

## Basic concept

Magic works on the *opposite* of expectations. (It's the *inverse* of Glam's power.) The more (other) people believe strongly that it's absolutely impossible for you to do something, the easier it is for you to use magic to do that thing.

This has various nicely thematic results:

## Underdogs win

It's the classic fairytale schema. Who succeeds in the contests to win the princess's hand? The *absolute most unlikely person*, the simple-minded peasant boy who comes in dressed in rags and whom everyone laughs at. Who wins the archery tournament? The strange man who shows up at the last moment and insists on shooting blindfolded. You can't use magic to win if you're already seriously in the running, or even if you're just part of the crowd; you have to look so incompetent that people are actively expecting you to fail.

## People don't believe

One of the questions for magical worlds is always whether people know about the magic or not. If not, how and why is it being concealed? This concept comes with an easy answer. If you start to suspect that magic might work (*especially* if you have the right basic concept), you'll start to have a general low-level belief that things could turn out magically in an unexpected way, which will *actively prevent* any magic happening around you that you don't do yourself (and if you're only suspecting a tiny bit, you're unlikely to have figured it out well enough to *do* any). So no one is likely to get to the level of actually believing in magic.

## A reason to keep a secret

Suppose that you've figured out how magic works, and are trying to use it. You've got a good reason to try and keep this secret from your family and friends. If you tell them about magic, they'll start expecting magical things to happen, which means you won't be able to do magic to or around them. Which means that if they come down with some absolutely incurable terminal disease, you won't be able to cure them magically, because they think you might be able to.

## Fairies in disguise

We also get another classic fairy tale trope! Fairies (well, in this case, people who know about magic) can disguise themselves as feeble elderly women who you meet on the road -- someone who you think *absolutely can't help you* defeat the evil dragon. (They can't just be a normal person on the road and count on you not-expecting people to be able to cast magic on your sword; they need *really strong* expectations, as in "this person can't possibly do anything to help me with my quest even a little!")

## Mechanics of Magic Use

Figuring it out

Making it happen

What you can do

How it scales

Limitations