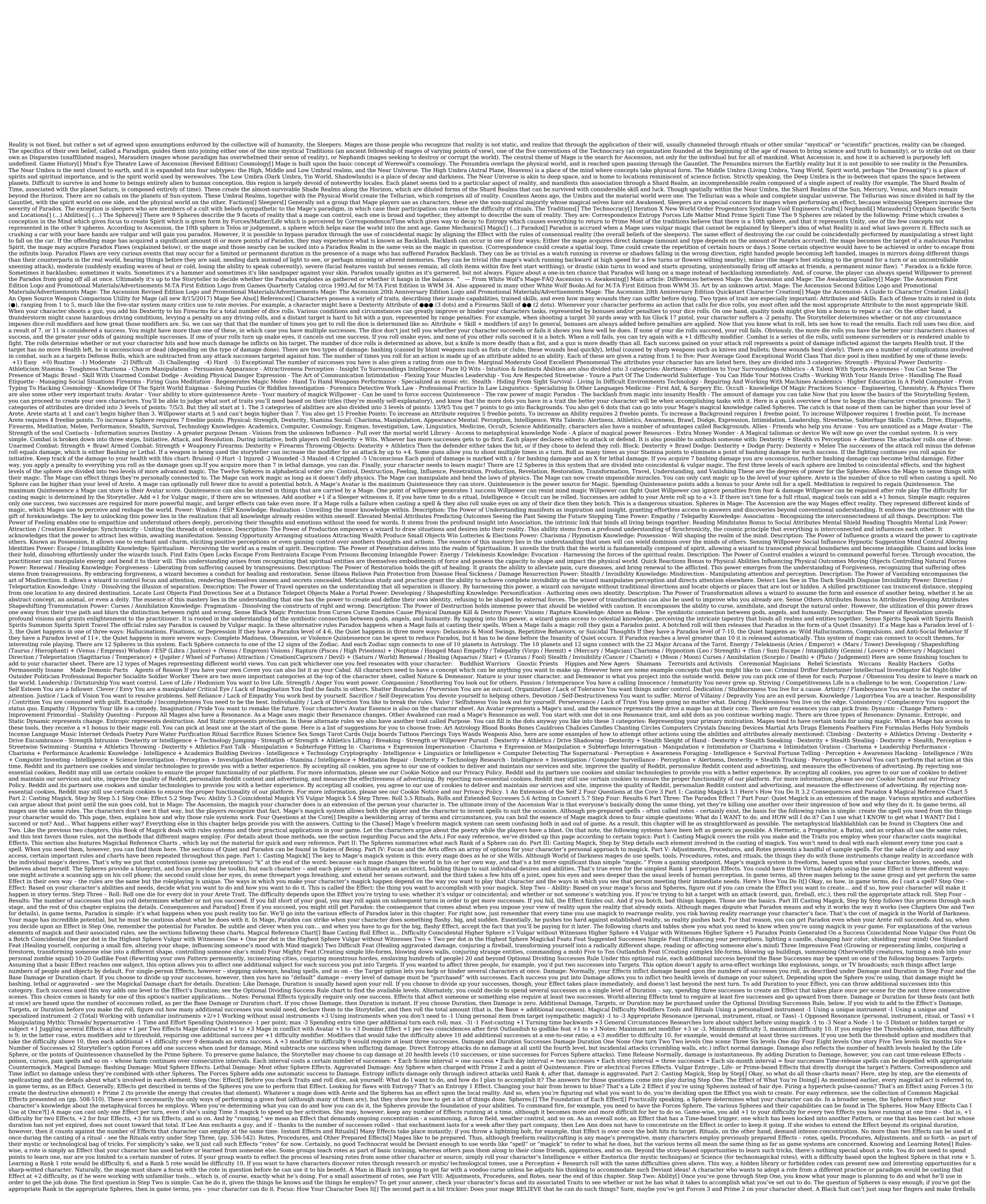
I'm not a robot





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appear, however. Such feats don't fit her focus - they violate her beliefs. She can't conjure fire using someone else's focus, either; if you gave her a rune-carved staff, she'd try to hit someone with it, not summon a firestorm. That sort of nonsense is Reality Deviance, and so - Spheres be damned - the Black Suit could no more conjure fire with a staff
than she could fart unicorns and shoot them into space. So that's where roleplaying comes in. Belief, Practice, and Tools In Mage's previous iterations, "focus" referred to the tools that a mage accepts as the source of her power; the
practice she uses in order to direct her beliefs toward intentions; and the course of that practice. Previous chapter shown how those three factors depend upon the background of each individual mage. The Focus and the Arts section later in this chapter explores the many different options your character could use. For
right now, simply remember this: when you cast an Effect, your character's FOCUS determines what she does. And that focus depends upon the character herself. As detailed in Chapters One, Two, and Six, mages focus their Effects through a combination of paradigm, practice, and tools. Step Two involves thinking from your mage's perspective -
ignoring the dots on your character sheet in favor of whether or not your character would believe in what you have in mind. If the answer is No, as with the Black Suit mentioned above, then think of another way to make things happen. Okay, the rune-carved staff won't work... but a lighter and some hairspray would! In the story, the agent rushes to
the bathroom cabinet, grabs the Aqua Net, pulls a lighter out of her pocket, and there you go. Now your Black Suit can conjure a fireball with a Forces 3/ Prime 2 Effect, using the lighter and the spray can as a focus instrument. [] Even if they've realized that they don't need rituals and tools, many mages prefer to use them anyway. As far as the
character's concerned, he's simply using a familiar method in order to direct his intentions - it's a comfortable habit, but not a requirement. In game terms, the character may have transcended the need for a given instrument, but he still uses it anyway to get a slight edge. That edge comes through as a -1 reduction on the Arete roll difficulty, which
for easy reference can be found on the Magickal Difficulty Modifiers chart. For more details about focus, practices, and tools, see Part VII: Focus and the Arts. Rituals as a Focus[] Fairly often, a mage's focus demands a ritual before the intentions become an Effect. In story terms, that character programs the virus, tosses the bones, performs the
dance, endures the ordeal, or does whatever else his beliefs and practice say he has to do in order to cast his magick. Game-wise, a ritual is simply the use of a focus as part of an extended Successes, under Step Three. Roleplaying the
magick puts some limitations on your character's capabilities, requires you to think about your mage's beliefs, and demands some imagination on your mage's perspective, you add a bit of real-life magic to the fictional magick within the game.
Coincidental Magick VS Vulgar Magick[] Speaking of imagination and magick... As Chapter Two points out, the easiest way to perform magick is to make it seem like part of the natural landscape. In the old days, this meant fitting your spells and practices into the local belief system. These days, that's still true... but technology, not magic, is the lay of
that land. And so, mages (and Mage players) favor coincidental magick over more obvious, vulgar applications of the Arts. An important element of Steps Two and Three involves the question Is what you're doing coincidental or vulgar? In Step Two, the question helps you decide what to do; in Step Three, the answer determines the difficulty of your
casting roll and the results of that roll in the results of that roll in the results of that roll in the gone believe is possible, whereas the vulgar spell or ritual shoves apparently impossible things into the faces of Reality and the Masses. The coincidental Effect appears to be something that's more or less ordinary.
but the vulgar Effect essentially drops "ordinary" off the nearest building. Calling your mom on a cell phone is coincidental; waving your hands in the air, chanting the names of seven devils, and then having Mom's face appear in the air in front of you so you can talk to her is vulgar. Game-wise, you've got three compelling reasons to make your
Effects coincidental as often as possible: • First off, it's easier to cast a coincidental Effect than it is to cast a vulgar one - the difficulty is less, and so are the risks. Because the difficulty is less, and so are the risks. Because the difficulty is less, and so are the risks.
succeeds... and heaps even more of them upon her if she fails. • Thirdly, various characters and agencies have a vested interest in stopping people who use vulgar magick; by using it, your mage risks attracting their attention... which, in both game and story terms, is not a healthy thing to do. And yet, there are times when vulgar magick is the only
option. There's no coincidental way to step sideways or download yourself into the Digital Web. A sudden bolt of fire from Heaven might be the one thing standing between a vampire and a child, so if bringing that fire down violates the laws of reality, then that's what you've gotta do. Mages, by their nature, are people who dare the impossible. And so
- in both game and story terms - vulgar magick remains an essential part of every mage's life. The trick, then, involves fitting your Effects, your focus, and your needs in with the boundaries of coincidence and vulgarity, making judgment calls between what you do it, and what happens as a result. And that takes imagination, cunning, and
nerve. Witnesses[] Because many mystic practices simply can't be passed off as coincidence, a mage has to be clever about what he does it. Even technomancers must remain careful about that sort of thing - animating dead bodies with a Vita Ray still counts as impossible so far as most people are
concerned. A witness, in game terms, is someone who's physically present when the magick occurs. Cameras, video feeds, YouTube, and so forth do not count as witnesses, although a mage still faces certain problems if she winds up getting posted on the Internet performing obvious magick. Despite common preconceptions, a Sleeper can be rattled
by acts of Enlightened Science as well as by magick, especially if that person has accepted the idea that sentient robots and functional jetpacks are beyond the Paradox Effect. Although the Masses certainly seem more willing to accept the possibilities of hypertech, real science is
defined not by flash but by limitations. As a result, a lot of the choices involved in magick depend upon having a clear space to work in - casting Effects in safe space rather than out among the Masses, clearing the area of potential witnesses, working in secrecy whenever possible, that sort of thing. There are practical reasons, after all, for secret
laboratories, hidden cottages, forbidden temples, and Black Suits radiating their Nothing to see here - move along auras. Such measures give mages room to move, far from the eyes of a Sleeper witness, the Consensus, and Paradox[] What's a Sleeper witness? As explained below, a Sleeper witness is someone whose beliefs
conform to the local ideas about what is and is not possible. Such people are not Awakened in the sense that mages are, and although they might enjoy movies about wampires or books about wizards, such things are not part of their everyday reality. Sure, a person might accept the idea of supernatural forces or paranormal abilities in an abstract sort
of way. He might pray to the ghost of a Jewish carpenter who's supposed to descend in glory from the sky and raise the dead for eternal judgment in Heaven or Hell. If, however, that person sees a real manifestation of ACTUAL magick - say, his neighbor flying through the air on a broom - then his view of reality is in for a rude kick in the pants. And
so, by extension, is the neighbor on her broom. As previous chapters have explained, "just plain folks" set the momentum of reality as a whole. These people are the Consensus. The fact that reality is a lot weirder than they realize is an abstract idea for them... one they don't really want to think about. When a mage forces the Masses to confront that
truth, that mage is overriding their Consensus with her own. And that's risky. Practically speaking, such override attempts are more difficult to accomplish than apparent coincidences are, and the price of failure is Paradox. From both a story and a game perspective, then, you'll probably want your character to avoid Sleeper witnesses as often as
possible, surround herself with sympathetic allies, and keep her Arts and workings on the down-low. Ideally, you'll be performing Effects in solitude, Chantries, Sanctums, Nodes, and other relatively safe spaces. In both life and fiction, of course, safety is an illusion. Desperate circumstances often call for desperate measures, and even the most
circumspect mage can find herself reaching for vulgar magick in the middle of a crowd. That's just the way things go down in the World of Darkness. If you avoid doing flashy stuff around witnesses, however, then you'll have more leeway to employ desperate measures and pull out the big guns when you need them. Drawing the Line[] As a general
rule, assume the following line between coincidental and vulgar magick: • If the average person walking down the street could see what your mage is doing and think, "Oh, yeah - human beings can TOTALLY do that," then it's a coincidence. • If the average person walking down the street could see what your mage is doing and think, "Holy crap -
human beings can't do THAT!" then it's vulgar. There's plenty of gray area on either side of that line, of course... a lot of which depends upon that whole "average person" thing. But as a quick-n-dirty rule, assume that your mage should be subtle whenever possible, and be ready to take the consequences when she decides not to be. Do the Night-Folken that your mage should be subtle whenever possible, and be ready to take the consequences when she decides not to be.
Count as Witnesses?[] To be clear: a Sleeper witness is someone whose life does not include intimate experience with an active supernatural world. The Night-Folk and their various allies and enemies - ghouls, kinfolk, kinain, cultists, Infernalists, mummies, hunters, etc. - DO NOT COUNT as Sleeper witnesses. Period. (We emphasize this answer
because it's a topic of constant debate.) Acolytes and extraordinary citizens are slightly more complicated: • A Technocratic extraordinary citizen does not count as one with regards to technomagickal procedures but does count as one with regards to mystic magick. That's because such people have been Socially Conditioned to accept
hypertech as normal and desirable and to reject mystic Arts as unnatural Reality Deviance. • A mystic acolyte or cultist does not count as a Sleeper witness at all. Such people accept faith and magick as part of their worldview, and yet - with very few exceptions - have also been raised in a technological environment, with popular media and everyday
gadgets that employ advanced (and sometime absurdly exaggerated) scientific principles. • As a possible exception to that rule, people who've been born and raised in one of the very few human communities that have totally escaped the influence of modern technology would probably count as Sleeper witnesses with regards to technomagick. No, the
Amish don't count; they know that modern tech exists but choose to reject it within their society. However, people raised deep in the Amazon interior or who've lived their whole lives in secluded Horizon Realms might qualify if they've had little or no contact with machine-using people. On the flipside, though, people who'd had a little bit of
experience with machines might be even more willing to accept the possibilities of hypertech, as they haven't had much experience or schooling to contradict the more ridiculous applications of technomagick. In such cases, it's the Storyteller's call, based upon the people and situations involved. Cultural Perspectives and Reality Zones[] One man's
superstition is another man's everyday life. And so, in certain cultural traditions, activities and practices that may seem impossible on Main Street, USA are perfectly acceptable. This isn't just true only of those developing nations that supposedly have flexible ideas about scientific reality. Plenty of urban enclaves, rural communities, and specialized
cultural gatherings (churches, festivals, conventions, etc.) throughout the industrialized world are dominated by Sleepers whose impressions of reality include certain mystic practices, weird technology, and potent martial arts. For information about the wiggle room afforded by certain cultural perspectives, see Part IX: Reality Zones, at the end of
this chapter. Allies, Assistants, and Cults[] Especially where magick is concerned, there's safety in numbers. And so, many mages nurture allies, assistants, and cults - people who, in both story and game terms, make it easier to successfully perform magick. • Allies are associated mages and Night-Folk - members of your Tradition or Convention,
collaborators from a different allied faction (the Council, Technocracy, Disparates, etc.), powerful Sleepers (cops, scientists, politicians, etc.), or various non-mages (hedge wizards, vampires, werewolves, and so forth) who share a common cause with you. These allies watch your front, and sometimes aid your magickal efforts if and
help with Effects whose practices they understand. Rules-wise, these folks can provide a sympathetic crowd for your roll, and can even make certain vulgar Effects coincidental. • Cults are folks devoted to your cause. Like allies and associates, they
take care of business and offer help with magickal workings. Cultists, however, are dedicated specifically to your faction, belief, or Path. Maybe they view you as a prophet or healer, follow the same god(s), or serve the faction to which you both belong. Like assistants, these cultists (who may also be devotees of technology) benefit your Effects in both
story and game terms. Unlike more casual associates, however, these characters believe deeply in what you're doing and can provide bonuses to your dice pool when you cast an Effect. See the Cult Background, detailed in Chapter Six, for more information. Magick's often easier with a little help from your friends. When several characters collaborate
on a single Effect, they can act in concert to provide more successes and a lowered difficulty. For details, see the Acting in Concert section near the end of Step Three, (pp. 542-543). Mundane Skills and Magickal Effects[] Because magick is an extension of the mage, a magickal practice often influences - and also depends upon - that mage's mundane
skills. A hacker studies computer technology, politics, and various social and governmental institutions. A shaman learns to live off the land, read people and animals, and absorb the culture of his people. A music-focused Ecstatic understands musical theory and instruments, whereas a hypertech inventor perfects scientific theories and hands-on
mechanical skill. Such characters typically have at least one dot in the Ability Traits that suit their practices and vocations. In story terms, these abilities; in game terms, they help him use a focus with greater results. If the magickal focus depends upon using a given Ability Trait - like channelings and vocations. In story terms, these abilities are the channelings and the channelings are the channelings and vocations. In story terms, these abilities are the channelings are t
magickal Effects through songs, for example - then the Storyteller may insist that the Trait has to be at least equal to the highest Sphere Rank that gets focused through that Abilities, (p.276). As shown in Chapter Six under Minimum Abilities, (p.276). As shown in Chapter Six under Minimum Abilities, (p.276).
of a magickcasting roll, and his magick can lower the difficulty of his Ability rolls. Most tools and rituals depend upon the successful use of an Ability too - after all, you can't hit your force cannon if you don't know how to shoot that force cannon, or can't hit your target with a shot! Naturally, you need to have a suitable Ability on your
character sheet in order to use it. Later in this chapter, the Practices section of Focus and the Abilities associated with certain mystic and technological practices. Assuming that you do have the Ability in question, you can employ it in one of two ways: Abilities Enhancing Magick[] When a character uses an appropriate Ability
just before working a magickal Effect - and, in game terms, takes at least a turn or two to do so - make a roll to reflect your success with that activity. The difficulty for that roll depends upon the circumstances for the feat in question; for details, see pp. 403-405. If you're using an activity to enhance your magick, you cannot spend Willpower to get an
automatic success, or use other modifiers to lower the difficulty of that activity roll. In Jinx's case, the Tarot reading's difficulty is 5, period. Each success on the Attribute + Ability roll reduces the difficulty drops by -2. Magick
Enhancing Abilities[] The right spell or Procedure can make certain mundane tasks easier, too. A little Mind-magick push, for example, can beef up a facedown or debate. In this case, you cast the magick and then follow through with
straight-up skill. Game-wise, use the same system as you'd employ when enhancing magick with Abilities: a successful Arete roll lowers the difficulty for each success rolled with your Arete roll. Let's
say that Jinx spends a point of Quintessence to lower her difficulty from 5 to 4. If she's using the magick to assist an activity - perhaps employing Entropy 2 to draw the Strength card from her Tarot deck - then her Arete roll is 4 even though the Perception + Enigmas difficulty is still 5. Each success, of course, reduces that difficulty, though. Jinx
scores three successes, and her Tarot-reading difficulty drops to 2. The Dramatic Feats section near the beginning of Chapter Shows how certain feats can provide focus or assistance for a magickal Effect. As mentioned above, certain skills and
feats may be required for certain workings; if you want to soup up your car with Forces and Matter, for instance, then you'll have to know how to work on a car. Step Three: Roll[] As we've already seen, you cast an Effect by rolling your Arete rating. At that point, however, various other circumstances determine what your difficulty is and how well
you succeed. Regardless of speed or circumstances, you can make only one Arete roll per turn. The Difficulty[] To reiterate what we've mentioned above, the difficulty of your casting roll depends first upon whether or not someone's around to notice it when she does
• Coincidental magick's difficulty equals the highest Sphere in that Effect + 3. If you use Forces 2 to make a breeze blow in your direction at just the right time, then the roll's difficulty on the highest Sphere + 4. If you used Forces 2 to make a candle flame fly across the
room and into your hand while you were alone, then the difficulty for that feat would be 6. (2 + 4 = 6) • Vulgar magick WITH Sleeper witnesses has a difficulty would be 7. (2 + 5 = 7) Minimum Difficulty[] The various modifiers
described below can raise or lower the difficulty up to three factors in either direction. No magick casting roll, however, can go below a difficulty of 3 if the caster's working somewhere on Earth. Reality has a limited amount of flexibility, and although lower difficulties might be possible in the Otherworlds (Storyteller's discretion), your Arete roll's
difficulty will never drop below 3, regardless of the modifiers involved. Magickal Attack Rolls[] Under many circumstances, though, you need to hit a target who doesn't want to be whether an Effect succeeds as well. In certain circumstances, though, you need to hit a target who doesn't want to be whether an Effect succeed, then the Effect succeeds as well. In certain circumstances, though, you need to hit a target who doesn't want to be whether an Effect succeeds as well.
hit. Perhaps you're firing an energy gun, swinging an enchanted sword, or flinging the archetypal fireball at your intended target of misfortune. In such situations, you also need to roll an attack to hit that person. The Effect might succeed, but its impact may go elsewhere. Such circumstances apply to targeted Effects - ones in which you might miss
that target or ones that the target of the Effect can dodge. Chapter Nine covers such situations, and their appropriate rolls, in the Magick and Violence section (pp. 413-416) and on the Order of Battle chart, featured on (p. 445). Fast-Casting her Effect - that is, making
stuff up and firing it off without preparation or practice. On a related note, she might also try working without her usual instruments, trusting sheer force of Will to carry her through. In both cases, the player suffers a penalty to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-casting and a +3 increase to her difficulty when fast-cast
when working without her usual tools. Again, both modifications can be found on the Magickal Difficulty Modifiers chart, and both affect any mage who has not raised her Arete high enough to work without a focus, as described in the entry Arete, Focus, and Instruments, Chapter Six, (p. 329). Modifiers[] As the last few chapters have shown, various
modifiers reflect circumstances that make a task more or less difficult. On the Magickal Difficulty Modifiers chart on, you'll find a collection of modifiers that reflect Tools and Rituals, matters of Time and Effort, and a host of General Circumstances that can help or hinder a mage's work. Modifier Limits[] As that chart points out, no collection of
modifiers can raise a difficulty by more than +3, lower that difficulty by more than -3, or bring the difficulty by more than -3, or bring the difficulty by more than -3, lower that difficulty by more than -3, or bring the difficulty by more than -3, lower than the thresholds option [] If your group employs the thresholds option described in Chapter Eight (p. 387), then you'll be setting your maximum difficulties at 9 instead of 10. In such
cases, then, a modifier that would push the difficulty to 10 or beyond that point will instead present a threshold. Let's say that your modifiers add +3 to your difficulty and that those additions take the difficulty to 11. Because 11 is
two more than 9, you get a threshold of two. To beat that threshold, you need to roll at least three successes at difficulty, the next two to beat that threshold. This option works best when you've got an incredibly challenging task and the time and space to work on it properly. For quick-result spells, threshold
successes can be unnecessarily complex. Use the option only when you need to do so. Difficulties Above 10. Each +1 modifier adds another success that you need to roll before you succeed. If, for instance, Lee Ann tries
to use Time 5 to travel back in time in front of witnesses, that would add a +3 modifier to that difficulty 10, over and above the other successes necessary to accomplish that feat. The mathematical absurdities involved in that roll show why mages so rarely
attempt such feats... and why they even more rarely succeed when they do. Using Willpower[] Will drives magick. When you throw a point of Willpower, spending this Trait involves points of temporary Willpower, not
permanent Willpower. Essentially, you're pushing the limits of reality by investing part of your character's determination to succeed. In order to do so, however, you have to declare the Willpower to make things happen. A
mage may spend only one Willpower point per turn when casting an Effects. Using Quintessence [] As the essential energy of Creation, Quintessence fuels magickal Difficulty Modifiers chart shows, you can spend
points of Quintessence to reduce the difficulty of your character's magickal Effects. Adjusting Arete Roll Difficulties[] As usual, the final difficulty of a single Arete roll can be reduced by a maximum of -3 (or three points of Quintessence). That said, you could spend additional points in order to balance out other modifiers; if, for example, you had a +2
 addition to your difficulty and an Avatar Background of 5, you could spend up to five points of Quintessence in order to drop that difficulty by -3, canceling out the +2 and reducing the difficulty by -3 as well: • Reinforcing the Pattern of an object so that it resists or
inflicts aggravated damage. • Fueling new Patterns so that Life, Forces, and Matter can be created from scratch. • Facilitating the many uses of the Prime Sphere. In certain cases - such as adding the ability to inflict aggravated damage to something that doesn't normally do that - you must spend a point or more of Quintessence in order to complete
that Effect. In all cases that don't involve Prime 3 or higher, however, you can spend only one point of Quintessence for each dot in your Avatar. Beyond that, a mage must rely upon Prime 3 or higher, however, you can spend only one point of Quintessence for each dot in your Avatar. Beyond that, a mage must rely upon Prime 3 or higher, however, you can spend only one point of Quintessence for each dot in your Avatar. Beyond that, a mage must rely upon Prime 3 or higher, however, you can spend only one point of Quintessence for each dot in your Avatar. Beyond that, a mage must rely upon Prime 3 or higher, however, you can spend only one point of Quintessence for each dot in your Avatar. Beyond that, a mage must rely upon Prime 3 or higher, however, you can spend only one point of Quintessence for each dot in your Avatar. Beyond that, a mage must rely upon Prime 3 or higher, however, you can spend only one point of Quintessence for each dot in your Avatar. Beyond that, a mage must rely upon Prime 3 or higher, however, you can spend only one point of Quintessence for each dot in your Avatar. Beyond that, a mage must rely upon Prime 3 or higher, however, you can spend only one point of Quintessence for each dot in your Avatar. Beyond that the prime 3 or higher, however, you can spend only one point of Quintessence for each dot in your Avatar. Beyond that the prime 3 or higher for the prime 3 or higher for each dot in your Avatar. Beyond that the prime 3 or higher for each dot in your Avatar has a fine a fin
easier to cast a simple Effect on yourself than it is to rock someone else's world with powerful magicks. Base Successes before your Effect manifests: • Personal Effects that make minor changes in your character's own reality require only one success. These include
for another person or object require at least two successes. For this reason, a single success inflicts no damage upon an opponent - damage begins at two successes. An unwilling target can also try to resist or dodge an attack, as detailed under the Dodging and Resistance entry below. In order to get around that resistance, you might need to roll
additional successes; the more successes you roll, the more damage you inflict. (See Damage and Duration, also below.) • Effects that significantly change your surroundings, even if that's only on a local level, require at least five successes. Large-scale alterations can demand 10, 20, even 30 successes, whereas small and subtle ones are much easier
to achieve. Magickal Feats[] Especially ambitious or complicated Effects take longer to cast and demand more effort in the process. For such workings, consult the Magickal Feats chart and find the number of successes you'll probably need in order to achieve the desired Effect. To gather those successes, an extended roll - in story
could be essential. The Rituals, Rolls, and Extended Successes entry, below, describes the process of rolling large numbers of successes and the various complications and consequences that can result when you try to bend reality on an epic scale. Degrees of Successes entry, below, describes the process of rolling large numbers of successes and the various complications and consequences that can result when you try to bend reality on an epic scale.
downloading your consciousness into the Digital Web... such things either happen or they don't. The Base Damage or Duration chart presents the basic amounts of damage that a given spell inflicts, or the length of time that a given Effect lasts, based upon the roll of your dice. Other Effects, however, might succeed only partially or succeed beyond
your expectations. In such cases, use the Degrees of Success chart to find out how well your mage managed the Effect in question. If she fell short of her goal or had to stop in the middle of a ritual (see below), then she could either accept an imperfect spell or try to pick things up again later. If she succeeded beyond her expectations, the Storyteller
owes her a bonus of some kind, based upon the attempted Effect and the circumstances surrounding the caster, spell, and subject of the Effect. Picking Up Where You Left Off[] After casting an imperfect Effect or falling short of her initial plans, a mage can pick up where she left off by making another roll at +1 to the original difficulty. In story terms
 she grits her teeth, regroups, and gives it the old (wizard) college try once again. For situations in which you try again due to a failed roll - or try again and for those situations, again see the Rituals, Rolls, and Extended Successes entry below.
Rituals, Rolls and Extended Successes[] By definition, ritual refers to a practiced sequence of events with a desired end. Glaring at a person and making her burst into flames is not a ritual. Essentially, a ritual allows you to roll until you
get the number of successes your mage's Effect requires. In game terms, a ritual might involve extended rolls, several turns, and a series of actions, possibly with several different tools involved. No Hermetic wizard, for example, would dare summon an angel without the proper sigils, purifications, invocations, and ceremonial instruments. Some
rituals involve brief activity, and others can take hours or even days. The optional Rite, Ceremony, and Great Work rule (see below) reflects the different time periods a ritual involves any kind of extended process that
requires several rolls, has a focus, and produces a magickal Effect. Despite the word's religious connotations, that ritual doesn't have to be mystical; a LAN party, a musical concert, an extended programming session, the loving care devoted to restoring an old car or inventing a new gadget... for our purposes here, they're all rituals. The ritual in
question can be solitary (like a series of katas, a deep meditation, the R&D process for a glorious machine) or communal (a play, a rave, the ignition of a gigantic statue in the middle of a desert). The focus element, however, is essential. A ritual involves intention (the goal of that rite), practice (the activity that fulfills that goal), and the appropriate
 instruments (the tools - from wrenches or computers to elaborate masquerades or intricate designs - used to turn that intention into a reality) for the practice in question. Coincidental and Vulgar Rituals[] Are rituals coincidental? They can be, especially when the shape and Effects involved with the ritual dovetail with the beliefs of a given culture or
subculture... and most especially when people from that culture form a congregation for the ritual itself. Essentially, those people - even when they're Sleepers - add their faith to the ritual of applications. Getting a Catholic congregation to accept a small miracle during High
Mass is coincidental; ripping open the Gauntlet and letting a demon horde pour through it, on the other hand, is vulgar even if you do it in the middle of an Electric Hellfire Club reunion. In many cases, the dividing line between a coincidental rite and a vulgar one depends upon the dressing involved in that particular ritual. A tech-based ritual - a
demo, an experiment, a rock concert, a launch party for some new software - tends to be coincidental unless it folds, spindles, and mutilates the laws of physics... and occasionally even then. (What was the Space Race of the 1960s if not a series of Technocratic rituals bents on transforming human beliefs about possibility?) Mystic rituals are trickier,
balancing the abstract concepts of the faithful with the experiences of a Sleeper's daily reality. ("Sure, I believe in angels... but did you SEE that fucking thing?") Even then, however, a rite can push the edges of what people accept as possible. You might not be able to conjure a raging hellbeast without risking heavy Paradox, but if you can make it
seem like cool theatrics, then you might just get away with passing it off as special effects during an especially wild Black Metal show. (Once it starts eating the audience, however, you have a problem...) It's worth noting that rituals cast by a mage within her dedicated Sanctum are almost always coincidental, so long as they follow the set of reality
inside that space. A Nordic Verbena could call up some powerful Effects using ser i shamanic rites; if she brings in a computer, though, such heresy probably won't go down well with the Old Gods watching over her ritual grove. Base Difficulty[] As usual, a ritual's base difficulty depends upon the highest Sphere involved in the Effect, plus the
modifiers for coincidental or vulgar magick. Other modifiers - for tools, Quintessence, allies, and so forth - will probably reduce that difficulty before any modifiers have been applied... and when you're figuring out the difficulty before any modifiers have been applied...
that you'll use. Maximum Rolls[] Rituals take a lot of energy. Mentally and physically, keeping the kind of attention a ritual needs is pretty draining. Even with a group of faithful allies working together - and lowering the kind of attention a ritual needs is pretty draining. Even with a group of faithful allies working together - and lowering the kind of attention a ritual needs is pretty draining.
number of rolls you can make during your ritual is equal to your permanent Willpower Trait plus your Arete. An houngan with a Willpower of 7 and an Arete of 4 could make 11 rolls (7 Willpower + 4 Arete = 11) in the course of his ritual to court Shango's blessing before he has given that rite everything he has to give. Note that the number of rolls is rolls in the course of his ritual to court Shango's blessing before he has given that rite everything he has to give.
independent of the number of hours your mage spends performing the ritual. See Rituals and Stamina, below, for more about how long your mage can keep this ritual demands intense concentration. With the exception of Rank 1 sensory
Effects, or perhaps a Mind or Entropy Effect that sways an audience or tilts odds in your favor, a mage cannot use more than two Effects at once while he's casting a ritual. If a mage does choose to juggle two different Effects during a ritual.
(like a Mind spell cast to influence a congregation during a larger ceremony), not to different Spheres being used within the SAME Effect. Failed Rolls[] Aside from the potential benefits of coincidence (shown above), a ritual's primary purpose in game terms involves the ability to use extended rolls to create bigger Effects. On the good side, an
extended roll can help you assemble a large number of successes; on the not-so-good side, it also gives you plenty of opportunities to fail or botch a roll. Each new roll presents a risk of failure and potential catastrophe. If you fail a roll - that is, you get no successes that turn - then you may still continue rolling in subsequent turns. Each failed roll
however, adds +1 to the difficulty of those subsequent rolls. Fail one roll, it's +1; fail two rolls, and it's +2... and so it goes until you either complete the Effect, fail completely, or botch a roll. If the difficulty reaches 9 and you fail another roll and acquire a new penalty, then the new penalties become thresholds: a +1 difficulty adds one more success
to the total you need, a +2 difficulty adds two more successes, and so on. By that point, your mage is risking disaster, and it's probably best to stop the process and regroup than it is to press forward - see Rituals and Paradox, below. Botched Rolls[] If you roll a botch during a ritual, you may spend one turn, a temporary Willpower point, and one
previously rolled success in order to keep the whole thing from blowing up in your face. At this point, your mage is holding the ritual together through sheer determination. You can either stop there or else keep going with a +1 increase to your difficulty. A second botch, however, spells immediate disaster... again, see Rituals and Paradox
 Interference[] If an outside party disrupts a ritual - say, by attacking the rite or distracting the caster - then the mage in charge of that ritual proceeds as if there had been a botch rolled; a second turn of interference brings the
hammer down and the ritual to a crashing halt. Rituals and Paradox [] Magickal rituals stir up a lot of reality. And so, every roll after the first one adds one point of Paradox to the caster botches the ritual, however, then the Paradox backlash adds those
additional points of Paradox onto the Paradox onto the Paradox pool - one for each roll after the first. If the Effect succeeds, then those two points disappear. If you botch a roll during the casting of that Effect, however, those
Stamina[] Extended rites are exhausting. As a general rule, assume that a character may work for one hour without penalty for each dot in his Stamina Trait. After that, you'll need to make a Stamina roll for each subsequent hour... and the difficulty for that roll is the base difficulty of the ritual itself. A successful roll allows the mage to go on for
another hour; the second roll suffers a +2 penalty, and so on. A failed roll means that exhaustion has set in. At that point, you can either call off the ritual or spend a point of Willpower to keep going, the next Stamina roll suffers a +3 penalty as above... after all, your mage is seriously
running out of steam! A botched Stamina roll counts as Interference, above. In story terms, the mage starts fumbling around in a daze and must struggle to keep the rite from ending in catastrophe. For obvious reasons, then, long rituals can be extremely dangerous affairs. Rituals and Mundane Abilities[] By their nature, rituals tend to employ
mundane Abilities - Art, Computer, Esoterica, Technology, and so forth. In story terms, the activity provides the focus for that ritual; and in game terms, the Attribute + Ability roll lowers the difficulty of the rite. As described above, under Mundane Skills and Magickal Effects, each success with a mundane activity roll reduces the Arete roll difficulty
by -1, to a maximum reduction of -3. The difficulty for that roll is the base difficulty for the roll is the roll is the base difficulty for the roll is 
down into three categories, each one reflecting a certain investment of time and effort: • A brief rite (one to five successes) reflects a short observance: a song, a quick prayer, activating a mechanical sequence, sticking pins in a doll, that sort of thing. Game-wise, this involves one or two rolls and five minutes or less of story time. Magick-wise, the rite
conjures a simple Effect through either a focus or sheer force of Will, depending on the mage's abilities. More involved Effects require... • A ceremony (five to 10 successes), which commits time and effort to the casting of an Effect. A mass, a concert, a session in the workshop, a trance, a series of katas, an evening of debauchery - such things count
as ceremonies. The ceremony doesn't have to be a social event but can involve solitary practice as well as a communal gathering. In game terms, each Arete roll performed within a ceremony reflects an hour or so in story time and may run for up to five hours, after which it becomes... • A Great Work (10 successes or more) - a serious devotion to the
Effect at hand. High Ritual invocations often involve Great Works, as do mechanical inventions, major spiritual observances, alchemical research, festivals, and other forms of hard time in the lab, workshop, dojo, or temple. Game-wise, each Great Work roll reflects five hours of commitment to the task, which can run as long as it needs to before the
mage either reaches his goal, fails horribly, or hits the end of his endurance, as shown under Rituals and Stamina and Maximum Rolls. A major investment of time, materials, effort, and skill, a Great Works aren't usually one-sitting
projects. A mage could spend days, weeks, or longer dedicating himself to a Great Work, hanging the process by spending a Willpower point and then resuming the effort after a short interval. To pick up where you left off, make a Wits + Esoterica roll (or Wits + Esoterica roll).
Technology for acts of enlightened hypertech). That roll's difficulty begins at the ritual's base difficulty (no modifiers allowed), and then goes up by +1 for each break taken after the first one. So long as the work area remains undisturbed, and no more than 48 hours pass between sessions with the Great Work, the mage may continue to extend the
process. One failed roll, however, ruins the process and forces the mage to begin again... which explains why so many Great Works take a long time to perform. Acting in Concert[] So you've got some helpers while you're casting that ritual. What does that mean in game terms? As we saw above, a sympathetic crowd can make a ritual feel
coincidental, and assistants can lower the difficulty for a magickal Effect. Allied mages can also help out by acting in concert with the caster, and a Cult (as in the Background Trait of that name) adds to the caster and a Cult (as in the Background Trait of that name) adds to the caster and a Cult (as in the Background Trait of that name) adds to the caster and a Cult (as in the Background Trait of that name) adds to the caster and a Cult (as in the Background Trait of that name) adds to the caster and a Cult (as in the Background Trait of that name) adds to the caster and a Cult (as in the Background Trait of that name) adds to the caster and a Cult (as in the Background Trait of that name) adds to the caster and a Cult (as in the Background Trait of that name) adds to the caster and a Cult (as in the Background Trait of that name) adds to the caster and a Cult (as in the Background Trait of that name) adds to the caster and a Cult (as in the Background Trait of that name) adds to the caster and a Cult (as in the Background Trait of that name) adds to the caster and a Cult (as in the Background Trait of that name) adds to the caster and a Cult (as in the Background Trait of that name) adds to the caster and a Cult (as in the Background Trait of that name) adds to the caster and a Cult (as in the Background Trait of that name) adds to the caster and a Cult (as in the Background Trait of that name) adds to the caster and a Cult (as in the Background Trait of the Background Trait of that name) adds to the caster and a Cult (as in the Background Trait of the Backgr
potential complications of getting a bunch of people to cooperate on an important project. Common Ground[] When several characters collaborate within a single ritual, they must all share a certain amount of common ground: • Each mage involved in the ritual's Effect. You can't help someone ground: • Each mage involved in the ritual's Effect. You can't help someone ground: • Each mage involved in the ritual's Effect. You can't help someone ground: • Each mage involved in the ritual's Effect. You can't help someone ground: • Each mage involved in the ritual's Effect. You can't help someone ground: • Each mage involved in the ritual's Effect. You can't help someone ground: • Each mage involved in the ritual's Effect. You can't help someone ground: • Each mage involved in the ritual's Effect. You can't help someone ground: • Each mage involved in the ritual's Effect. You can't help someone ground: • Each mage involved in the ritual's Effect. You can't help someone ground: • Each mage involved in the ritual's Effect. You can't help someone ground: • Each mage involved in the ritual's Effect. You can't help someone ground: • Each mage involved in the ritual's Effect. You can't help someone ground: • Each mage involved in the ritual's Effect. You can't help someone ground: • Each mage involved in the ritual's Effect. You can't help someone ground: • Each mage involved in the ritual's Effect. You can't help someone ground: • Each mage involved in the ritual's Effect. You can't help someone ground: • Each mage involved in the ritual's Effect. You can't help someone ground: • Each mage involved in the ritual's Effect. You can't help someone ground: • Each mage involved in the ritual's Effect. You can't help someone ground: • Each mage involved in the ritual's Effect. You can't help someone ground: • Each mage involved in the ritual's Effect. You can't help someone ground: • Each mage involved in the ritual's Effect. You can't help someone ground: • Each mage involved in the ritual's Effect. You can't help someone ground g
summon a cyclone, after all, if you don't understand elemental Forces. • All participants must remain in contact with one another for the duration of the ritual, able to communicate freely through whatever means work best for them: telepathy, speech, Instant Messaging, texting, etc. • Those participants need to work out a shared approach to the
ritual; after all, an Etherite in a shamanic rite will probably do more harm than good. That said, mages from distinct yet allied groups - differing Traditions or Technocratic Conventions - can certainly collaborators need to hash out some common cues
and protocols... which, in game terms, will probably involve a few social feat rolls before all is said and done. Once they've established a common base to work from, the allies can focus their intentions through a shared ritual. The Collaborators[] Coordinating a large ritual may demand several hours of prep time. Once everything has been established
though, the casting group can work together in one of two ways: • Equal Collaborators - that is, mages who are more or less on the same level as the primary caster - can roll their successes toward the successes toward 
count only to enhance a successful Effect. Only one option may be used at a time - not both. UnAwakened Assistants[] Acolytes, cultists, citizens, and so forth can add certain benefits to the ritual as well: • The Cult Background adds one die to the caster's dice pool, up to a maximum of five dice. And yes, those extra dice may also help to botch a
casting roll - cults can screw things up as well as help things along. • If you've got over 100 people involved, certain vulgar Effects (summonings, gateways, raisings of the dead, and so forth) may be considered coincidental if there are no other witnesses around to contradict that impression. A solitary rite on the Moors is far more effective in that
regard than a concert in a nightclub downtown. Downsides and Risks[] It's not all roses, of course. The downsides of collaboration include the difficulty of wrangling several people toward a common belief system); coordinating logistics for large gatherings (which usually requires time, work, space, and
often money); and the potential to screw up on a grand scale. Grand, as in if one caster botches a casting roll (see below), every participant suffers the Paradox, either by adding the Paradox points to their individual pools or by enduring a large-scale blast that affects everyone - Awakened and otherwise - who happens to be near Ground Zero at the
time. Despite the risks and costs, collaboration provides a sense of security and fellowship. Solitary rites do have their own kind of significance, but we humans tend to be sociable by nature, and our group rituals - magickal and otherwise - transform the potential of one into the power of many. Step Four: Results[] The dice have been cast. What
happens now? In Step Four, we cover the effects of your mage's spell. Game-wise, those effects are based on the number of successes you roll. The more successes option (see the Optional Rules sidebar), a typical Effect affects one targe
within the caster's clear sensory range. If you choose not to use that option, simply assume that you can affect one target per success if the spell, you cast is capable of affecting several targets at once... a sleep spell, for instance, rather than a healing spell. Specifically targeted spells (mind control, curses, transformations, etc.) reach only one target
at a time. Area-effect workings -explosions, broadcasts, storms, and so on - reach everyone within the area of that feat. A target on the fringes of the mage's sensory range (under cover, far away, obscured by fog or forest) increases the difficulty of the caster's Arete roll by +1. A mage with Correspondence 3 or better can expand her sensory range
rather dramatically, as shown on the Correspondence Ranges chart. That mage's familiarity with expanded perceptions allows her to ignore that penalty; all other mages, however, must take it into account. If your target is out of sight, behind barriers, or otherwise beyond the normal reach of your senses, then you must use the Correspondence
Sphere in order to reach him. A song might affect someone who can't see the singer, for example, but it won't reach someone who cannot hear it unless the singing mage adds a Correspondence Effect to connect the song to its intended target. (For details, see the entry right below this one.) Damage and Duration[] Unless you're using the Divided
Successes option, an Effect that inflicts damage follows the Damage or Duration chart. Healing spells work the same way, repairing lost health levels at the same way, repairing lost health levels at the same way, repairing lost health levels at the same rate that an attack spell takes health levels away. Like damage, an Effect's duration is based upon the successes you roll; the better you roll, the longer your spell lasts. This applies, of
course, to spells that could potentially last a while - charms, enhanced perceptions, shape-changing, and so forth. Damage-based attacks tend to be immediate, whereas attacks that change the target without causing health level injuries follow the Duration part of the Damage or Duration chart. As mentioned on that chart, you can either inflict
immediate damage (in which case Duration is one turn) or else cast a spell that lasts awhile (in which case Damage is zero). The only way to inflict damage over a period of time involves the Divided Successes option. Spheres and Damage[] As noted on the Magickal Damage chart: • Correspondence does not inflict damage at all unless it's coupled
with another Sphere (like using Life 3/Correspondence 3 to teleport a person into several different destinations at once) or used to drop a target into an unfortunate location (like an active volcano). Such attacks tend to be extremely vulgar and usually cause aggravated damage. • Entropy Sphere attacks cannot inflict direct damage at all until Rank 4,
after which point they inflict aggravated damage by disintegrating the target's Pattern. (Entropy-based indirect attacks, like falling walls or speeding cars, inflict damage as Environmental Hazards; see that section in Chapter Nine for details.)
based attacks inflict bashing damage, and fire or electricity-based attacks inflict aggravated damage. • Vulgar Life-based attacks inflict bashing damage, unless the caster adds Prime 2 and a point of Quintessence to make an attack aggravated. • Vulgar Prime
attacks inflict aggravated damage. Prime 2, plus a point of Quintessence, allows the caster to make any Sphere's damage aggravated, and Prime 3 lets him attack with a weapon or blast composed of pure Quintessence energy. • Matter and Spirit inflict lethal damage unless they're augmented with Prime 2 and Quintessence. • Time does not inflict
damage unless it's combined with Matter (to age objects) or Life (to age living things). In such cases, it inflicts damage through enhanced decrepitude. • If several different Sphere involved. A Life/ Time Effect, for example, would deal out aggravated
damage. You cannot stack damage by combining Spheres - only the most devastating Sphere counts. Dodging and Resistance[] Generally, a successful Arete roll equals as successful Arete roll equal
determine how much damage is done... and if the attacker winds up with only one success left over, then there's no damage at all. Really obvious attacks - lightning bolts, clouds of deadly gas, and so forth - are easy to see coming. Invisible ones - flesh-eating spirits, silent curses, Entropic ripples that collapse a bridge, that sort of thing - may be
detected with a successful Perception + Awareness roll, difficulty 8. Resisting Psychic Assaults[] Mind-control spells, mental commands, Social Conditioning, and so forth can be resisted by an unwilling target if she's aware that she's under attack. In such cases, a Willpower roll, difficulty 6, acts as the dodge for that assault, subtracting successes
bolts, storms, etc. - can be soaked like any other physical damage. The usual rules, presented in Chapter Nine, apply when soaking damage. All-out Reality-fucking, however, is hard to endure. Vulgar attacks of pure reality-alteration power (curses, transmutations, possession, etc.) cannot be soaked unless the target has countermagick or some other
specific protection against the Effect in question. Mental attacks can be resisted, as shown above, but they cannot be soaked except by Willpower. And so, a Mind-based blast of psychic trauma hurts... a LOT. Countermagick[] Vampires, werewolves, faerie beings, and other paranormal entities have a chance to resist a mage's Arts... and the mages can
often resist Night-Folks' abilities too. Although such monsters don't use countermagick in the way that mages do, their innate abilities give them a certain degree of protection. Dice PoolsNight-Folk can use the equivalent of basic countermagick. Instead of Arete, such entities use their Wits + Occult as a dice pool. However, that dice pool cannot
exceed the Gnosis or Rage (whichever is higher, for werecreatures), Willpower (vampires, spirits, wraiths, demons, hunters, and hedge wizards), Glamour (changelings and other fae), Mystic Shield (Bygones), or True Faith (faithful humans) Trait of the Night-Folk character. Essentially, those Traits reflect the metaphysical capacity of the target
character. If a werewolf, for instance, has a Wits + Occult dice pool of six but a Gnosis of 4 and a Rage of 3, then she cannot use more than four dice as countermagick. If the targeted creature does not have a Wits + Occult dice pool, then the Storyteller may rule that the character cannot resist True Magick - see Optional Limits, below. That said, a
mage needs certain Spheres in order to harm a member of the Night-Folk. As shown on the Common Magickal Effects chart (p. 508), Life Sphere magick alone cannot affect vampires, werebeasts, ghosts, spirits, or the fae. Difficulties and LimitsWhatever dice pool you employ, the difficulty for such rolls is either 7 or the mage's Arete, whichever is
higher. This way, a powerful werewolf or vampire can shrug off the Arts of an amateur mage, but a powerful wizard or Technocrat can wipe the floor with supernatural foes. On a related note, the Night-Folk cannot counter immediate-damage attacks like plasma bolts or Enlightened martial arts, nor can they oppose indirect assaults like weakened
floors, fire, typhoons, and so forth. The only way to counter a mage's attack is to recognize it as a mystic assault. Thaumaturgical counterspells won't prevent a Virtual Adept from using Enlightened hypertech to hack the vampire prince's bank account. Mages Countermagick the Night-FolkWhen countering the effects of some paranormal critters'
Disciplines, Gifts, Glamour, and so forth, a mage uses her Arete as the dice pool. The Storyteller may rule that the mage needs certain Spheres in order to counter werewolf Gifts; Entropy and Spirit to counter a wraith's Arcanoi; Mind and Prime to counter the dreamlike
powers of the fae, and so on. After all, it's not as though mages corner the market on supernatural abilities... and although they certainly appear to be the masters of paranormal arts, mages have a hard time seeing beyond their own perspectives on reality. Optional LimitsAs an optional rule, the Storyteller may decide that a Night-Folk or mortal
character cannot use countermagick at all unless he's got some sort of magical knowledge. A vampire, for instance, may need the Thaumaturgy Discipline (or some other discipline that reflects mystic study and understanding) in order to resist a mage's Arts. A hedge sorcerer could counter spells by default, but most other humans could not.
Werecreatures, spirits, Bygones, and the fae are magic(k)al by their essential nature, but they might still need at least one dot in Occult or Rituals in order to understand the mage's spells enough to counter them. Given the vulnerability that fae creatures have to the banality of Technocratic accomplishments, it's fair to rule that changelings cannot
counterspell technomagick at all... or, if they can, to raise the difficulty of doing so to 9 or even 10. For more details about the Night-Folk, see the section of that name in see the Mage 20 sourcebook Gods. Monsters, and Familiar Strangers, Magick-using characters can deploy countermagick to resist reality-warping effects. Essentially, the target
dodges the Effect with her Awakened reflexes and her understanding of the Spheres. Countermagick counts as a full action; you can abort a previously planned action to employ countermagick roll removes one success from an
assailant's casting roll. True countermagick allows for several different optional rules variations, as shown below. To employ a sort of basic countermagick that's based
on their innate capabilities. (See the sidebar nearby.) Either way, countermagick [] • Sphere Knowledge: To oppose another character to character, but the rules remain the same. Basic Countermagick [] • Sphere Knowledge: To oppose another character to character to character to character to character to character.
of the Spheres that are being used to attack you. You can't resist a Forces-based assault, for example, if you don't understand Forces. • The Roll: Assuming you have the essential Sphere(s), make an Arete roll. In Mage 2nd, the difficulty at 7. •
Successes: Each success rolled deducts one success from the attacker's successes. If the incoming spell is less effective than it would have been otherwise - see the Degrees of Success chart instead. If that attack depended upon acertain number of successes, the assault
fizzles completely. Innate Countermagick[] Certain characters or materials possess innate countermagick roll. Characters or material Primium, for example, automatically provides a countermagick roll. Characters or material Primium, for example, automatically provides a countermagick roll.
are. Protective or Offensive Countermagick (Optional)[] Although countermagick usually deals only with attacks upon the mage in question, a skillful mage can try to intercept an attack that's aimed at someone else. Such protective or offensive countermagick still requires at least one dot in a Sphere from the attacking Effect, and demands a full
action to cast. This type of countermagick, however, also requires at least one dot in the Prime Sphere, too, plus one point of Quintessence. That mystic energy fuels the protective mage can try to reflect that assault
back upon the caster. As usual, each success cancels out one of the attacker's successes attack, for example, would inflict two
successes' worth of damage or effect of the spell upon the attacker.) Anti-Magick (Optional)[] A common tactic among Technocrats, the anti-magick technique uses Prime Sphere principles (or Primal Utility) in order to harden Reality against an offending Deviant's magick. Mystic mages use this approach as well, but not with quite the same
enthusiasm as their technomancer peers. Rules-wise, this counts as a full-turn action. The player rolls her Prime 3, for example, would give you three dice to roll. The difficulty is 8 for that roll, and each success adds +1 to the difficulty of a mage who's trying to cast an Effect. Every success costs one point of Quintessence
from the Quintessence Trait of the mage deploying anti-magick, Essentially, she's using her own Prime energies to counter mage's existing Effects. Curses, gateways, wards, trigger-spells, transformations, and so on can
be untangled by a sufficiently successful unweaving endeavor. Story-wise, the unweaver draws upon his understanding of the Spheres, Prime energy, and the methods of enchantment, then begins a ritual that unravels the original caster's work. Game-wise, the character needs at least one dot in Prime, plus at least one dot in each of the Spheres used
in the original spell. Rolling at +1 to the basic countermagick difficulty (again, see above), the player tries to overcome each of the original caster's successes. How Many Successes Does It Take?[] If the Effect has been put together through magick
- unweaving demands at least 10 successes, possibly 20 or more in the case of major creations or Great Works. Certain Effects - Gilgul, instant damage, sensory magicks, and the titanic magicks used to craft Horizon Realms - cannot be unwoven. Others might have precautions woven into them, like the Primium armor used in many Technocratic
cyborgs and bio-constructs. In this case, the protection acts as countermagick to the unweaving, subtracting successes from the mage who's trying to unweave a HIT Mark. Still, a gateway can be closed, a summoning circle destroyed, or an enchantment broken by successful
unweaving. Quintessence Cost[] For many Effects, unweaving doesn't require Quintessence in the original Effect, however, then the unweaver must spend at least an equal number of Quintessence points to undo that Effect... an important
consideration when either wrecking Wonders or removing the special properties of Prime-reinforced weapons, armor, and other creations. Failure[] A failed roll - that is, one that scores fewer successes than it needed in order to activate the Effect - fizzles or fades away. If you're using the Degrees of Success chart, the spell might wind up having a
diminished result; in most cases, though, the magick just won't manifest. Botching, Magick, and Paradox. If you roll 1s on your dice without scoring any successes on that roll, then you botch. (See Botching and The Rule of One in Chapter Eight, p. 393.) Story.
wise, this represents a disastrous error: fumbled words, a dropped instrument, dancing widdershins when you meant to dance deosil, and so forth. Game-wise, a botch turns magick into a clusterfuck. • If the Effect was coincidental, your mage gets one Paradox point for every dot in the highest Sphere involved with that Effect. A Correspondence 4/
Life 3 spell, for example, would score four Paradox, plus one points. • If the Effect was vulgar without Sleeper witnesses, then your mage gets two points of Paradox, plus two
more per dot in the highest Sphere. That unfortunate mage racks up 10 Paradox points and may be in for a visit from the Paradox Faerie. • If the mage gains five points of Paradox or more within a single event, the Storyteller may decide to roll for a backlash - see the Paradox Effect section below for details. As mentioned earlier under the section
Coincidental vs. Vulgar Magick, a Sleeper witnesses in Part III. Step Two, For obvious reasons, the free botch option mentioned in
Chapter Eight does not apply to casting rolls. Given the world-shaking powers that True Magick invokes, the edge of danger remains an essential part of Mage - the final element in the trinity of Pride, Power, and Paradox. Part Three: The Paradox Effect[] Magick, it's been said, is a double-bladed instrument. That fine metaphysical scalpel reshapes
Reality to a mage's desires, but it cuts the hand that wields it, too. Paradox is the cost of doing business with Reality - the scourge of Awakened vanity that reminds each mage of his true place in Creation. Poetry aside, Paradox limits a mage's ability to work her Will without consequences. Storywise, it smacks a proud magus off her throne in various
unpleasant ways: burns, prisons, manifestations, entities, and worse. Game-wise, Paradox forces each player to be subtle and imaginative. Vulgar magick is a sure road to the Paradox Effect, and although coincidence can earn a backlash too, your mage is better off playing things safe... or as safe as things can get in this World of Darkness, anyway.
Chapter Two presents the metaphysical explanations for Paradox, and Chapter Six lays out the game system effects that Paradox has on your character. In this section, we'll look at what happens when "Jiminy Cricket with a chainsaw" pops up to take a swipe at you, and the various rules that kick in when he does. Sources of Paradox[] Clearly,
Paradox is bad juju. In the course of the game, however, it's also inevitable. The question isn't really WILL I get Paradox, and how MUCH Paradox will I get when I do? Essentially, a character acquires Paradox points in one of three ways: Botching Rolls[] As we've seen several times throughout this chapter, a mage
acquires Paradox when her player botches an Arete roll: • If that magickal Effect was coincidental, the Paradox is minimal: one point for each dot in the highest Sphere used in the Effect was vulgar without witnesses, the amount of Paradox goes up: one point, plus one more point per dot in the highest Sphere. • If the Effect was vulgar without witnesses, the amount of Paradox goes up: one point for each dot in the highest Sphere used in the Effect was vulgar without witnesses, the amount of Paradox goes up: one point for each dot in the highest Sphere used in the Effect was vulgar without witnesses, the amount of Paradox goes up: one point for each dot in the highest Sphere used in the Effect was vulgar without witnesses, the amount of Paradox goes up: one point for each dot in the highest Sphere used in the Effect was vulgar without witnesses, the amount of Paradox goes up: one point for each dot in the highest Sphere used in the Effect was vulgar without witnesses, the amount of Paradox goes up: one point for each dot in the highest Sphere used in the Effect was vulgar without witnesses, the amount of Paradox goes up: one point for each dot in the highest Sphere used in the Effect was vulgar without witnesses, the amount of Paradox goes up: one point for each dot in the highest Sphere used in the Effect was vulgar without witnesses and the paradox goes up: one point for each dot in the highest Sphere used in the Effect was vulgar without witnesses and the paradox goes up: one point for each dot in the highest Sphere used in the Effect was vulgar without witnesses and the paradox goes up: one point for each dot in the highest Sphere used in the effect was vulgar without witnesses and the paradox goes up: one point for each dot in the highest Sphere used in the effect was vulgar without witnesses and the paradox goes up: one point for each dot in the highest Sphere used in the effect was vulgar without witnesses and the paradox goes up: one point for each dot in the effect was vulgar without witnesses and the p
with witnesses, the Paradox can be catastrophic: two points, plus two more points for each dot in the highest Sphere. Vulgar Magick[] Beyond that, though, vulgar magick ALWAYS accumulates Paradox, even when the roll succeeds: • Coincidental magick does not acquire Paradox unless you botch a roll. • Successful vulgar magick earns one point of
Paradox. Permanent Paradox, however, it never comes off. A Paradox backlash takes those points on the character sheet; unlike normal Paradox, however, it never comes off. A Paradox backlash takes those points into account but does not
dispel them. Each time a character with permanent Paradox generally comes through the Enhancement Paradox generally comes thro
too. Bygones and constructs often suffer from permanent Paradox points - a flaw that keeps certain Technocracy operatives or Nephandi confined to the Otherworlds. Essentially, a being with permanent Paradox is a walking reality crime - a violation of Earthly metaphysics whose own body is hazardous to her health. In all three cases, Paradox
constitutes a threat to the character involved, and a large Paradox pool reflects the potential for a serious backlash. The Paradox Backlash Backla
Essentially, Paradox becomes a metaphysical game of Jenga. Each incident that generates Paradox adds points to the character's Quintessence/ Paradox wheel. Those points add up until the Storyteller decides to check for a Paradox backlash: a sudden release of Paradox wheel. Those points add up until the Storyteller decides to check for a Paradox backlash: a sudden release of Paradox wheel. Those points add up until the Storyteller decides to check for a Paradox backlash: a sudden release of Paradox wheel. Those points add up until the Storyteller decides to check for a Paradox backlash: a sudden release of Paradox wheel. Those points add up until the Storyteller decides to check for a Paradox backlash: a sudden release of Paradox wheel.
becomes hell. Rolling for Backlash[] At dramatically inconvenient moments - generally at times when a player has earned five points of Paradox or more in a single stroke - the Storyteller can say "Let's roll for a backlash." Generally, this comes about when your mage has done something stupid, gloriously stupid. The Storyteller picks up
one die for every point on the Paradox side of your Quintessence/ Paradox wheel and rolls them against difficulty 6. Each success means that one points of Paradox gets discharged. On the positive side, this discharged remain on
the wheel, to be discharged at some later time. On the negative side, a backlash hurts. Effects of Backlash hurts the time. As mentioned
above, each success discharges one point of Paradox; for other effects, see the Paradox Backlash Roll Successes Effects of Discharge Botch All Paradox points discharge harmlessly. No successes No effects, but no Paradox points
discharge. 1-5 One point of Paradox discharged per success. Mage also suffers one die's worth of bashing damage per success and acquires a trivial Paradox flaw. 6-10 One point of Paradox discharged per success or acquires a minor Paradox flaw. 11-15 Usual Paradox point-
discharge, as well as a Burn of lethal damage or one of the following effects: a significant Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet. 16-20 Usual Paradox Spirit visitation visitation visitation visitation visitation visitation visitation visitation vi
Quiet, or banishment to a Paradox Realm. 21+ Usual Paradox Gischarge plus a Burn of aggravated damage and one of the following effects: two points of permanent Paradox Realm. Storyteller rolls one die for each point of Paradox in character's current
Paradox pool, against difficulty 6. Staving Off Disaster[] Generally, a mage can feel a Paradox backlash coming. The built-up energies within her frame tingle beneath her skin, vibrate in her bones, or beat inside her head like an impending migraine headache. When a backlash threatens to cut loose (in game terms, when the Storyteller rolls the dice),
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that character can "will it not to happen... YET." The player spends a point of Willpower, the Effect automatically fails, and the backlash hovers until the end of that scene. From that point onward, the mage is on borrowed time. Every additional point of Paradox she gathers adds one die to the coming backlash. The Storyteller could invent some
especially poetic horror for the coming punishment, but the mage has an opportunity to put her affairs in order (possibly forever...) as the cataclysmic energies continue to build... and BUILD inside her... A player who decides to put off the backlash will discharge all of her Paradox points, except permanent ones, at the end of that scene
(The permanent ones still count, however, toward the backlash dice pool.) The eventual results of willing the Paradox not to happen might be messy, but that scene - while it lasts - can certainly be dramatic. Nullifying Paradox[] A rare but precious ability available only to Masters of Prime allows a mage to wipe out Paradox with the energies of
Creation. Story-wise, the magus invests some personal Quintessence (possibly adding a bit more energy from external sources too) into a symbol or Periapt keyed to a magickal working or consecrated to his body and personal Resonance. (See the Prime Sphere entry for details about consecration.) When Paradox energies gather around him, he
releases that stored up Quintessence, and the Prime Force cancels out the Paradox Energies. Game-wise, the player pools his Quintessence, then uses a Prime 5 Effect to channel that Quintessence and nullify the Paradox on a one-point-for-each-point basis. Any remaining Paradox energies have their usual effect or remain on the mage's Paradox
Wheel until some later event. If the Quintessence dispels all the Paradox, then that Paradox, then that Paradox is gone until the mage gains some more... as we all know he will. Shedding Paradox [] Under normal circumstances, mages tend to generate small amounts of Paradox and then bleed them off simply as a matter of course. If a character manages to keep her
Paradox pool below five points at a given time, then those energies simply fade back into the world at large at a rate of one point per week. Assuming that she doesn't do anything overtly magickal during that time (she might, for instance, activate Rank 1 perceptions but never act on her surroundings in a magickal way), such minor amounts of
Paradox cause no difficulties. If your mage wants to "pull a Willow" and go cold turkey on the magick thing, she can withdraw from reality-altering practices entirely. In this case, the Storyteller might - just MIGHT - allow her to shed a Paradox point per
week after that. This optional rule runs outside the official systems for Mage Revised, but it can offer a lifeline to a character walking on the edge. After she hits a Paradox pool of 10 or more, however, all bets are off. One way or another, a backlash is inevitable... Backlash Forms[] When Paradox energies discharge, many strange things can happen.
Oddly enough, several of these Paradox manifestations violate the very same Reality Consensus they supposedly protect. After all, when a person suddenly grows horns, explodes, or vanishes into a hole in reality – possibly in the hands of some demonic spirit-creature – those effects seem anything but real to a scientific mindset. So what's up with that
anyway? The Paradox of Paradox?[] The nature of Paradox itself often seems like a paradox: to enforce Reality, unreal things occur. For that reason, a Storyteller may decide to limit the effects of a Paradox backlash to realistic things like terrible luck or physical backlash. ("Happens all the time. People just explode.") Other interpretations of Paradox
claim that the manifestations of a backlash reflect the fears or personality of the mage on the receiving end of the backlash becomes a karmic sledgehammer, crossing the eye for an eye of Old Testament justice with the self-inflicted
element of Threefold Return. ("That which you do, for good or ill, returns to you threefold.") The repercussions of Paradox seem even more uncanny when you take into account the Scourge of Mage: The Sorcerers Crusade: an apparently divine affliction that could either help or harm a mage through a capricious sense of justice. If the Paradox Effect
began this way, a person could argue, then doesn't that mean that it is, by default, coming through some sort of conscious, godlike agency? The truth, ultimately, should remain the Storyteller's secret. The more mysterious and enigmatic such forces seem to be, the more ominous and terrible Paradox becomes in your chronicle. The more notorious
effects of a Paradox backlash can be found below. An Onset of Quiet[] At times, a 'Dox-ridden mage can slip into the fearsome form of metaphysical delusion known as Quiet, described in the section of that name, below. Instead of rolling for immediate punishment, the Storyteller just starts slipping notes to the player like, "You overhear such-and-
such..." or otherwise narrating events that only the afflicted character can perceive. This way, the Quiet slides into the story in a subtle dashion, without the pyrotechnics of other forms of backlash. That subtle drift into insanity suits the name given to such delusions. An onset of Quiet generally strikes mages who've accumulated 10 points of Paradox
or more. Again, for details, see the section on Quiet, below. Paradox Flaws [] Manifestations of the "you are what you do" principle, Paradox Flaw twist reality around a reality-twisting mage. In game terms, a Paradox Flaw twist reality around a reality-twisting mage. In game terms, a Paradox Flaw twist reality around a reality-twisting mage. In game terms, a Paradox Flaw twist reality around a reality-twisting mage. In game terms, a Paradox Flaw twist reality around a reality-twisting mage. In game terms, a Paradox Flaw twist reality around a reality-twisting mage. In game terms, a Paradox Flaw twist reality around a reality-twisting mage. In game terms, a Paradox Flaw twist reality around a reality-twisting mage. In game terms, a Paradox Flaw twist reality around a reality-twisting mage. In game terms, a Paradox Flaw twist reality around a reality-twisting mage. In game terms, a Paradox Flaw twist reality around a reality-twisting mage. In game terms, a Paradox Flaw twist reality around a reality-twisting mage. In game terms, a Paradox Flaw twist reality around a reality-twisting mage. In game terms, a Paradox Flaw twist reality around a reality-twisting mage. In game terms, a Paradox Flaw twist reality around a reality-twisting mage. In game terms, a Paradox Flaw twist reality around a reality-twisting mage. In game terms, a Paradox Flaw twist reality around a reality-twist reality around a reali
spawn absurd distortions of reality. Strange as they might be, Paradox Flaws echo the effects of the magick that spawned them: a swaggering fire-wizard finds himself leaving sooty footprints or scorching everything he touches; a time-skewing trickster makes clocks run backwards, scrambles the temporal perceptions of her companions, and could
even age in reverse; the mind-shattering Agent of Authority could make people tremble with his mere presence - a useful but ultimately alienating Flaw; and the witch who curses or heals too freely might impose the opposite effect - blessing her friends - despite her best intentions. Paradox displays a fine sense of irony of the
non-Morissette variety, and we encourage the Storyteller to hone a sense of delicious irony as well. Paradox Flaws increase in severity, from minor inconveniences to gross distortions of body and surroundings. At the higher levels, a mage cannot appear among the Masses without being recognized as some sort of aberration. If the Avatar Storm has
faded in your chronicle (or if it never happened at all), people with such Paradox Flaws fade in time. Even the supposedly permanent ones
ease with the passing of months or years... assuming that the mage does not, in the meantime, acquire more Paradox. Once a given Flaw has latched itself onto a mage's Pattern, however, it tends to become the focus of her Paradox. Subsequent Paradox energies gravitate toward that Flaw and, rather than spawning new ones, enhance the present
Flaw. Horns become larger and more prominent; warm or cold skin becomes too hot or cold to touch; fluctuations of time or space distort the localized reality so badly that the mage travels within a personal vortex of oddity. Game-wise, the initial Flaw would move further up the severity scale, keeping its initial form but becoming even more impairing
or grotesque. This severity scale runs as follows: • Trivial Flaws (1-5 point backlashes): Short-lived distortions of body or circumstance haunt the mage for a short time. Hair changes color; skin chills or grows uncomfortably warm; breezes blow or air stills; odd smells - ranging from the pleasant to the nauseating - waft from the mage's general
direction. He might hear or speak words in reverse, like an odd metaphysical dyslexia, or witness minor hallucinations among his various senses. (Some Ecstatic mages speculate that psychoactive delusions might be minor Paradox Flaws in action.) Dull or stabbing pains afflict his joints, or sudden surges of weariness or manic energy take hold
Whatever the Flaw might be, its effects last between several minutes to several hours before fading away... unless, of course, the mage continues to garner Paradox, at which point the Flaw may last longer and become more intense. • Minor Flaws (6-10 point backlashes): Although the effects at this level become more noticeable, the Flaw still
presents a minor inconvenience - an uncontrollable sneezing fit, perhaps, or an attack of Tourette Syndrome (which is actually an onslaught of sound for an hour or so. Material things around the mage might be affected too: his clothes
might wrinkle, change color, or fall apart; his digital technology might all malfunction at once; or his footprints could smoke or leave scorch marks on a carpet. Lower-level Paradox Flaws might add +1 to the difficulties of certain of his rolls
for a scene or two, and they might even become sources of embarrassment. • Significant Flaws (11-15 point backlashes): Now the mage becomes a walking billboard for reality flux: horns sprout from her head, useless wings jut from her shoulders, or her hands curl into claws or gnarled appendages. She might radiate intense cold or heat, or maybe
suffer excruciating migraines or incapacitating migraines or incapacitating nausea. The mage could vomit flies, speak gibberish, or float several inches off the ground. Lower-level Flaws last longer and have more debilitating effects. Certain challenges could raise difficulties for certain types of rolls (social, physical, mental) or penalize the mage's dice pools by a die or two.
Significant Flaws tend to last a while, too - several days, perhaps even a week or more. • Severe Flaws (16-20 point backlashes): Awful Paradox energies now warp the mage's body and circumstances. His facial features might turn into a smooth, shapeless mass; his arms might transform into tentacles or boneless flaps of skin. He could burn
everything he touches or transmute it into some precious or worthless material. (That Midas touch, of course, is rarely as helpful as it might sound...) Perhaps his skin grows stony warts or other projections, or he turns into a shadow or wisp of smoke. Lower-level Flaws intensify, lasting longer and hurting more. By this point, the mage probably
suffers reduced dice pools, increased difficulties, or both, and he cannot show himself among the Masses without tragic results. • Drastic Flaws (21+ point backlashes): By this level, the Paradox energies have distorted a mage's Pattern so badly that she may never recover her old, normal self. She might turn into a tree-like wooden horror or melt into
a protoplasmic mass. Lovecraft would need to invent new adjectives for the impression she presents. Flaws from the lower ranks can reach inhuman levels and last for months or even years. Plagued by chronic pain, unusable physique, or both, the mage loses dice from various pools and adds +2 or more to many difficulties. Such Otherworldly
abominations exist either beyond the Gauntlet or in the most remote corners of Earth they can find. Physical Backlash, a.k.a. the Burn[] A simple yet terrible consequence of Paradox energies, the Burn manifests as intense pain at the lower levels, rising to literally explosive levels at the high end of the spectrum. Essentially a searing physical backlash,
the Burn manifests as (re)opened wounds, dizzying pains, sudden headaches, brands across the mage's skin (often in cryptic symbols or glyphs), rashes, scale, the Burn literally incinerates a mage from the inside out or else detonates him in a
screaming flash of discharged Paradox. As shown on the Paradox Backlash Roll chart, the Burn begins as bashing damage at the lower levels, then rises to lethal and finally aggravated damage, because it comes from inside, not
outside, that mage's Pattern. Other methods, however, could help in that regard - cybernetics, Life Sphere magick, the Cinematic Damage option, and so forth. So long as the protection is a part of the mage's actual body, not something that can be put on or taken off, it might help her deal with the Burn. That said, the larger Burns radiate outward
like explosions, inflicting damage upon the mage's surroundings and companions. A physical backlash (of any type) that involves 10 points of Paradox or more becomes an explosion, dealing out damage in a radius around the mage, as per the Explosions rules in Chapter Nine. Such backlashes seem especially common among tech-based mages, whose
machines detonate with Paradox energies when things go poorly. Paradox Spirits[] As fearsome as the Burn can be, Paradox Spirits - a.k.a. Paradox 
for errant willworkers and their aberrant ways. These entities rarely manifest for minor violations of the Consensus. A backlash of over 10 points, however, might draw the attention of such a creature. The smaller ones seem to manifest and then disperse on a per-offense basis. Larger backlashes (over 15 points) tend to summon more formidable
spirits - self-willed beings whose appearance and behavior have become infamous enough to echo through Awakened myths: Farandwee. Wrinkle. The Man. Known long ago as Scourgelings, such entities are immune to Spirit Sphere magicks lower than Rank 5, unless those magicks inflict damage... and even then, the nastier Paradox Manifestation
have an uncanny talent for shrugging off such attacks... Appendix I features several Paradox Spirits and offers inspiration for more original creations. Because such spirits are sometimes thought to manifest a mage's conscious or subconscious, an inventive Storyteller can create her own Paradox Spirits, based upon the characters in her game.
Regardless of their origins, such entities tend to have individual calling cards: certain types of magick that draw their attention, certain punishments, others attack the offending mage in combat, and many pull the offender into a Paradox
Realm tailored to suit that Spirit's personality. In the old days (that is, in Mage: The Sorcerers Crusade), such beings were even known to aid a mage in need. The modern variety, however, seem as ruthless and unforgiving as the forces of nature that spawn them. Realms[] Like any other kind of tapestry, the Tapestry of Earthly Creation occasionally
tears. When it does, those rips in Reality become Paradox Realms occupy a parallel existence with Earth's Penumbra, vibrating at a different metaphysical frequency. Other sources plant Paradox Realms far beyond the
Horizon, floating like weird little soap bubbles through Etherspace. As with so many other manifestations of Paradox, a Storyteller should decide the truth for himself, then keep it secret from the players. In story terms, Paradox Realms present an eternal mystery that still intrudes with disturbing frequency into the adventures of a mage. Game-wise, a
Paradox Realm could be a solitary hole in existence, a prison managed by a Paradox Spirit, or a Realm that's expansive enough to accommodate dozens or even hundreds of characters. The shape and form of each given Realm are unique and often echo the principles of a particular Sphere. Even this tendency, though, is not a hard-and-fast rule. If you
want to craft a Paradox Realm in which the mage meets, or becomes, every person she has ever harmed, then let that Realm become her prison. That said, each Realm should also have an escape; if one of your players, after all, gets his mage dropped into an inescapable Paradox Realm, that character would wind up scrapped unless you and the
player wanted to stage an entire solo chronicle within the Realm. Escaping a Realm, then, should be possible, but not easy... and that escape should be measured not by mystic might but by solving problems without the use of magick. Reality Among the Realms[] A trip to a Paradox Realm can become an Otherworldly adventure in which the usual
rules of reality become puzzles fit for a wizard or philosopher. Chapter Nine's section about Magick in the Otherworlds contains suggestions for the odd, reality-warping effects a Paradox Realm might have on the usual rules. As general guidelines, however, a Storyteller might decide to use the following tendencies for the set of reality within a
particular type of Paradox Realm: • Correspondence-based Realms tend to skew perspective and distance. It's almost impossible to judge spatial relationships in such places; an object that seems far away might be close enough to stub your toe against, but a person who appears to be within reach actually stands a fair distance away. • Entropy
 Realms either accelerate decay to horrific extremes, or hold the pristine quality of CGI illusions. Folks tend to associate Entropy with death, but a Realm based on such principles might instead seem incredibly random or painfully predestined. • Forces Realms throw around the elemental energies associated with this Sphere. Storms abound; shadows
and light move in capricious ways; Earthly physics run in reverse - water flows uphill or objects fall up unless otherwise restrained. Forces-based magick either causes great upheavals or has exactly the opposite of its intended effect. • Life-based Paradox Realms feature biological fluctuations or endless levels of mutation and genesis. Living things
might self-generate in midair, out of nothing, or dissolve into new and shocking forms. The mage himself could be turned into a chaotic biomass, growing limbs, shifting in size and shape, or otherwise being rendered helpless in the endless flow of life. • Matter Realms jumble the apparent solidity of material forms into endless fluctuations or
unpredictable altered states. Solids become liquids; liquids condense into solids; both become vapors. Colors and mass become irrelevant or else attain such stability that no force imaginable can change them. • Mind Paradoxes trap a mage in her own mind, alone with her worst fears, memories, confusions, and neuroses. The Realm becomes a form
of Seeking, based not around the advance of magick but rather upon the avoidance of it. • Prime-based Paradox Realms pulse with the essence of pure, unfiltered energy. Ultimately indescribable in words, such regions become endurance tests of overwhelming sensations and vitality. • Spirit Realms are, essentially, miniscule Dream Realms into
which the mage is cast and then sealed away. • Time Paradoxes confront the visitor with temporal loops, recursive events, dilated time flows, split-screen realities, and Groundhog Day-type scenarios in which the mage must either reenact previous sins or deal with a timeline in which she never existed, amidst otherwise familiar locations and
circumstances. In short, the Storyteller is encouraged to let her creativity off the chain when dealing with a Paradox Realm. That said, she's also advised to construct such Realms in advance, then drop them into a story at an appropriate time, rather than try to make them up off the top of her head. A Paradox Realm works best when it suits the
overall flavor of the tale and the characters within it. Unbelief: The Shit Factor[] Perhaps the most devastating form of Paradox doesn't strike mages down at all. Instead, it degrades the things they hold sacred: the creations they shape with their Arts, the beasts that embody wonder, the magnificent technologies they strive so hard to perfect. Unbelief
is the crushing weight of the Consensus, squeezing the life out of miracles and denying the products of a better world. Although mystic mages feel the effects of Unbelief most keenly, Technocrats suffer from those effects as well. It's Unbelief most keenly, Technocrats suffer from those effects as well. It's Unbelief most keenly, Technocrats suffer from those effects as well. It's Unbelief most keenly, Technocrats suffer from those effects as well. It's Unbelief most keenly, Technocrats suffer from those effects as well. It's Unbelief most keenly, Technocrats suffer from those effects as well. It's Unbelief most keenly, Technocrats suffer from those effects as well. It's Unbelief most keenly, Technocrats suffer from those effects as well. It's Unbelief most keenly, Technocrats suffer from those effects as well. It's Unbelief most keenly, Technocrats suffer from those effects as well. It's Unbelief most keenly, Technocrats suffer from those effects as well. It's Unbelief most keenly, Technocrats suffer from those effects as well. It's Unbelief most keenly, Technocrats suffer from those effects as well. It's Unbelief most keenly, Technocrats suffer from those effects as well. It's Unbelief most keenly, Technocrats suffer from those effects as well. It's Unbelief most keenly, Technocrats suffer from those effects as well. It's Unbelief most keenly as well as well
and forbids the full enjoyment of economic ideals. Certain willworkers refer to Unbelief as "the Shit Factor" - the idea that the Masses cannot accept anything unless it's shitty. When Agent Smith in The Matrix described the flaw-ridden world created by the machines, he was referring to Unbelief. Normal people, supposedly, cannot accept a reality
filled with wonders. It has to be a mess in order for them to accept it as real. And so, dragons and clones and HIT Marks must be disguised or hidden when they appear within Earthly reality. Otherwise, they soon die from the effects of Unbelief. The Shit Factor seems to work most powerfully in cities... and might, in fact, be the primary reason why
the ideal of cities keeps crashing and burning in the realities of urban decay. Rural areas and open wilderness appear to have less weight and more potential for marvelous things that "cannot be" soon after they appear. Perhaps the Mythic Threads sustain
certain creatures - vampires, ghosts, and the like - but dragons and aliens quickly disappear without a trace. Ultimately, Unbelief is the damning expression of the mortal status quo: that which should not exist cannot exist. Part Four: Quiet[] Mages depend upon clear minds in order to do what they do. And yet - in another layer of paradox - they also
inhabit a state of metaphysical insanity in which they choose to deny the reality that everyone else accepts. The Awakening is a sort of madness in which a person can no longer see or accept what passes for reality among most other people. And so, a mage occasionally loses track of reality altogether, drifting or plunging into the state often known as
Quiet. Essentially a state of disassociation and disconnection, Quiet sets a mage adrift from any reality except her own. At its lower levels, this leads to irrational actions and momentary delusions. At the higher end of the spectrum, this Wizard's Twilight manifests those delusions in forms that other people can see, or else it drops the mage into a
prison of her own mind's making. At the extreme end of such disconnection, the mage becomes a Marauder, essentially oblivious to the world outside her head. As with Resonance, Quiet often depends upon a mage's actions. A stiff-necked, intolerant character is more likely to gravitate toward Denial, whereas a libertine drifts into Madness and a hot
tempered killer falls to Morbidity. People often view Quiet as a single sort of malady; as the Types of Quiet section shows, however, metaphysical un-sanity follows the choices made while sane. Like magick, Quiet is an extension of the mage. From the chronicle's standpoint, then, your character will probably get the breakdown she deserves. Baseline
Reality[] What is crazy by a mage's standards, anyway? After all, when your entire existence is based around denying and remaking the reality that other people take for granted, aren't you crazy by default? Yes and no... which is why Quiet is so dangerous for the Awakened. Psychologists and philosophers often refer to baseline reality - that is, the
level of reality that's generally acceptable to a person or society. The Consensus, for example, presents a massive baseline reality, though, everyone's got a bit of wiggle room: one person may believe in angels, another in the Old Gods, and a third in nothing at all. All three people, however, accept a baseline reality in
which objects fall down, the sun rises in the east, and certain temperatures freeze or boil things. Mages use their beliefs and practices to alter baseline reality. Even then, however, they still maintain their own frame of reference. A Hermetic wizard might invoke angels to cause a typhoon, but he accepts that his friends are his friends, that his sword is
a sword, and that there isn't a fat little naked version of himself, or believing that his friends are conspiring against him, or perceiving his rune-encrusted sword as a singing waffle iron, then that wizard is beginning to go
crazy. His baseline reality has shifted into the Twilight Zone. For all that talk about crazy wisdom, a smart mage keeps an eye on his sanity. The power of flexibility the world at large: don't make your practice, goes one saying, everybody else's problem.
Such vigilance also explains why so many mages gather into groups - allies can provide sanity checks - and why solitary mages often go batshit insane. In game and story terms, Quiet occurs when the mage's normal perspective and paradigm
that person's baseline reality enters hazardous terrain. As many real-life mystics see it, madness is that place where your perceptions and behavior make you a danger to yourself and everyone around you. Each mage has a different baseline reality... and some of them get pretty eccentric. When eccentricity becomes delusion and potential violence,
however, most Awakened folks would agree that that a person's going insane. And for beings with the power to mold Reality, insanity's a truly awful thing... Storyteller makes some plans, based around a particular character's
personality and actions, and decides how this particular case of Quiet will manifest. • Selecting from among the types and symptoms of Quiet described below, he determines the early effects of the Quiet insanity. • When the character reaches a particular goal (say, 10 Paradox points), or endures a certain challenge to her sanity (reading a
blasphemous tome, perhaps), the Storyteller begins slipping notes to the player, describing the delusions or suggesting irrational acts. • Instead of, or in addition to, the notes, the Storyteller might start introducing weird objects or characters (the hobgoblins) into the story, as if they're perfectly normal parts of the tale. • If/ when the player resists
the idea that her mage is going crazy, the Storyteller can have her start spending Willpower points or making rolls that may or may not succeed in driving the madness away. • And, of course, if the mage gains more Paradox, the Quiet grows deeper and more irrational... possibly removing the mage from the player's control if that player refuses to go
along with the madness or lets it go too far. Most players enjoy a chance to go crazy and will probably take an episode of Quiet and run with it to delightfully demented extremes. Just remember: insanity is not cute or fun. We can't emphasize that
afflicted person. Most often, though, it begins with subtle quirks of perception and behavior, rising (or falling) steadily into a deeper sense of dislocation from the reality shared by everybody else. In game terms, Quiet follows six levels, starting with the sort of minor quirks that anyone could have, but then progressing... or regressing... toward
dangerous irrationality. Falling Into Quiet[] Generally, this metaphysical insanity comes about as a result of accumulated Paradox. The mage becomes so comfortable in her removal from reality that she starts to lose touch with it. Other forces, though, can also inspire such madness: • Paradox Backlash: Strong Paradox backlashes (10 points or more)
can knock a mage straight into Quiet. The degree of insanity depends upon the number of Paradox points discharged during the backlash - see the Levels of Quiet chart for details. • Trauma: Severe mental and psychological shocks can jolt the character's connection to reality. Botched Mind Sphere rolls (on Effects of Rank 3 or higher); extended
torture or Social Conditioning; sanity-cracking experiences; devastating loss; massive Mind Sphere attacks (that take the character to Incapacitated or worse); or physical brain damage (five health levels or more to the head) can all provoke an onset of Quiet. In such cases, a successful Willpower roll (psychological attacks) or Stamina roll (physical
damage) - made with the mage's current Paradox Pool as the difficulty - might keep the insanity at bay. • Resonance or Synergy can lose track of reality as a result. In this case, the Storyteller might call for an Arete roll, difficulty 8, when the player reaches five dots in a
Resonance or Synergy Trait. If the roll succeeds, the mage's excellence overcomes the heady effects of Resonance and Synergy; if not, she succumbs to those forces and enters Quiet. (For details, see Resonance and Synergy; if not, she succumbs to those forces and enters Quiet.)
relationship with reality becomes, the more severe her case of Quiet Level Paradox Discharge Delusions or Disassociation 1 1-3 Minor quirks or occasional delusions; mage begins to manifest odd behavior and minor disassociation from his baseline reality. 2
4-6 Delusions and disconnection become more severe; mage perceives things that no one else can see, starts denying the experiences of other people, and begins to behave irrationally even by Awakened standards. 3 7-10 Mage's senses backfire, creating blindness (real or conceptual), vivid hallucinations, and erratic - perhaps dangerous - behavior.
Hobgoblins might appear, manifesting the mage's delusions in ways that other people can perceive. 4 11-15 Mage either drops into total catatonia or takes on many of the characteristics of a
Marauder but without immunity to Paradox. 6 21+ Mage goes Marauder and becomes a Storyteller character. Types of Quiet Level Denial Madness Morbidity 1 Stubbornness, minor projection Minor hallucinations Attraction to death and decay 2 Selective perceptions, hypocritical behavior Frequent delusions, mood swings Fixation with mortality 3
Irrational behavior, literal blindness to denied subjects Wild hallucinations, sensory overload Bloodlust and macabre behavior 4 Deadly fanaticism Mindscape or constant hobgoblins Violent sociopathy 5 Fanatical drone Catatonia or dementia Sadistic killer 6 Marauder Maraude
game terms, Quiet ranges from minor afflictions (Level 1) to total dementia (Level 5). At the extreme level of that scale (Level 6), the character goes irrevocably insane and becomes one of the Marauders - a permanent convert to the reality in her head. For reasons explained in Chapter Five, a player character who goes Marauder should be essentially
dead to the player, reverting to the Storyteller as a supporting character in the ongoing chronicle. Although a Storyteller might choose to allow Marauder player-characters, such characters can easily destroy a game. Rising out of Quiet[] A character who's aware of her declining mental state can try to shake off the delusions or irrational behavior. In
game terms, this means spending a Willpower point, taking at least one turn to do nothing except resist the effects of Quiet, and then scoring at least three successes on a Willpower roll. Under the usual Mage rules, the difficulty for this roll is 7; as an optional rule, the Storyteller might decide to make that difficulty the character's Quiet level + 5,
thus making it harder to shake off higher degrees of Quiet. (Shaking off a Quiet level of 3, for example, would be difficulty 8.) With those three successes, the mage manages to assert her will over the delusions during the current scene. Although the madness isn't gone, she keeps a clear head and gets through the rest of the scene intact. Game-wise
the player removes one point of Paradox from the mage's pool, which might lower the Quiet level. That roll, however, is an all or nothing affair; the player must score three successes, or more, with a single roll - not an extended action. One or two successes just make the delusion seem more real, and failure leaves the mage where she was before. A
botch causes the delusion to manifest as a hobgoblin (see below). Either way, the Willpower point is gone. Curing Quiet? Some Dramatic Options[] With a lot of effort and Willpower points and roleplays out the process of asserting her character's sanity. This
can become a dramatic story element, especially if the character's in the middle of some existential or external crisis that forces her to sort her shit out fast before ongoing events make things worse. Other character's in the middle of some existential or external crisis that forces her to sort her shit out fast before ongoing events make things worse. Other character's in the middle of some existential or external crisis that forces her to sort her shit out fast before ongoing events make things worse.
based rolls, and an extended roll in which the healing character uses Mind 4/ Prime 4 to drive out the Paradox within the suffering mage's mind. As a base guideline, assume that the healer must invest his own personal Quintessence and replace each point of Paradox in the Quietridden mage's pool with two or three points of the healer's own
Quintessence. The particulars of such curing efforts are left to the individual players and Storytellers. Whatever it takes, however, the cure should NOT be easy, no mage would fear this madness... and yet, all sensible mages do. Mindscape Rolls Attempted Task Dice Pool Meditate into mindscape Perception +
Meditation Meditate into Demesne Perception + Demesne Reduce time in mindscape Wits + Enigmas or Perception + Demesne Communicate to outside Willpower Difficulty for all is Quiet Level + 3 Types of Quiet[] Although generally considered a side effect of Paradox, Quiet is, in many ways, its own beast - a symptom of dissociation from the
Consensus to which any mage, regardless of affiliation, remains vulnerable. It's the flipside of that godlike power to rework reality, the place where no reality exists except the one you perceive. And despite the old stereotypes (and old game systems) that present Quiet as either babbling dementia or catatonic withdrawal, new-millennium mages
recognize several different types of insanity: Denial[] Mistakenly known as Clarity in Mage Revised (there's nothing clear-headed about it), Denial shuts out things the mage does not want to recognize. A common malady among Sleepers as well as the Awakened, this delusion categorically denies things, people, or circumstances that a person refuses
to accept. Essentially, you don't believe in it, therefore it cannot possibly exist. Denial has another awful feature too: a person - mage or otherwise - in a state of denial often acts out the things she denies. The jealous lover cheats on her spouse; the bully-hater bullies people; the religious fanatic murders innocents because they weren't holy enough.
"What you repress," the saying goes, "you express." As a result, a Black Suit who denies the existence of witchcraft might find himself practicing witchcraft as a joke... or worse, doing so without even recognizing the things he's doing as witchcraft ("That's ridiculous - YOU'RE the one who's crazy..."). This sort of shadow-projection is less a matter of
hypocrisy than of delusion - the insane person literally does not see what he's doing. Such delusions are bad enough when Sleepers have them. Backed up by the metaphysical power of a mage, though, they can have fearsome effects on that person's world. Denial Quiet robs a mage of clear perceptions. She won't see things that are there, all the
while insisting upon things that are not. Often associated with the Technocracy (who don't use magick - oh no, perish the thought!), this form of Quiet can strike any type of mage. A Celestial Chorister could hate people in the name of love; a Weaver could command demons in the name of Allah; an Akashic could become a harmonious monster. When
Nephandi tempters cast their webs, they love to inspire Denial-type Quiets... and, because Denial blocks out what the mage doesn't want to see, such weapons become their most effective shields as well. ("Nope, no Nephandi here - not one! Believe me, if there were, I'd know...") Effects of Denial[] • Levels 1-2: At the lower end of the spectrum,
Denial manifests as a stubborn refusal to perceive stuff that's obvious to everybody else. No, there is NOT a dragon sitting in the middle of Main Street; no, Islam is NOT a real religion; no, magick does NOT exist - that's just a bunch of Superstitionist nonsense propagated by Reality Deviants, and the sooner we purge it from the Earth, the happier
everyone will be. • Levels 3-4: As Denial grows stronger, it begins to manifest as literal blindness or deafness to circumstances... or worse, blindness to deafness to anything but a twisted version of them: why did you call me a fat pig?; no, you never told me that Master Porthos is dead; I HEARD you planning to kill me and sell my body off for spare
parts. Delusions block out or pervert the reality experienced by everyone around the mage, and things that were once annoying quirks of behavior can become frightening and dangerous. • Levels 5-6: At the highest levels of Quiet, Denial can reshape the world in that mage's immediate vicinity. People might lose their voices in her presence, blurt out
things they would never have said under their own power, or even disappear until the mage leaves the room. This explains the weird reality warps that often follow a Marauder attack: blanked hard drives, fuzzy photos or videos, people who swear that nothing odd just happened even as the fire trucks arrive at the scene of mass destruction. The
mage's delusion becomes part of localized reality, externalizing her refusal to accept certain things into the temporary disappearance of those things from the reality around her. Madness [] The most infamous and common form of Quiet, Madness showers the afflicted mage with mood swings and delusions. Often associated with the Marauders and
other clearly demented willworkers, such hallucinatory perceptions and volatile behaviors start out as little quirks but then swell to sanity-rupturing proportions. Sometimes known as Dementia, Madness turns you into a prisoner of your own mind. Senses feed you incorrect perceptions; things and people who are not there appear as solid as you are;
surges of emotion or calm drag you along emotional roller coasters, with often inappropriate results (making fart jokes at a funeral, grabbing your teenage son's crotch). And while the dotty old wizard might seem amusing in theory, the maniac who has the power to turn people inside out without even realizing what he's done is a terrifying figure
indeed. Although it can manifest in subtle ways - sounds or scents without a source, strange fluctuations of color or proportion - madness has ultimately unsubtle consequences. The mage can try to keep things together for a while, and he may even successfully wave off or ignore the early manifestations of delusion. When the hallucinations become
too strong, however... or, still worse, start running around as self-willed hobgoblins... that's when the Quiet becomes too powerful to ignore. The mage himself might still think he's sane, but his version of sanity looks pretty cracked to everybody else. Effects of Madness[] • Levels 1-2: Madness often starts as tiny ripples of unreality or distortion. Did
just hear the phone ring? Did someone call my name? Who's smoking in here - I thought I was alone? In many cases, the symptoms begin as extensions of the mage's tools and practice: great 'shrooms, man... hey, when do they wear OFF? Hmmmm... I thought I had dispelled that ghost... Beyond that, Madness might set in as sudden mood swings or
implacable obsessions, unquenchable urges or hyperfocused monomania. And because such things aren't uncommon among the Awakened, Madness only gets worse from there... • Levels 3-4: By the time Dementia becomes obvious, the mage has already hit a downward slide. Obsessions, aberrant behavior, hair-trigger passions, and vivid
hallucinations take hold. Objects, impressions, or images manifest: graffiti, phantom phone calls, floating spiders in the air. At Level 3, only the mage can see them; by Level 4, other folks start to see them too. Meanwhile, the afflicted character behaves erratically, reacting to things from a deluded impression of reality. • Levels 5-6: Madness attains
its most frightening degree: wild visions, violent behavior, hazardous fixations, or total catatonia. The mage might suffer from metaphysical autism, withdrawing from her surroundings even while apparently awake. She'll chant nonsense, shit her drawers, and tangle Reality in the strands of her personal insanity. At the highest degree, the mage either
detaches herself from baseline reality and falls into a mindscape, or else becomes a raving lunatic with the powers of a god. Either way, she might easily be lost for good. Morbidity[] Drawn from the word morbus - "disease" - Morbidity reflects an obsession with death, corruption, and pain. The Archmage Voormas may be the poster child for this
particular insanity. From early fixations with mortality and ruin, a Morbid willworker careens toward sadistic pleasures and ultimate extinction. Although referred to as Jhor in Mage Revised, Morbid Quiet is a soul-sickness... not the Resonance of Death, but a fascination with Oblivion. One could say that all Nephandi suffer from Morbidity. That
accusation gets dropped on Thanatoics, Goths, and Black Suits too. As with all forms of Quiet, though, any mage can grow Morbid in this sense: the priest obsessed with crucifixion, the sadistic lover, the callous scientist. As a form of delusion, Morbidity is less about death than it is about gore, disease, and torment... and whereas some folks glory in
vicarious thrills through fictional horror, the Morbidity-afflicted mage becomes an instrument of real-life cruelty. Along with the usual delusions of Quiet - delusions that, in this case, involve decay and suffering - a Morbid mage attains a corpse-like pallor or leprous corruption. His thoughts and activities focus on mortality. Unlike the dark or sardonic
humor of the Hollow Ones, his mood is often deadly serious, so to speak - nihilistic in temperament and vicious by design. As insanity digs in further, he'll be driven to unhealthy extremes. By the time he lurches toward suicide or homicide, the Morbid willworker has become an avatar of decay. Effects of Morbidity[] • Levels 1-2: Despite the stereotype
of Morbid Gothlings, Morbid Quiet often sets in with people who don't share a casual relationship with darkness. Most often, in fact, it tends to strike people who deny their dark sides and are paragons of righteousness within their own minds: the pious preacher, the haughty shaman, the valiant hunter of Reality Deviants. Provocative delusions lead
to flashes of anger and despair: Why'd you betray me? You broke my heart. God HATES you! Violence soon seems not only reasonable but necessary. And with those surges of dark emotion and subtle hallucination, the doors open toward insanity... • Levels 3-4: As Morbidity takes hold, the mage begins to reflect his unhealthy obsessions. His behavior
grows callous or deliberately cruel; his thoughts reflect constant violence and hate; he rages, seethes, or settles into cold deliberation. The law of the jungle consumes his thoughts reflect constant violence and hate; he rages, seethes, or settles into cold deliberation. The law of the jungle consumes his thoughts... featuring himself, of course, as the alpha predator. In some cases, he might gravitate with Poe-like fascination toward excess, grit, and horror; in others, he might force
himself through a sardonic kind of cheer - the bright-lights grin of an American Psycho. • Levels 5-6: By this point, the mage has the look of a wolf, the soul of a virus, and the mind of a demon on PCP. Honestly, this is one fucked-up character, and the Storyteller might want to take it over on general principle. A mage at this stage of Morbidity is a Pol
Pot or Dr. Mengele, but he has inhuman powers and the will to use them in the most sadistic way possible. If he's not already entering the Nephandic Cauls by this point, it's only because he's either nursing a massive case of denial or else feeling like he could be a dark god himself. Marauders of this type are the worst of their kind - reality cyclones
that should be killed on sight. Quiet Manifestations[] Mages remake reality to suit their desires... and so, when those mages go insane, their insanity affects Reality as well. Beyond the behavior changes and internal delusions that characterize a Quiet, the following manifestations change the world around a demented mage, reflecting often-
subconscious applications of magick. Hobgoblins aren't the only kind of minds that suffer from hobgoblins. That term also refers to the self-willed hallucinations that take shape and direction from the mind of an insane mage. Rooted in the fears, conflicts, and memories of an afflicted willworker, a hobgoblin embodies things that the
mage in question would rather deny. Game-wise, a hobgoblin comes into play when a player either botches a roll to wish away the madness, or reaches a level of Quiet where that character's delusions attain recognizable form. A hobgoblin could actually be anything: a smear of paint, a cry of paint, a religious tract that shows up tucked inside every
book on the mage's shelf, the vision of an old enemy or lover, a TV broadcast no one else can see, a song that plays over and over in her head, a stranger shouting on the corner, a car that speeds toward the mage in traffic... The possibilities are limited only by the mage's backstory and the Storyteller's imagination. A typical hobgoblin lasts for one day
for each point in the offending mage's Arete, though some can last much longer than that; if the hobgoblin becomes a character, it has health levels and abilities to match the mage in question. Others appear as lost children,
crusading reporters, tearful relatives, or other personifications of guilt or irritation. And although the Storyteller could create one manifestation for each point in the mage's Arete, there's really no upper limit to the number of hobgoblins that might appear... Environmental Alterations[] A truly powerful Quiet can spread outward from themage's mind
to alter the landscape and living beings nearby. As noted earlier in this section, things can shift without conscious effort on the mage's part: weather patterns could manifest, the ground might tremble, music might play, and people could be rendered silent. A crowd of people could turn, temporarily, into zombies or birds. Packs of rats, dogs, or naked
toddlers might manifest out of thin air to chase the mage down the street. Such alterations come only from mages with great powers and potent madness. When they appear, however, these manifestations can be pretty fucking weird. In game terms, large-scale alterations are the Storyteller's prerogative. The player has no control over such things
whatsoever, and the manifestations can twist reality as much as the Storyteller wants it twisted. Essentially, these alterations become the reality-warping special effects that follow Marauders around, as described in Chapter Five, Part ?*!: The Mad. If your mage begins to manifest such Fortean phenomena, then she's halfway to Maraudertown on a
greased-tracks bullet train. Mindscapes[] The polar opposite of environmental alternation, a mindscape pulls the mage's consciousness into its own little world and then locks the door behind her. Within that mindscape, the mage's consciousness into its own little world and then locks the door behind her. Within that mindscape, the mage struggles through her insanity, finding the keys she needs to unlock the Paradoxes of her consciousness. To the rest of the
world, the mage enters the catatonic state that gives Quiet its name. For the mage, that journey becomes a Seeking through which she might make herself sane again. Voluntary and Involuntary or involuntary. For a voluntary
mindscape, the mage meditates herself into a mental sanctuary where she can sort things out, probably by making a few successful Perception + Meditation rolls. (Difficulty is the Quiet level + 3.) If that character has the Demesne Background Trait, she might be able to retreat to that mental domain through a Willpower roll of difficulty 9. (See
Chapter Six, p. 311, for details.) Once in her private space, the mage undergoes a symbolic quest to recapture her equilibrium. For an involuntary mindscape, the mage winds up stuck in a realm of the Storyteller's design, fighting to regain her sanity again. Either way, when she emerges, her entire Paradox pool is clear, unless she's got some
permanent Paradox that cannot be resolved. Time Passing[] Generally, Quiet mindscapes last for one day for each point, and though a few rolls of Wits + Enigmas or Perception + Demesne (difficulty, again, is the Quiet level + 3)
might speed up the journey toward sanity by one day per success, we recommend roleplaying through the struggle as a miniature story. Messages from Within and Outside Assistance[] While inside the mindscape, a mad mage can try to contact the world outside Assistance[] While inside the mindscape, a mad mage can try to contact the world outside Assistance[] While inside the mindscape, a mad mage can try to contact the world outside Assistance[] While inside the mindscape, a mad mage can try to contact the world outside Assistance[] While inside the mindscape, a mad mage can try to contact the world outside Assistance[] While inside the mindscape, a mad mage can try to contact the world outside her head. Three successes with a Willpower roll (once again, difficulty is the Quiet level and the properties of the contact the world outside her head. Three successes with a Willpower roll (once again, difficulty is the Quiet level and the properties of the proper
+ 3) allow her to send a clear message; fewer successes than that send a garbled message to whomever might be listening. Meanwhile, an adventurous friend can try to reach into the mindscape and retrieve the lost mage. A few successes with a Mind 3 dreamwalk or Mind 4/ Mind 5 astral projection can send that ally into the Quiet mindscape if the
Storyteller chooses to allow it. Once there, however, that friend becomes vulnerable to the mindscape and all its potential terrors. Characters who suffer damage in a Quiet mindscape take bashing damage; if that damage kills someone, that person might either die for real or fall into a coma at the Storyteller's discretion. As mentioned earlier, the
mindscape becomes a Seeking through which the mad willworker - and perhaps her friends - must find a path toward sanity. And like any other Seeking, such journeys should not be guided by dice alone. Wisdom from Insanity[] There's a reason people speak of crazy wisdom. For although insanity presents a hazard to everyone involved, a person who
manages to puzzle through that madness might emerge with deeper insights into life, magick, and the universe. In story terms, a character who emerges from Quiet with his sanity intact might resolve certain issues; change his Demeanor or even his Nature; gain dots - by the Storyteller's choice only! - in certain Traits like Awareness, Cosmology,
Enigmas, or Occult; and resolve all the Paradox in his pool, save the ones that have become permanent. A Quiet, of course, might never be truly resolved; Porthos Fitz-Empress faced his own Quiet in the final moments of his life, and such madness blasted Doissetep to its foundations in the Ascension Warrior saga. Marauders lose the people they once
were in the dementia they now embrace. And so, Quiet may play a vital role in your saga as a whole... shaping and perhaps transforming the chronicle through a solitary, but expansive, madness. Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the
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