Arx PRP Guidelines - Magic and Threats

How to roll for random magic abilities, mage sight, and types of enemies and/or threats.

I. Rolling for Magic Outside of Mage Sight

We can allow PCs to attempt to do odd things based on their secrets, but currently no PC has the ability to consistently or reliably touch any kind of magic, with magesight coming closest. For GMs, we emphasize this randomness and danger with very difficult checks.

If a PC says they wish to try to do something magical, we have them:

@check mana + <relevant skill> at daunting

Roll Result	Magical Effect
Catastrophic Botch: Botch! <Name> fails completely.	The magic backfires. @harm extreme + a curse/magical scar of some kind
Botch: Botch! <Name> fails badly.	The magic backfires. @harm them based on the threat of the scene, starting at medium. IE, minor threat medium, normal threat heavy, elite severe, boss extreme, hero killer nuke.
Fail: <Name> fails.	The magic does nothing.
Marginal Fail: <Name> marginally fails.	The magic has something adverse happen unrelated to what they were trying to do, which fails.
Marginal Success: <Name> is marginally successful.	The magic has a minor effect that has nothing to do with what they were attempting.
Success: <Name> is successful.	The magic works close to what they were trying to do, but with a serious side effect of some kind, and the destructive side effect should be greater than what they were trying to do.
Critical Success: Critical Success! <Name> is spectacularly successful. OR Critical Success! <Name> is inhumanly successful in a way	The magic works close to what they were hoping for.

that defies expectations.	

II. Rolling for Magic - Mage Sight

We scale the difficulty and consequence based on what they are using mage sight against. We could potentially make this a contested roll against bits.

- @check mana + occult at normal if using it when alone in a room, trying to examine an item, or to check a room for active magic happening.
- @check mana + occult at hard if using it to examine another PC, or something they are carrying. This would show active magic use by the other PC or something they are carrying.
- @check mana + occult at daunting if using it on an NPC that is magically proficient, or in a scene where there is clearly active magic and they want to know more. This is when they are sticking their tongue in the magic.

We want to only allow PCs to see active magic, not passive things (someone under writ that they currently are not trying to resist, for example), to avoid any circumstance where PCs can be outed by mage sight.

Roll Result	Magical Effect
Catastrophic Botch: Botch! <Name> fails completely.	@harm severe from the poison in the primum, if they get a permanent wound, it comes out of mana. Magical scar. Could result in temporary madness, really major character effects, like going blind and so on.
Botch: Botch! <Name> fails badly.	Poison in the primum really gets them. @harm heavy, and if there's any interesting magical side effects, feel free.
Fail: <Name> fails.	Nothing seems to happen, but the ward triggers. @harm medium
Marginal Fail: <Name> marginally fails.	Nothing happens, but they feel nausea from the Poison in the primum. @harm bruise.
Marginal Success: <Name> is marginally successful.	A small hint. Say aureth is using it in a room with an abyssal ward, to kill trespassers. His mage sight manifests as spiders because of course it does. He might see a tiny black spider skitter around his feet. Poison primum results in @harm bruise.

Success: <Name> is successful.	Something that gives more of a hint as to usage. Aureth would see black spiders move around and build a black pulsing spider web across the door where the ward is. @harm bruise from poison primum.
Critical Success: Critical Success! <Name> is spectacularly successful. OR Critical Success! <Name> is inhumanly successful in a way that defies expectations.	A pretty blatant hint. Aureth sees a vision of the black spiders weaving the web, and unsuspecting white spiders dying as they try to cross it, unless the white spider waves its little legs and casts a spell of protection. No damage.

III. Threats

Threat Level	Definition	Examples
Minor	It honestly would be a misnomer to call this a 'threat'. This is any situation where one would expect a normal person to not be at any risk of death. Accidents happen, so it's possible for something to be slightly dangerous, but it would qualify as a horrific accident if someone actually died to this.	- Small animals. A squirrel trained to go for the eyes. A particularly surly badger that jumps at people. An angry fox. A small dog. Alarming, but combat here should not end in character death. - A bar brawl or fight that's understood to be non-lethal: Again, accidents happen, but no one is trying to kill you here. Just try to beat you up in anger. - An Unarmed, untrained civilian out for blood. A really irate merchant, Old Bill the One legged, a fishmonger swinging a trout. They might WANT to kill an armored pc, but this is very unlikely. - A normal fall, slip on the floor, tumble from a chair. A very short height, and yeah someone could hit their head, but tragedy here is unlikely.
Normal	These are life threatening, but threats that PCs would be expected to normally overcome.	- A single armed mook, a normal thug in the Lower Boroughs, a regular member of the Iron Guard. - A fall from a tree, or a breakneck race on horseback that has a bad fall could be a normal range threat. - A pack of wolves would fall in this range for a group of PCs. - Armed, non-magical cultists would be mooks.

		The bulk of faceless NPC minions will fall in this.
Elite	This would be anything that a single PC might struggle with, that we want to show as a cut above mooks and other normal threats.	- A captain of the iron guard. Elite house troops for the different noble houses. Most NPC members of the Champions Guild. Any NPC members of the King's Own. - The lowest tier of supernatural threats we'd have here. Imps, hordelings, very minor spirits or ghosts. Shards (abyssal corrupted people or animals). - A hungry and perturbed grizzly bear. - For non-combat damage: a fall off a cliff into a river. Activating a trap in a shardhaven. Most poisons. - An apprentice mage possibly.
Boss	These are intended to be a serious challenge for PC parties. Danger of character loss should be real, and PCs probably won't be able to confront anything thought of as a boss alone. This is the kind of stuff that murdered Killian.	- A Bringer of Silence. A lower range demon. A lower to mid range adept/mage/invoker. - Younger spirits, some less developed supernatural/mythic creatures (unicorn, griffin). Very, very young dragon.
Herokiller	These can't be beaten by PCs. They can only be avoided, fled, pleaded with, or temporarily stopped. Direct confrontation will virtually always lead to character loss.	- Fractals of the Abyss. Metallics. Adult dragons. Liches. Ancient mages, powerful adepts, invokers. Major demons. - Full armies, numbers simply too high for characters to realistically fight. - Several thousand minor threats or hundreds of elites, dozens of bosses, a puffin of murderdogs, etc.