Discord

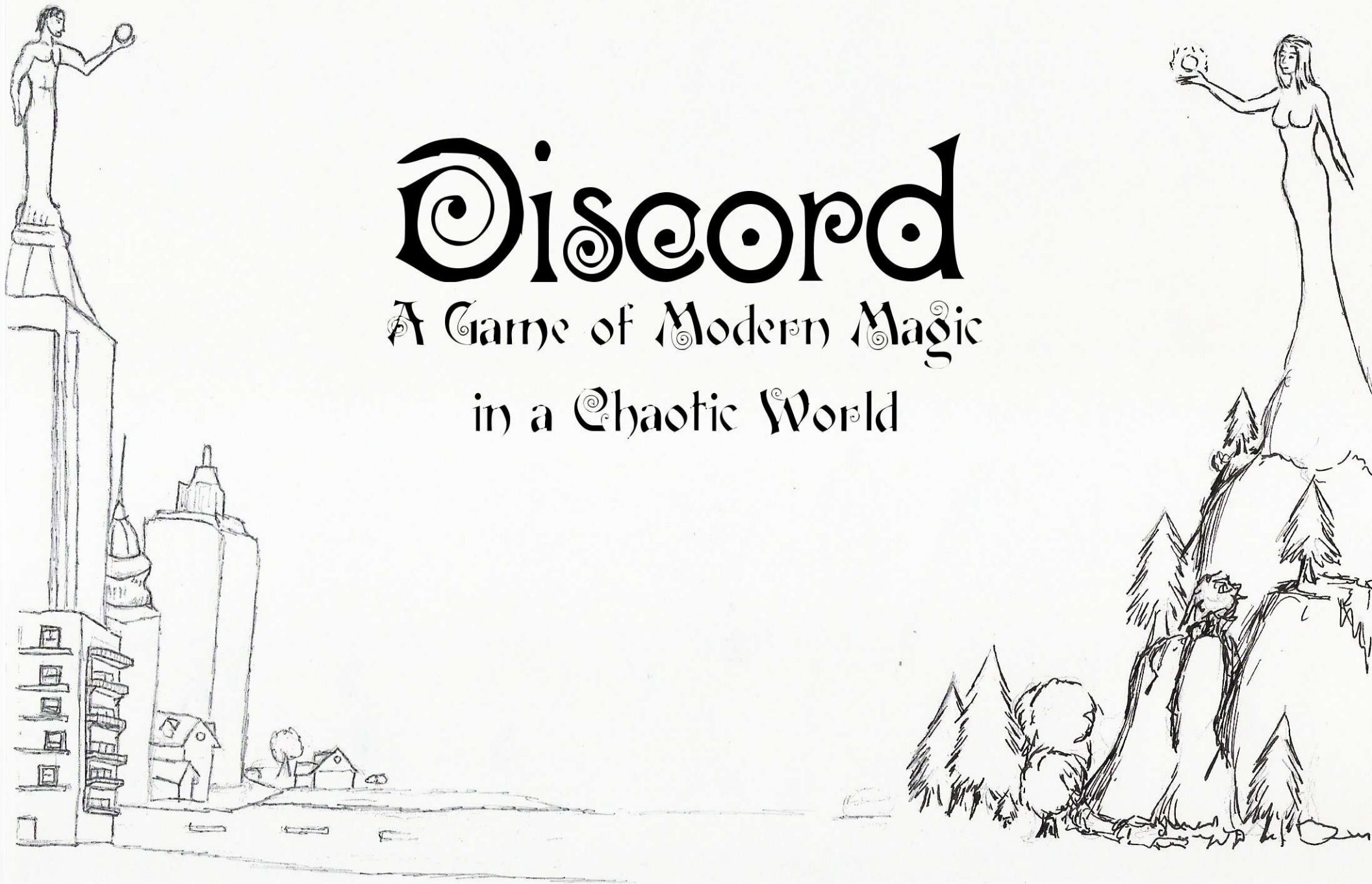## A Game of Modern Magic

in a Chaotic World

A World of Possibility

Stacy walked the circle very carefully, making sure that everything was right. The moon would be in its best aspect soon, and everything had to be right. The candles were all lit and properly placed. The reagents were ready.

The circle was etched with care. She had traced over the pattern in the book at least a dozen times now. Every line, every curve, and every intersection was perfectly made. Even the tiny little flourishes at the ends of the lines were properly curved.

As the moon rose into prominence, Stacy took position at the edge of the circle. Lifting her dress carefully, she knelt down into the soft earth and began to chant the mantras.

Hour by hour passed, but she was vigilant. Her throat was dry and cracking, the words coming out in a strained whisper. The candles burned low as the way spread over the ground. The wind slowly died down to a whisper.

At long last, the time had come. Stacy's heart quickened, pumping hot blood into every part of her. Her breath come faster, more ragged. She had even begun to feel a little excited in that most special way. There was something erotic about a spell working out the way you wanted it to.

The circle began to glow red and a mist rose up as the candles died out in a burst of wind. The mist coalesced into a human form, with dark ruddy skin. Stacey raised her head to it and said, "Welcome great spirit, I have called you here to serve me."

The demon grimaced down at her and replied, "I think you made a mistake little girl. This circle is all wrong and your not at all powerful enough to command me." He then took a step towards her, but Stacy did not move. She smiled as a slight worry shook through her. She didn't make a mistake, but the thought of it gave her a chill.

Reaching behind her back, Stacy removed the twisted ritual knife. "No, I am quite confident that this is how I wanted things to go," she spoke. And then she dove towards it thinking, "This is always the best part."

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Introduction

A while back, I found out about the 24-Hour RPG project and though to myself, "Damn, that's a cool idea." Making a whole game in 24 hours perfectly suited my attention span, so I started thinking about ideas that would make a good one. After sifting through a few in my muddled mind, I decided upon an idea that had occurred to me after reading a Wikipedia article about occultism.

Apparently, there's this kind of magic(k) called "Chaos Magic," that works around the idea of paradigm shifting and such. The idea of a modern magic game suddenly seemed really cool. Of course, I quickly realized that stuff like Mage and Unknown Armies had already treaded this ground, but I thought I could do a good job and bring something different to the table. So here it is, Discord, my 24 hour game about modern mages and casting your way through life. Enjoy.

A Few Words on Style

Throughout this text, I try to keep the tone light, but within the realm of its material. Since this is a game about magic and mystical stuff, I wanted the text to sound kind of "whoOoOOoO" mysterious. More than likely, it will not quite have that effect, but I hope it remains legible.

As to my use of gender pronouns, an issue that every game designer just has to talk about these days, I decided to be funny and use the Spivak pronouns, "e," "em," and "eirs."

What You Need

All you need to play are pencils, copies of the character sheets, and a bunch of six sided dice. You will probably need about 5 per person.

Nothing is True

...And everything is permitted. This paradox is the fundamental law of chaos magic. Everyday, everywhere, people are creating their own realities. In every corner, there is the stirring of magic, but most just cannot fathom it. They look at it, all the time, but they do not *see* it.

What does it mean to see? How can anything be permitted if nothing is true? Understanding comes with time and study. At the surface, it simply means that you can see and do anything you want, but nothing you do is absolutely true. There is no higher Truth, no one great force that governs all. There is only you, and your will.

There is more to it, however, than simple acceptance. Chaos magic is not about accepting, but about rejecting. First you reject the idea that anything is absolutely True, then you learn that anything *can* be true. Belief, faith, dogma, and ritual are all tools for the magician to wield. They are clothes that the mage wears to aid in creating er effects. The changing of belief systems, the "paradigm shift" is one of the primary rituals of chaos magic.

In this game, you take on the role of a magician. You can be a chaos magician, or you can stick to one paradigm, or something else entirely, whatever works for you. In the next few pages, the various things that make up a character will be discussed. But first, take a look at the character sheet at what a character is made from, then you can explore what the individual parts of each character are.

The Magician

In *Discord*, characters are defined by their beliefs. These beliefs are called paradigms. All characters have three fundamental paradigms that define how they interact with reality at the basic level. These are Physical, Mental, and Spiritual.

The physical paradigm defines that everyone has a body, that can be used to manipulate the world at the physical level--the most mundane level.

The mental paradigm defines that everyone has a mind, that can be used to perceive and understand reality. The mind operates at a higher level than the body.

The spiritual paradigm defines that everyone has a soul, that feels other souls around it and tries to be one with the universe. The soul is about social change, as it combines ideas of empathy and emotion.

There are many other paradigms, but everybody has these three. Each paradigm is in turn defined by no less than three aspects. These are the qualities of Power, Control, and Belief.

Power is how much force you bring to bear. When a mage tries to change the world, er power defines how much of a change is possible.

Control is how able you are to use the force you have. When a mage tries to change the world, er control defines how well that changes is in line with what the mage wanted.

Belief is the knowledge, the faith, that your changes will take hold. Mages must have a certain degree of belief, in order to make changes, but they can become lost in dogma if they are not careful of their belief.

Beneath the paradigm qualties are five lines to write out the character's tricks. A trick is something that a character can do or knows which aids in manipulating reality. A character can have a number of tricks under one paradigm equal to the Belief rating in it.

Along the side of the sheet, you will note a Will track. Mages need Will to change things. The more a mage has, the more often and more powerful eir changes can be.

The Magic

Magic is everywhere around you, all the time. This fact may be hard to believe, but the reason you so easily overlook it is that most magic is not that stunning. Indeed, you could be doing some minor magic right now and not realize it. When you ask someone to grab you a soda from the fridge, that's a minor command spell. When you head into the kitchen to get it yourself, you are performing the minor miracle of teleportation. It's a very slow and short ranged teleport, and it involves a tiresome ritual known as "walking" but its a minor magic none-the-less.

Of course, most people don't want to play a game about walking to the corner mart to pick up beer. Magic of the more spectacular sort is very possible, but everyone has to start somewhere. With all that said, the method of performing change in *Discord* is quite simple.

First, state what you want to do. This could something mundane, like writing a novel, or it could be something more amazing, like shooting out fireballs. Whatever you are going for, have in mind what effect you would like to go for.

Once you have figured out what it is you want to accomplish, pick a paradigm that aptly defines it. You may use any of the three core paradigms freely, or you may use

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another paradigm if you have shifted into it. Paradigm shifting will be covered in a moment.

Now, you get to roll dice to figure out what happens. You may roll a number of six sided dice (d6) up to or equal to the Power quality in the paradigm you are using. For each die that rolls to four or higher, count one "Event." If any dice roll up as 6, reroll those and check again for number of four or more. Reroll any more 6s and keep going until you stop getting them and have a final count.

Next, take a look at the value of Control for that paradigm. If the number of Events is equal to or less than the Control, then each Event is yours to use as you want. Events that you scored in excess of the Control value are events outside of your control. In a simple situation, they might just remove events that you have earned. In more complex events, the extra events may be used by other characters.

Events can be used to change the course of the story. To do this, you set variables that your events will update. Woah! That's kind of complicated huh? Not so much as you might think. A variable is just some defining quality of a situation. An example is probably in order about now.

Jenna is attempting to draw a picture for her art class. She needs to make a roll to see how it turns out. First, it is determined that making a peice of art will use the Spiritual paradigm. Jenna really feels as though she puts a peice of her soul into every drawing she makes. Next, she determines that there are two important variables in this test, time and quality. Quality is how good the drawing is, and time is how long it takes her to do it. The consensus is that it will take 3 hours to make a drawing, and it will be of average quality, if nothing but a minimum effort is given. Jenna rolls 5 dice, and gets 5 events. Her control is 4. Up to four and she would have

gotten all her events. Because she rolled one over four, one event is removed from her usable total. That means that she has 3 events to herself. She uses 2 events to raise the quality of the drawing twice, and 1 event to lessen the time required. After 2 hours, Jenna creates a great peice of art.

The immediate question that arises is "How much can one event change?" The answer depends on the group, and what the players think is fair. In general, a single Event can:
- Raise or Lower a variable by about 10%.
- Increase or Decrease time by one of whatever unit is being used (hour, minute, second, etc).
- Raise or Lower a descriptive quality by one level.
- Add one new variable to a situation.
- Raise or lower one variable in order to double raise or lower another one.

By this point, if you have played an RPG before, you might be wondering exactly who gets to decide on all this stuff. I have yet to mention a gamemaster (GM), because that role is optional. *Discord*, being a game about chaos, runs well as a communal storytelling exercise. Every player can tell a part of the story as it develops. For a given situation, everyone can pick a paradigm and roll, and then use the events they get to individually alter the outcome of the entire situation.

Of course, playing the traditional method by having one player take the role of GM is acceptable as well. The GM plays all the minor characters and directs the story as a whole. Either way, you should do whatever best suits the group.

Although a situation can have many variables, one is

particularly important, especially to magic. This variable is called Blatancy. Blatancy is measured on a scale of 0 to 5.

Blatancy measures how mundane or mystical a change appears to be. When mages cast spells, they often find it easier to go with a subtle, low blatancy effect than something obvious and strange.

A zero blatancy change is something so mundane and pointless, that it pretty much is not a change. Standing still is a zero blatancy action.

A one blatancy change is still mundane and ordinary, but it at least involves some action. Hailing a taxi (a kind of transport magic) is a one blatancy action.

A two blatancy change is mundane, but odd. Things like deja-vu and weird coincidences are blatancy of two. If you were thinking of hailing a taxi, and one just pulled up for you before you even raised your hand, that's a blatancy two.

Blatancy three represents truly strange, but explainable phenomenon. A taxi that appears for you at midnight in the middle of the city, when there are no other cars around, might be a blatancy three. Other examples might include pretty much any parlor magic trick, like rabbits out of a hat or knowing what card a person is holding. Whether or not what you are doing is a trick or real magic is up to you. Blatancy three stuff borders on the mystical and unexplainable.

Things of blatancy four are downright eerie and would almost have to be mystic in nature. A travel spell of blatancy four would be the "I'm there" spell. That is, you head into a back alley and walk back out to the place you were going. Other blatancy four changes include stuff like telekinesis and telepathy. Thing that are clearly magic, but on a small scale.

Blatancy five stuff is, very simply, everything else. If it's so blatantly magical it fits no where else, it's a five. Teleporting somewhere or shooting fireballs are examples.

The reason blatancy is so important is because reality is consensual. That means it is defined by everyone who has a part in it. When a mage performs a blatancy one action, no one will bat an eye at it. It happens all the time. On the other hand, a blatancy five change is so unbelievable, that reality as defined by the rest of the world fights against the change.

The way this is handled by the game is through the Belief quality of any viewers present. Belief opposes blatancy. Magicians do not generally count for this, because their beliefs allow for such effects. To keep it simple, just say that if a mage has a Power in their magic paradigm that is higher than or equal to the blatancy of what they see, then they are fine with it.

For everyone who may not be cool with a blatant effect, determine if they can do anything about it by looking at their Belief. The higher the belief, the less blatant and effect that the person can tolerate. To find the maximum blatancy that a person can counter, subtract their belief from 6. So a person with only one belief can interfere with no one else's changes. A fanatic with five belief would not even tolerate coincidences (although they may justify them through belief, their choice).

What this means is that a person whose beliefs are strong enough may cancel out blatant effects. Say a scientist (Paradigm of Science with Belief 4) is watching a mage summon a demon (a Blatancy 5 action). The scientist's belief means that he can only accept coincidences as normal (Blatancy 2 and down). When the demon starts coming in, the scientist immediately and unconsciously starts trying to disbelieve in it. The mage loses a number of dice of power equal to the scientist's

power. If that brings the dice to nothing, no demon. Even if you get roll anything, it may not be enough to actually fully summon the demon. Or the blatancy might be forced down to accommodate the scientist. A blatancy 2 demon is invisible and limited to what it can do.

It is for this reason that you do not often see demons walking the streets and people flinging fireballs about. Once you have a dozen or a hundred people all watching you at once, not believing in magic, magic stops working. That is also why mages tend to become solitary.

Paradigms

Belief is power. To the chaos mage, systems of belief are methods that can be used to unlock hidden power for change. Almost anything can be a paradigm. Traditional religions are one source, such as Christianity or Buddhism. Paradigms can also be based on imaginary (or so you think) or ancient religions, like the Cthulhu mythos or the Norse pantheon. You can even have paradigms based on other things like martial arts or roleplaying games.

The reason you have paradigms is to facilitate change. In order to work magic, you should use a paradigm that makes sense and aids in that spell. Summoning demons is not exactly within the realm of Christian works, to give one example. Banishing demons, on the other hand, meshes perfectly with Christianity.

In game, the GM or other players can veto any events you use that seem to be outside the realm of your paradigm. As a general rule, no true magic (mystical) effects can be performed with the core three paradigms. Only mundane actions (blatancy of one or two) can be performed with these. As an optional rule, no spells may be cast with a blatancy greater than a paradigm's Belief.

The mage simply doesn't yet believe that e is capable of performing such amazing feats with that paradigm.

Chaos mages try to learn many paradigms so that they have a wide variety of tools available. Traditionally, however, you can only use one paradigm at a time. To keep things simple, you may only have one active paradigm at a time. An active paradigm can be used like one of the core three: any time, for any appropriate reason. The rest of your paradigms are inactive, and serve no purpose until you activate them.

Changing to a new paradigm, a paradigm shift, requires time and effort. Until they are well versed in them, most people cannot simply snap their fingers and swap beliefs. The mage must meditate, study, and focus to shift paradigms. So if you are using Christianity to bless all your friends one day, but want to do some summoning later, then you have to spend a few hours meditating to clean out the old paradigm and shift into the new one. Astute players may immediately wonder if they can make a test to reduce the time on that, or improve the quality of the shift or something. If you want a ruling from the book, the answer is no. You just have to do the time. Like all rules, however, this is subject to the group's wishes and play style.

Tricks

For every paradigm, you can have a number of Tricks equal to your Belief in that paradigm. A trick is like a skill, basically. Tricks give you a little extra edge at something particular that you are really good at. There are two main functions for tricks. They can enable and enhance.

Enablement means that a trick lets a character do something new. A person can try to perform medicine on

an injured person with just their Mind paradigm, but they should not be allowed to do very much. In such a case, the effects of each Event should be severely reduced. If the character happened to have a trick of Surgery, however, every event could be used to its full potential.

As far as enhancement goes, a trick gives you one more event, totally free. The surgeon not only can use every event to its full potential, but e gets one further event, completely free. That means that the event is under control, and it does not count towards the Control limit. Just add it on after the roll.

How powerful a trick is depends on how powerful a game the group wants to play. If you want to be almost normal humans, just with a little enhancement, use tricks as above. If you want a little more edge, let the extra trick event do double effect. Or if you want a really high powered game, let all events do a bit extra from a trick. Just be careful, a wizard with several tricks worth in one spell could easily have an overpowering effect on the game.

Tricks can be almost anything, but you should try to pick things that are not too general and not too specific. Drive is ok, Drive Car is better. Drive 1987 Dodge Pickup Truck is a little too specific, while Operate Vehicle is too broad.

You could also pick out tricks to enhance certain spells too. A good trick like this might be summoning of a specific type of spirit, or casting a certain category of blessings.

If you lose belief, then you also lose tricks. Since this game goes for simplicity, you just lose the lowest trick on the list, so make sure you order them by how important they are to you.

Tricks only apply to the paradigm they are under, and any tricks in inactive paradigms cannot be used, of course.

The Will to Power

Its about time to get back to that Will counter. Will is very important to the game. Up to now, you might have wondered what limits magic power (aside from blatancy). Willpower is it. It is the will that drives a person, and allows them to enact change upon the world.

Whenever you attempt to change a situation, you must put a will point on the line. If the action succeeds, you keep the will point. If you fail, then you lose the will point. If you succeed very well, then you gain an additional will. It is up to the group or GM to decide when an additional will point is merited, but if a player completely dominates a scene with their entertaining and well-rolled actions, then that player has probably earned the point.

There are a few wrinkles in this basic set-up, to keep things interesting. Whenever you attempt to perform magic, you are risking a whole lot more. Success will almost guarantee a will point (few things are as satisfying as shifting the world to your whims). If you fail, however, you lose a number of will points equal to your Belief in that paradigm. Belief is power, but it is also risk. Failing at something that was held so close can be devastating to a person's confidence.

If you run out of will, then you can no longer cast spells. No will means no power. You can, however, still roll for other tasks using the core three paradigms as normal. If you fail again with no will, then you lose a point of Belief to any paradigm, players choice. At this point, depression is setting in such a way that the character begins to lose faith. If the character succeeds, regain a will point. Regain will equal to Belief on an exceptional success. Lost belief must be earned back the hard way, with patience and experience.

For the desperate soul, will can also be spent and burned. Spent will means you don't risk it, you just lose it. Burnt will means you are permanently reduced in how much will you can have. For a single point of spent will, a player can add one event in er favor. You can only spend one will in this manner per roll, unless the group wants a more high powered game, in which case you can spend all you want.

By burning a point of will, you can guarantee success, or at least assure that one variable will be set to the most favorable value. This is a dangerous and desperate solution however. When you burn off will, the character is faced with such a powerful opposition, that e actually gives up a piece of erself to fight it. Burning should only be done is uttermost desperation, because once a point is burned, that spot on the will track is marked out forever.

Will can also be used in a defensive, or rather a counter-active, manner. When one mage sees another mage casting a spell, the first mage can try to interfere. There are many ways to do this, depending on how the spell is being cast. If it's a ritual, then the first mage need do nothing more than disrupt the ritual, a simple physical action.

If the mage is casting a more instantaneous spell, however, then more immediate measures will be needed. A mage on the defensive can spend will to remove events from an opponent. A mage can also burn will to ensure a failure, or a least favorable variable, on an opponent. Basically, you can do the normal will actions, but in reverse.

The last use of will is to improve your character, but that will be covered after character creation, so just hold onto that thought for a moment.

Character Creation

With some understanding of the forces that swirl around them, every mage must take the both step from learning to doing. The time has come to create a mage and enter the world of chaos.

The first step is to come up with a name and a concept. The concept is very important, because it determines who you are, what you do, and why you do it. The group as a whole should decide on a theme for the game, and pick appropriate concepts based on that theme. Some examples themes might be high school kids who play with the occult and learn its true power, or medieval mages who quest over the land in search of ancient knowledge. Both are perfectly valid games, but each requires different character concepts. The goth girl dealing with tests and depression doesn't belong in a medieval wizarding campaign anymore than a raging barbarian belongs in a high school.

Once a theme and concepts have been decided upon, you will need to choose a paradigm. Everyone starts with four paradigms, the base three plus one personal path. Choose something in line with your concept, either by making one up or picking from the list later on.

After choosing paradigms, put one point into Power, Control, and Belief for every paradigm. Then prioritize your paradigms. The most important one gets 8 more points, the second most important gets 6 points, the third one gets 4 and your least important paradigm gets only 2 extra points. You may place these extra points into any of the three qualities you want. There is a limit of 5 in any quality. Higher values may be possible, but you must usually rely on other methods to obtain control or power greater than the normal five.

With paradigms defined, you may now pick out which tricks you want. Remember that you get one trick per point of belief, and you can choose all of them right now. Again, these can be made up or chosen from the list later on. You may choose the same trick more than once, if you like. That would indicate a higher mastery of some skill, and give you two trick events in those situations.

Starting Will is equal to your highest Power plus your highest Belief. Mark off a number of circles with a little slash for the amount you have.

Zeal has not been talked about, but it is very simple. Zeal is this game's version of health. When you run out of zeal, the game is over for that character. It may be that the character is dead. More likely, the character has simply lost the drive needed to live such an exciting life, and has retired to simpler things. In a teenager game, the characters may have "grown up" at last. Zeal loss, gain, and the methods of character death are talked about in the section on combat.

Last of all, there is inventory. Character may or may not have any special items. Usually, characters should be allowed to pick one defensive and one offensive item to start out with. Different items and there uses are mused on later.

Once you have everything set down, go through and make sure the character is to your liking. Once the game starts, there's no turning back. If you are satisfied, then congratulations, you are ready to play.

Advancement

People get better over time. When faced with challenges and dangers, people will improve their abilities. RPGs use this mechanic quite a bit, as players love to see their characters grow. In *Discord*, there are no experience points. Rather, characters are advanced by spending points of Will. It costs two times the next level in any stat to raise it by one, but it costs double that to raise one of the core three paradigms. So raising a stat from 3 to 4 costs 8 points with most paradigms, and 16 points for the core three.

New paradigms cost 2 points to buy as a blank box. The new paradigm can then be upgraded for the usual Will costs. To buy a new paradigm and get a one in each stat for it would cost 8 points then.

Buying back lost Zeal costs 10 points per point. Expensive, yes, but then it takes a lot of effort to keep going in the face of hardship.

Behind the Curtain

So far, the mechanics have only been give a cursory explanation. There really is not a whole lot more to them that what has already been said, but some guidelines in their use might be helpful. After all, just what variables are involved in some activities? And how would you even begin to run a combat? Hopefully, the examples in this chapter will give you a good start to resolving unforeseen situations during gameplay.

Situations and Variables

During the course of a roleplaying game, there are generally two ways to solve conflicts: role-play and roll-play. Sometimes, character can talk their way through problems and the players controlling those characters can work out issues without a die ever having to hit the table. That is a perfectly fine way to resolve situations, but sometimes, people cannot agree on things.

When the result of a situation is in dispute, a roll should be made to determine the outcome. In most RPGs, players roll some dice which interact with that characters stats to tell them how well the character did at whatever the character was doing. *Discord* is not like that.

In *Discord*, characters are defined more by their beliefs and the strength of those beliefs than by any measure of their actual statistics. A character with a high Physical Power could be said to be strong, but it is not a given. Indeed, a character with lots of physical power may just be very good at manipulating situations to create results, which would indicate intellect more than brute strength. If you want a character who is particularly adept at being strong and tough, take tricks that indicate that. A trick "Strongman" would do it, indicating that in situations where brute force might be helpful, this character gets a bonus.

Also, unlike some games, high stats may not always be advantageous. A character with high power gets to roll more dice, and is therefor more likely to earn Events. But the character only needs events up to er Control. To look at it the other way, a character with high Control will almost always be in command of a situation, but without Power, has no means of enacting that command. Belief is a beast all to itself, as a high belief grants more tricks and other benefits, but also puts the character at greater risk.

Likewise, the results of a roll do not tell whether or not a character succeeds. In fact, nothing in the game really gives a hard and fast measure of success or failure. Rather, the game defines a method where the group can evaluate the outcome of a situation and then determine if a character succeeds or fails based on what that character hoped to achieve.

The immediate, raw result of a roll is to tell the player how many Events their character has under er control. A player will almost never have more favorable Events (those under the character's control) than that character Control score. It is very easy to have less though. If you roll poorly and get few Events, then that's tough luck. If you roll too well, then the character over does it and can't control all the changes being made. In most situations, this just means that out of control effects negate some in control ones, reducing the amount available. The GM or other players are free to try and take over those loose events and use them for themselves or against the player who rolled as well. Because events over the control maximum reduce the number of available events to use, a character has an

effective safety number of double er Control score. If more events are rolled than this number, then a critical failure occurs. In such a situation, the character has unleashed so many out of control events that not only is e unable to act, but the situation is backlashing. With a critical failure, something bad will almost always happen to the character.

On the other hand, rolling the exact amount of events needed is a celebrated occasion. Whenever a character rolls the exact number of events as their control pool, a critical success occurs. In such a situation, everything is almost bound to work out in the character's favor.

For criticals in *Discord*, very little need be done extra. For failures, the negative events will be factored in as usual and for critical successes, getting the maximum number of good events is usually enough. If the group feels it is warranted, an additional slight penalty or bonus may be awarded for a critical, but these things usually handle themselves.

Once a player has a handful of events to make use of, the games not-unique, but definitely uncommon resolution mechanic comes into play. Before a situation is rolled, the group or the GM determines what variables are important to it. Now, a situation test need not be concerned with every single variable, just the most important ones. Who cares about how good the lighting in the art room is, when all that is important is how good the finished piece of art will be. Quality is an important variable, Lighting is not. Likewise, the challenge need not concern over canvas and paint quality, since those are just sub-elements of Quality, and are already covered by that variable.

In any task, the group or GM can make it harder or easier to "succeed" at by changing the starting values of variables. This is very obvious really. A challenge of average difficulty should have average ratings in its variables. To go back to the example of the painting, say that the group decides that the painting takes five hours to complete, and that it will be completed with average quality. Those are the results that would occur if the artist rolled no events, or chose not to roll. Does painting normally take five hours, or does it take five days? It does not matter. As long as the group is ok with the timing and such, then the factual reality of things can take a backseat.

The artist, now, does not wish to take five hours, and wants more than just average quality. So the artist rolls. With a Power of 3 and a Control of 4, e gets 3 Events. The artist also has the trick, "Painter."

Now the artist can assign the events to the variables, changing the nature of the situation. If all that was done was to edit the numbers, however, it would get very dull. They are called Events for a reason. Either the artist, or one of the other players or the GM should introduce some situations to this task that force a change. The GM says that the lighting here is horrid and that the paints are of poor quality. The artist then uses er Painter event and one of the other events to counteract these two forces, by opening a window and getting fresh paint. The actual result of these actions is that the painting is of higher quality, by two steps. With two events left, the artist simply states that in a burst of creativity brought on by the sunlight, e manages to finish the painting in only three hours (reduced variable of time by two, from five to three).

Is the painting action a success? That depends. If the artist wanted or needed a painting of significantly higher quality, then it is a failure. On the other hand, the painting is quite excellent, so if it is of good enough quality, then it is a success. By using this system of variables and subjective success, the game gains a lot of depth. It also becomes significant that you can shift the variables around

a good bit. With an event, instead of just raising or lowing one variable, you can choose to negatively affect one variable so that you can double effect a positive one. If the artist really did need a better painting, then e could have increased the time taken by one hour and then used the Painter event to increase the quality by two steps.

Common Variables

While the individual variables in a situation are as unique as the situation itself, some qualities show up again and again in different tasks. These common variables can make working out situations much easier, since familiarity with them makes resolution much faster.

Time. Value = Numeric w/ Unit.

Present in almost every situation, the time needed to complete a task can be highly useful knowledge. Usually, in a game, you will not use mixed units of time or fractional time. You just round it off. So a situation might take 6 hours to resolve, instead of 5 hours and 45 minutes.

Time is always presented with a unit. All the standard units are there, in addition to the RPG standard, the round and the turn. A turn is one person's action and a round is one turn for everybody. In game-time, both are about the same length since turns are assumed to happen near-simultaneously. A round is about 3-5 seconds long, enough time for everybody to attempt one thing during a hectic situation like combat.

When adjusting time using Events, each event can raise or lower the time taken by one of whatever unit is being used. If it is being lowered below one, then use them to half it. So one hour becomes ½ hour, then ¼ hour. That's the exception to the no fractional time bit.

Quality. Value = Descriptive.

Sometimes just getting it done is enough, but often it becomes an issue as to how well you do it. Quality tell you this, using a descriptive modifier. You can convert this to a "+3 success" if you want, but most people have an easier time understanding descriptive words. Also, the connotations of a word give you a slightly better idea of just how good a level of success is. Below is the list of descriptive values. It can be used for other stuff besides quality, but this seems like a good place to put it. Usually, a situation starts at Average, and can be improved or degraded from there. If another increase will send it off the chart, then you have two options. Either those points are wasted (the chart is all) or you can make up new values (Godly + 1, Super-Godly). You might also employ diminishing returns for higher and lower values. Really, things can only get so good or so bad. A piece of art is either wonderful, or its crap, but only art critics are going to argue whether one piece of art at the Godly level is better than another piece of the same caliber.

Numeric	Positive	Negative
0	Average/Decent	Average/Decent
±1	Fair	Mediocre
±2	Good	Poor
±3	Great	Bad
±4	Superior	Awful
±5	Excellent	Terrible
±6	Breathtaking/Epic	Disturbing
±7	Godly	Abysmal

As said numerous times, most situations begin with the piece already at average. If a harder challenge is needed, start out with something lower. If a easier time is desired, start out higher. With three dice, a person can expect to get about one to two Events per roll, so getting up to good or great is not out of the realm of possibility for the average person, but superior work takes extra effort.

Dedication. Value = Percentage.

Although it is not on the character sheet, everybody also has a trait called dedication. Dedication starts at Belief times 20, and indicates how committed to finishing something that character is. So during a fist fight, your character has er Physical paradigm's Belief times twenty in dedication.

Dedication is a percentile value. These are good values to use when something needs to be done, but you do not want to deal with figuring out units. You might use this during a race if you do not care about how long it takes you to run the 100 meters (a unit type value, done like time), but rather are concerned with who completes the entire race. Percents can also be used to see when, if ever, a certain variable is completely removed, as in the case with Dedication.

A key example of dedication in use it during battle. One character swing a club at another character. That's using an Event, and the event can lower dedication by 10%. Since the attacker has a tool for aid, some extra can be added on, say it goes up to 15%. The defending character can use an event as well, to cancel out the first (dodging), but that extra 5% still gets through. It would take two entire events to completely cancel it, but the character would earn up 5% extra dedication for it.

Dedication cannot go above 100%, nor below 0.

Some percentile values can, if the group wants, but not this one. Dedication is not to be confused with health any more than Zeal. Zeal is long term ability to carry on, long term resolve. Dedication is short term. If you run out of dedication, then you are out of the fight. Maybe you are knocked out, maybe you just got tired and chose to sit out. Either way, your character does not come back in until the situation changes such that e can.

While there are infinitely many more variables, those three should give you a good idea of what kind of things variables can do. One more type that wasn't listed is the Boolean. A boolean variable is either on or off, true or false. A good use for this might be a spell effect of some kind, or a literal switch. A single event can turn it on, or turn it off.

Most situations will only need time and quality, or maybe just time and a boolean. You either do it, or you don't, but how long does it take you. There are two ways to fail such a test: taking too long, or trying to rush and not finishing it. The player gets to pick how it happens. Feel free to make up new variables as they are needed, or use one variable more than once if it seems appropriate. For example, writing computer code might have three variables: time, quality of operation, and quality of code. In a short time, a programmer could write working but sloppy code, or take his time to good looking and working programs. There is also the option to write non-working, sloppy code in a short time, but that seems an odd one to pick. In this case, the player must choose which quality is most important. In this case, probably good working, but some situations will not be so clear cut. Take advantage of that to make the game challenging and entertaining.

Physical Paradigm

The actions resolved with the physical paradigm are things likes sports, fighting, races, horseback riding, and surviving the elements. Basically, anything that requires lots of work from your body, but not too much of an emotional or mental challenge.

Most physical situations can be resolved fairly easily. Just roll the dice and see if you can work out what needs to be done. When throwing a baseball, for instance, the only variables that really apply are distance and accuracy. Spend those events wisely, since you have to choose between how far it goes and how close it gets to target. For reference, those two variables would probably be a numeric-unit of Distance (units of 10 meters probably) and Quality. The more events put into quality, the better the form of the throw. In baseball, this translates into less movement and work for the catcher. A fair throw might be such that the catcher need only take one step. A godly throw would be so good, that you get it in the catcher's glove without the catcher even moving er hand. For combat throws (throwing to hit with intention to hurt), quality would determine how painful it is and would translate into dedication loss at 10% per level, just as if you had lowered dedication directly instead.

Another example of physical action is sneaking. In this case, time and quality are again the most important factors. How long does it take a person to sneak from one end of a hallway to the other, and how well hidden can that person remain? This kind of thing is actually an opposed situation. Any guards who might see have to score better at spotting than the sneaker does at sneaking. Thankfully,

a set of all black clothes and some soft-soled shoes might aid the sneak in getting a few extra levels of quality.

For most groups, the main use of physical paradigm will probably be combat. After all, the main premise that RPGs were founded on is "Kill them and take their stuff!" Combat in *Discord* is done in rounds, and is very narrative, like the rest of the game. You can play it realistically and have characters swing fists at each other's rapidly bloodying bodies, or you can play it off like a high-action kung fu movie.

The style of play matters only to the group, not the rules. A punch or a kick or a brilliantly executed wind of the seven fists technique all do the same 10% loss to the opponent's Dedication. When dedication is at 0, that character is out of the fight.

Dedication is lost for a lot of reasons, and can be regained by simply spending events to rest. Remember, it is not health. A person might never take a blow and still lose the fight, because that person lost the desire to keep fighting. Maybe there were too many close hits, or all that time dodging has finally worn the person out.

Tools like weapons and armor are discussed in the objects section, but for now just know that a good piece of equipment can turn the tide of battle to your favor or open up new strategic options.

Other paradigms can be used in combat, of course. Spell casting under such hectic conditions can be tough, but can definitely sway the direction of the fight. When using any other paradigm, roll it like normal, but understand that your dedication is still based on your physical belief.

Battle is very fast and situations can change rapidly. To keep things in order, combat is divided into rounds. A round is about 3 to 5 seconds long. Due to the variable

assignment method that *Discord* uses, an entire round of combat is resolved with just one roll.

Each combat round is resolved with a series of steps.

1. Declare Intentions – Each fighter must have a motivation, an intention. Go around the table and have everyone state what their general intent is. At this point, the action need not be specific, just something simple like, "I fall into a defensive posture," or "I rush forward to bash his head in."

2. Choose paradigms – Each combatant should now pick the paradigm that best suits the action at hand. This will usually be physical, but the others can apply. Maybe one player wants to intimidate an opponent into backing down (a Spiritual action).

3. Roll dice – Everybody rolls at the same time. Figure out how many events you have earned up. Any tricks that apply may be used, but remember that tricks only work for the action they specify. In other words, you can't use trick of Dodge to shoot somebody.

4. Determine order – Most games have a separate initiative roll. In this game, you have to take initiative. To facilitate this, everyone has an Initiative variable as well. Whoever has the highest one, performs their actions first. If no one spends events to raise initiative, then everyone goes at the same time. The first person to say that they run into battle for an attack gets the initiative and er target is second.

5. Make actions – Spend your events now to reduce the opponent's Dedication or to set them up for more loss later. Also, you might want to save a few events to reduce enemy damage. Because the person with initiative is faster and can see what is happening first, a character with higher initiative knows what a lower initiative character is about to do. To do this in the

game, a player with high initiative may ask what an opponent is going to do, if the foe is slower in the battle.

That's the basic flow of every combat round. After all the action is resolved, declare new intentions and start it all over again. There are a few more snags to combat, though, to keep it interesting.

First off, once initiative is taken, it is kept. The order only changes if someone's initiative lowers or rises. Both can be done with events, from anyone. If initiative order changes, it goes into effect on the next round. So remember that attacks do not always need to do damage. A quick blow to the kneecaps will do the weapon's damage to Dedication, but the player can choose to lower the opponents initiative with that event instead of the 10% damage.

When on the slow end of initiative, life can be pretty rough. The opponent knows what you are going to do, and can counter it. Worse, a person with initiative can counter it for less events, which means a person with low initiative is on the receiving end for longer and cannot put up much of an attack. Gaining the upper hand in a fight is always highly important.

What was that about less events? With creative usage, you can get more out of your events. For example, you can counter an enemy's attacks one for one with events, canceling out any damage that the opponent does. This is the equivalent of blocking or parrying every attack in a fight. The more elegant approach, if you have higher initiative, would be to simply dodge. Getting out of the way is a one event action, you are only moving a couple of inches, a foot at most. Sidestepping negates all damage, because the opponent's attacks just hit air. Now you have all your other actions available to pummel the foe with. Keep in mind, this only works if you have initiative. If the

other person is faster than you, then the hits land before you get a chance to move, but the move is still made.

Dodging may seem like a cheat, but it is perfectly valid by how events are meant to work. They are tiny packets of action--a currency of storytelling. So always look for the elegant solution to a problem. Do not, however, be fooled by requests that are not in line with how events function. If your action is a super powered overhead bash that does tons of damage, it does 10+Weapon% per event spent on it, and no more. If that bash is so powerful, then put all your events into it, leaving you fully open to attack because of that one slow bash. But do remember the rule about lowering variables. You could spend one trick event to lower your initiative and raise your damage by 20% instead of the normal 10. That would simulate a powerful but slow attack quite nicely.

Other actions that can be taken during combat include blocks and parries. A block is the assumed default for events spent defensively. You are attempting to negate damage by letting the blows land in less vital areas. A shield or good armbands can aid in blocking. Parrying is using a weapon to deflect the blow of another weapon. For all intents, parrying and blocking are the same thing in the game. You can describe them as you want, but each is handled the same. Depending on the weapon, you can add its damage rating to your defense when parrying with it.

The following are some optional rules and minor tweaks to get combat into the tone that best suits the game. Essentially, there are two tones for combat, gritty and cinematic. Gritty combat is high realism, dirty and deadly. People go down quick in gritty combat and everyone pays a price for violence. Cinematic combat is like in movies, fast and dramatic. In cinematic combat, the losers might come back another day and the winners walk away with barely a scratch. Choose the kind that works best for you, or combine elements of both to get exactly what you want.

Gritty Combat Options

For gritty combat, you want to really make things hurt. Make them count. If you want really fast fights, double the effects of all events. A successful attack now knocks off a painful 20% by itself. You can take as many hits as you have belief, at most.

To further enforce the painful feel of combat, allow events to create a new variable: Damaged (Location). This allows for targeted shots and real hurt to be done. For example Damaged (Right Arm) could be created by swing a lead pipe at someone. A damaged limb cannot be used as well, and all events made using it are half as effective. A second point of damage to a limb makes it only one-fourth as effective (5% under increased damage rules). A third point will disable the limb. The locations that can be used are: Head, Right/Left Arm, Right/Left Leg, and Torso. More detailed locations can be used if you like, but only give them one damage point in that case. So you can have Damaged(Right Hand) and that hand is now broken and useless, but the right arm is still only at one-half effect. A damaged torso limits all actions. A fully damaged torso or head is fight over, automatic loss. With that much bashing to the skull or guts, a person just loses all ability or will to fight.

If you think fist fights are deadly though, then make sure you avoid guns. Projectile weapons like guns and bows are too fast to be dodged, blocked, or parried. Armor can reduce the damage, but otherwise, you take everything that the shooter gives you. To hit someone with a gun requires a certain degree of quality. Usually this is any positive number(a Fair or better), but certain situations can increase or lower the difficulty. For example, if the

target has initiative, then it is one step harder to hit. The target is moving and the shooter is lagging behind. Darkness and smoke can also increase the difficulty. Long range also adds a step. If the shooter has enough quality after all that, then the hit is made. The gun does its built in damage, plus 10% per level of quality over the one needed to hit. So if a shooter needed a Good to hit someone, but paid up to a Superior, then the gun does its base damage plus 20% extra. If you are using wound locations, it also does one wound to wherever it hits.

Cinematic Combat Options

If your group is really into fighting, then it might be wise to use cinematic rules. This allows fights to carry on in slightly more flashy fashion, with less consequences.

First off, leave damage alone. The 10% plus weapon damage should be ok. If you really want to draw fights out, then base effect can be reduced to 5%. Don't use hit locations, because they add needless complexity and deadliness.

For guns and bows, you still can't dodge them, exactly. What you can do is use your plot immunity to have the bullets just not hit you or not hurt. Projectile damage can be reduced like any other kind of damage, but you cannot parry bullets and arrows unless you are playing a *really* cinematic game.

To add a layer of excitement, use stunt rules. To perform a stunt, you just have to describe your action exceptionally well. Make it fun and interesting. If you've played Exalted, you know what this about. It works pretty much the same way too. If its a good description, roll one die to the side of your main roll. Any events it generates are automatically under control, free of charge. For more interesting stunts, award more stunt dice. It is

recommended that about 3 be the most dice for any one stunt.

Loss and Redemption

The thing about violence is that people get hurt, people die, and no one walks away the same. *Discord* reflects this in a number of ways. There are many things that you can lose because of a fight. Four of them are covered briefly below.

Dedication is one thing. It represents how committed you are to finishing something. By resting or pumping up, a character can regain dedication. Being hit and being attacked lowers it. When you run out of dedication, you are out of the fight.

Will is long term resolve. It is the power to shape the world. During a fight, so many rolls will be made that keeping track of them all for the sake of Will is a major pain. Instead, only count major actions for Will, like casting a spell. At the end of a fight, the loser loses will and the winner receives will.

Zeal is the really long term commitment. It is how much passion a character has. Without passion, a character is effectively dead. The character is no longer playable, because e is either rotting in the ground or retired to the simple life or something. Whenever you lose a fight or suffer a major setback, lose one Zeal. Zeal is hard to get back, so take care of yourself.

Belief is perhaps the riskiest trait of them all. Belief measures a lot of things, including faith and self-confidence. Whenever you lose a point of Zeal due to setbacks or losing a fight, roll the belief in any active paradigm. If you get any events, you are safe. If you roll nothing, or if you roll more than double your control, you lose a point of Belief. If you had a trick for that point, it is also lost. People who face hardship sometimes embrace

their faith and sometimes they lose it. The more faith they have, the easier it can be to hold on to it. Losing faith also means losing what that faith gave you.

For a paradigm like Christianity, losing belief is easy to visualize, but what does it mean to lose belief in Physical? For each core paradigm, belief in it represents a certain kind of self-confidence and care. Losing belief in them has very dire consequences.

Physical belief is how strong and healthy a person views their body to be. A person with high belief feels that "the body is a temple." With very low belief, the person is sickly and possibly has a condition such as obesity or osteoporosis. With no belief, the person is a cripple and very sickly.

Mental belief is how active and healthy the mind seems to be. A person with high belief is very lucid and confident in their paths. With low belief, the person usually has mental problems, like depression or schizophrenia. At zero belief, the person is completely insane or is mentally handicapped.

Spiritual belief is an aura of good feeling and comfort that radiates off the person. With a high belief, the person is likable and easy to approach. With a low belief, the person seems grouchy and easily angered, possibly violent. With zero belief, a person is cold and dead and no fun to be around.

When any belief is at zero, the player has the option to let the character just "die." Warding the character in a hospital or mental institution is one option. A person with no belief in a stat can be annoying to play, and is probably getting low on Zeal anyway. In such a situation, early retirement may be preferable to facing any more pain that the world has to offer.

Of course, if the player wants to play a mentally deranged hermit and play the character as such, that's also an option.

Healing is sort of an off stage process in this game. Zeal can only be recovered with Will points, and Dedication resets at the start of every new fight. If you took any new variable wounds, by using the hit locations optional rule, then those are about the only thing that you could worry about healing. Wounds heal slowly, over time, and only with medical attention. In general, it takes one week for a level one wound to vanish, it takes one month for a level two, and three months for a level three. If the damage is to a specific location (like a destroyed hand) then it takes the full three months to heal it. This is all assuming that the wounds can be healed. A broken hand is one thing, a shattered hand is another. Depending on how gritty the game is, the hand may be lost for good. If a wound seems so bad that it just won't ever fully heal, a point of physical power or control may be taken away, to indicate diminished ability.

All other damage, as mentioned, just sort of evaporates after the fight. If you took a sword across the chest, feel free to roleplay like theres a big cut on you. If the group wants to simulate bleeding, to really up the danger level, then lose one point of temporary Zeal per minute until medical treatment is given. After that , the Zeal recovers up to whatever the actual amount is. If you run out of zeal, you die. Or you suffer a horrible medical emergency that you just barely survive, but retire once out of the hospital. Either way, game over for that character.

Keeping track of all those variables can be a pain. Writing them on the character sheet is troublesome for some, like Dedication or initiative, which changes rapidly. One good solution is to track Dedication with coins. A handful of nickels and some pennies do great. For

initiative, try setting one die aside and putting it on whatever your initiative currently is.

Mental Paradigm

Actions of the mental paradigm are a mixed bag. First off, it covers any application of the mind, such as problem solving and memorization. Secondly, it is used for perception, the gathering and interpreting of knowledge. Finally, it is used for any complex tool use, like lock-picking or crafting.

Problem solving and the like are easily resolved. Roll your mental paradigm and assign those events, just like any other test. For memory or information tests, roll and every event is one piece of information that the character now has. So if a mage is researching on the internet to find new spells, roll mental paradigm and any events provide information that might lead to the spell being discovered.

Perception is handled exactly like information tests. Do keep in mind that the starting quality values for test can be higher, so things which are hard to see can require more events than just average. Say that a room contains a desk, a key on the desk, and a scrap of paper under the desk. A person enters the room and rolls mental paradigm as a perception test. With no events at all, the person sees the desk, it's obvious. One event lets er see the key, and two events or more reveals the piece of paper. If the person did not roll well enough to see one of those items, then the person just did not notice them for some reason.

Crafting is a bit more complex, but only by a slight degree. To craft an item, a person needs the right tools and usually a trick for that type of craft. A person without the trick of "Blacksmithing" can certainly try to make a sword, but the results will most certainly be less than stunning. Assuming the person has everything e needs,

make a mental paradigm roll. The factors being worried about are time and quality. This is one test where you might also want to employ a junk variable as a difficulty factor. What that means is, say that the blacksmith is making a sword out of a very hard, magic metal. This metal is hard to work with, so it has a Difficulty of 2. Whatever the blacksmith rolls, the difficulty factor absorbs two events automatically. So the smith must get at least 2 to even begin working. Any excess events can be used normally to decrease time or improve quality.

Once the item is made, it starts with average stats, the stats that are listed for whatever item that is. Any points in quality above average allow the smith to all more to the weapon. A higher quality sword might be more durable and do more damage. This is one of the key advantages to making your own stuff, it tends to be better quality if you are good enough to work with the materials.

Things like crafting and lock-picking are extended actions. That is to say, all actions take time, but these can take a good while. Also, many extended actions are continuable; you can drop them for a while and pick up again where you left off, or add on once you are finished. Depending on the results of the previous test, this may or may not be possible, and it can have varying effects on the variables of the test. For example, if the smith above decided to reforge the sword, to add more onto it, that would be fine, as the sword was made properly the first time. In fact, the GM decides that the difficulty is only 1 now because the metal has been prepped by the first forging already.

Reworking or retrying an extended action is a great time to employ the law of diminishing returns. The second forging of the sword should only add more stats to it if the blacksmith can meet a higher quality than the last time e

made it. To be really mean, the smith can actually degrade the sword by not meeting a certain degree of quality.

Spiritual Paradigm

The powers of the spiritual paradigm also vary quite a bit. All at once, spirit represents how well people interact with each other and how in control of er emotions a person is. Spirit is the governing force behind social actions and self-control.

When trying to convince someone of something, treat it like a regular challenge, roll and add events to time and quality. Like a crafting challenge, there might be a difficulty.

Debate is a fun application of spiritual paradigm, because it allows you to employ social combat. Treat this exactly like regular combat, except that instead of hitting each other with pointy things, the combatants are dueling it out with dangerously pointed words. Blocks and parries take on a whole new meaning. Dodges are not possible in the normal sense, as you cannot side step an argument. A person can side step the issue, though. It may be a dirty trick, but it works. Evidence that supports the case can be used as a weapon or a defense, but usually only once.

Another use of spirit is empathy, understanding other people. Empathy is rolled like a perception or information test, only the information in this case will be about the mental and emotional state of the person, and maybe even possible causes for such a state.

Self-control is a useful application for storytelling. Having a character roll spiritual paradigm to check for fear, panic, anger, or other strong emotions. Set a difficulty or quality as well, so the players have to get at least a few events, depending on how strong the emotional stimulus is. A player might also choose to roll if the player is unsure what the character would do. Dice shouldn't rule decisions, but they can certainly help out in a pinch.

Wielding the Unseen Forces

So far, this book has talked a lot about everything and not a whole lot about the main attraction, the magic. Up to this point, the game has been merely describing the baser magics. The subtle things that do not really require true magic, blatant magic. Now the time has come to understand the swirling forces that surround us all, and how to tame them. Its time to learn the *real* magic.

In order to cast spells, a character needs a paradigm aside from the core three. Lucky for you, every character starts with one. The paradigm guides the character's energies, the character's will, into a suitable form for magic to happen. Without a framework of belief to operate from, you might as well just be mumbling about demons in your basement, because nothing is going to happen.

You also need a spell. You can make up spells on the fly, but the character will get much more use out of a predefined and practiced spell. To make a spell, either on the fly or before hand, you must ask yourself the 6 questions. For each question, mark down the cost for your answer.

Who?

Who or what does the spell effect? This is called the Target. The target can be yourself, an object, an animal, another person, or even a whole group of people. Consider who this spell effects. Be careful, some things are resilient to change.

When and Where?

Does the spell go off when triggered by a certain time or place? Mark it if so, but there is no cost adjustment.

Casting a spell that takes time to trigger just means the target has longer to turn it off, but has the advantage of waiting for a more opportune time to go off. The risk and reward is built in.

Why?

Why are you casting this spell? In *Discord*, the reason matters. Think about it while you read on.

What?

What does this spell do? This is the Effect. In general, one effect costs one event. A magic effect can do just about anything, introducing new variables and adjusting existing variables just like normal actions.

How?

How is the spell cast? Do you flick your wrist and it triggers or is there a long and complex ritual involved? Your paradigm has a lot to do with how you cast a spell. The entire reason chaos mages use paradigms is to give them tools and a framework to cast from.

Coming Together

Casting spells is actually quite easy, for the player. For the character, there better be some roleplaying going on. When casting, the mage may choose how many events to put into it. The more events, the more power. For most games, assume a maximum of 5 power. Blatancy is equal to the power, but may be raised or lowered to any amount for one extra event.

The how and why of spell casting are not just tacked on extras. The better you describe your reasoning, the more accurately reality can reflect your changes. First off,

the how. Paradigms determine what methods are available to a person. The casting must be in line with the paradigm. For example, a person using a Christian paradigm might read scripture to enact a protective field over a person. That person could not just erect the field with no help though, they need the paradigm. Likewise, the mage cannot use scripture to light someone on fire without a good explanation. That's just not what the paradigm is about. If someone in the group feels that a spell is outside the paradigm that you are using, you cannot cast the spell.

Now, as to the why. Everyone casts spells for their own reasons. Many mages are in it for enlightenment. Magic as a conduit to an even higher understanding. Some just want the power. Whatever the reason, you must have one. Casting spells that further your agenda gives a free bonus event, just like a trick. However, casting spells against your beliefs incurs a penalty of one event, like a difficulty rating. If an action is considered neutral, it has no extra.

And now it is back to the what. *Discord* does not have a built in power or spell creation system. In the end, all such systems are limiting in some way and magic in this game has enough limits already. Basically, to cast a spell, you simply choose a method, an effect, and a description. The method is how you cast it, the effect is what the end result is, and the description is what happens to get there. The more events you put into it, the more powerful the spell and the more drastic the effect. A Good Luck Blessing of power 1 might just add a slight bit of fortune to a person, effect is 1 extra event on that person's next action. A Good Luck Blessing of 5 is going to be dramatic though, like the person has supernaturally good luck and gets 1 extra event on every test for the next week.

You might also have noticed the blatancy increase on those. Usually, it is best to just describe what happens and then apply a blatancy based on that. The power 1 is a blatancy 1, very subtle. The power 5 is about a blatancy of 3. A person being that lucky for a week is just down right weird. If a person with at least a 4 belief were to realize what was going on, then the believer could cancel out the effect by disbelieving in it. Of course, by spending an extra event, you can lower the blatancy of the action, but then the blessing cannot operate as effectively. If it is the case that lowered blatancy reduces the effective power of a spell, then the mage can increase some other variable. For example, the blessing might last a month instead of a week, because its effect is subtler. Do note that if the blatancy is *forced* down because of disbelief, you do not get that increase. The power is just forced down with it.

When casting a spell, there are also some restrictions based on what you are casting on. When casting against another person, you just remove their belief from your power before rolling. Belief is protection. Likewise, anything that the person believes in gets protection. Objects, pets, and such things which are close to a person get their belief minus one in protection. Things of less value get belief minus two and so on down until you have things that get no protection. Even something so mundane as a lost hair band can have protection on it, which becomes a real pain for divination spells.

You may have noticed that on the whole, magic is not all the powerful. A person can do simple effects pretty easily, but most of those could have also been done without magic. This is all true. Magic is a subtle force, not an infinite well of power, at least at first. Blatant spells can do a lot, but they can be canceled out by non-magic believers. Thankfully, there are ways to get around some of the restrictions on magic.

The most important method is the ritual. Most magic is not cast on the fly in the street. Too many factors to account for can ruin all but the most subtle of effects. That is why mages who need powerful spells make them ahead of time, using ritual magic.

Magic, by default, is an instant action. That means that magic can be cast in combat as quickly as someone fires a gun or throws a punch. It takes less than a second for will to transform into power.

By using a ritual instead, magic becomes an extended action. By taking the time to do it right, the mage can gather all the power needed. Also, rituals benefit from preparations, like reagents and auspicious times. Casting a complex and powerful spell is much easier when you have a well drawn spell circle, some reagents, incense, and a full moon to work under.

For every extra bit of help that you can bring into a ritual, add one to three free events. Proper reagents adds one event. The full moon adds two, for an uncommon occasion. Were it Halloween, that would add three, for very powerful timing. The spell circle and incense are a nice touch, so the mage also gets two more events for good setting to cast in.

All those extras really stack up. Now the mage can increase the power of the spell. Extra events can eat up penalties in no time, even the belief protection. So how long does a magic ritual take? For game purposes, assume that the hoped for power level of the spell is the number of hours the ritual takes. So using a ritual for a power 1 spell (a bit of overkill really), would take one hour. With a ritual, power levels can be reached that are higher than five. In theory, a ritual that takes long enough and with the right conditions could reach any power level.

Shaping Events

The rules for what an event can do have already been discussed. Still, events can be confusing. They do a lot, but are limited, but where is the limit?

To repeat the earlier list, Events can:
- Raise or Lower a variable by about 10%.
- Increase or Decrease time by one of whatever unit is being used (hour, minute, second, etc).
- Raise or Lower a descriptive quality by one level.
- Add one new variable to a situation.
- Raise or lower one variable in order to double raise or lower another one.

The first option is the most common, and the baseline rule. An event is worth about 10% by itself. That's the whole basis of combat.

Option two comes into play with units of any type actually. If a ball can be thrown in 10 meter increments, then each event adds 10 meters. If a task is performed in 2 hour increments, then one event can lower or raise the time by two hours.

Raising and lowering descriptive qualities is simply that, up or down the chart one step per event.

New variables are where magic really comes into play. Imagine a person pushing a box. The variables involved are time and quality. The pusher needs a certain quality to push the box where e wants it to go. Now a mage comes in and lights the box on fire. A new variable has been introduced, Burning Damage.

The last option is the rule that lets you take more time to do things right, or to in some other way make things harder in one way to be easier in another. The group has the right to veto any use of this rule that seems

out of place. For instance, if you are trying to push down a tree, you are going to need magic or a lot of strength. People cannot take more time to do it, as taking three hours to push on the tree instead of just one will not do anything extra for you.

Certain actions can only be done once per round, regardless of events rolled. For instance, a pistol which is not semiautomatic can only be fired once per round. A bow may only be fired once per round. Only one spell may be cast per round. A melee attack can be made as one big attack or several small attacks.

Items and Inventory

For most people, the right tools can make all the difference. Items are really simple in *Discord*. In general, all items add extra value to one variable. For example, a sword or any weapon adds damage, which causes events used for attack to remove more dedication. Armor removes damage, causing the wearer to lose less dedication. Items can also have special properties, such as a gun's ability to not be dodged. Just use the items listed here as examples towards making your own.

Melee Weapons
Dagger/Blackjack: +5% damage
Short Sword/Club: +10% damage
Long Sword: +15% damage
Two-Handed Sword: +20% damage

Ranged Weapons
Sling: +5% damage, short range
Bow: +10% damage, medium range
Crossbow: +15% damage, medium range
Pistol: +20% damage, medium range
Rifle: +20% damage, long range
Assault Rifle: +20% damage, semiautomatic, long range

Armor
Leather Vest: -5% damage
Kevlar Mark I: -10% damage
Kevlar Mark II: - 15% damage
Kevlar Mark III: -20% damage

Shields
Buckler: -1 die from melee attacker's power
Kite Shield: -2 dice from melee attacker's power
Tower Shield: -3 dice from melee attacker's power
Riot Shield: -3 dice from melee attacker's power, removes 10% damage from bullet attackers.

Magic Aids
Crystals: Free event to any magic actions
Carved Wand: +1 control for all magic actions
Tarot Deck: 2 free events for divination actions

Tools
Lockpicks: +1 control to lockpick actions
Toolbox: 1 free event to repair actions
Swiss Army Knife: No bonus, but adds a little extra leverage in descriptions

Paradigm Shifts

The following is a list of possible paradigms, there are many more, but here are some sample ones. Each paradigm is built by setting one or more types of magic that paradigm is good at and one or more that it is bad at.

Christian
Good: Defenses and Blessings
Bad: Summoning and To Other People
Tricks: Scripture, Saints, Faith Healing

Buddhism
Good: Meditation and Self Improvement
Bad: Direct Effects and Materialism
Tricks: Zen Koans, the Eightfold Path, Travelling

Satanism
Good: Materialism
Bad: Helping others
Tricks: Rituals, Making Money

Wicca
Good: Auspicious Timing
Bad: Casting on the fly
Tricks: Nature magic, Crystal magic

AfterWords

I'm down to my last hour on this 24-Hour RPG project. I got most of the writing I wanted done, and I think the game is playable and achieves most of the goals I aimed for.

As the clock ticks down, I'm writing up this little bit, finishing any fiction and charts I might need, and maybe finding some art.

I'm disappointed that I didn't have more time to write up some GM material, and a few more rules here and there. I'm also sad that I didn't get a chance to really playtest this beast. I can only hope that this is more than just a random spewing of crap, and that there is, in fact, a game here.

The next page has the character sheet on it. I at least got that done. It's only a half-page, so you get two for one!

And finally, I'm sorry if I'd offended anyone through ignorance. I tried to research my material enough to understand it fairly well, but I'm sure I missed things here and there. It's just a little game, and I'm just a harried and rushed college student. Gimme a break.

Hope you really like the game, and that it at least inspires you to carry through with your own ideas.

Sincerely,
Chris Andrews – Uploaded at 7:11, 19 minutes before due

PS – I've got to thank my best friend and roommate, Ryan Cain. I cheated a bit and he did the cover art for me. He also did the ink on half of it, the good half. Check out his site: http://xenomega.250free.com/ It's a little cheesy, but he's a great artist. Pay him to make good art for you, now!

Name_____   **DISCORD**
Concept_____   *Character Sheet*
                                        Will
| Physical | Mental | Spiritual | 00 ○
|---|---|---| ○
| Power ○○○○○ | Power ○○○○○ | Power ○○○○○ | ○
| Control ○○○○○ | Control ○○○○○ | Control ○○○○○ | ○
| Belief   Tricks | Belief   Tricks | Belief   Tricks | 05 ○
| ○_____ | ○_____ | ○_____ | ○
| ○_____ | ○_____ | ○_____ | ○
| ○_____ | ○_____ | ○_____ | 10 ○
| ○_____ | ○_____ | ○_____ | ○

_____   _____   _____
Power ○○○○○   Power ○○○○○   Power ○○○○○   15 ○
Control ○○○○○ Control ○○○○○ Control ○○○○○
Belief   Tricks   Belief   Tricks   Belief   Tricks
○_____   ○_____   ○_____   20 ○
○_____   ○_____   ○_____
○_____   ○_____   ○_____
○_____   ○_____   ○_____
○_____   ○_____   ○_____   25 ○

_____   _____   **The Quality Scale**   Zeal
Power ○○○○○   Power ○○○○○   #   +   -   00 ○
Control ○○○○○ Control ○○○○○ 0 Average/Decent   ○
Belief   Tricks   Belief   Tricks   1 Fair   Mediocre   ○
○_____   ○_____   2 Good   Poor   05 ○
○_____   ○_____   3 Great   Bad
○_____   ○_____   4 Superior   Awful
○_____   ○_____   5 Excellent Terrible
○_____   ○_____   6 Epic   Disturbing   10 ○
                              7 Godly   Abysmal

Inventory