



# **Reality Warp**

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*Then put the gun in your mouth and pull the trigger. Don't worry. You already checked it. It's not loaded.*

*- Push*

# **Introducing Reality Warp**

## **What is this game about?**

*Reality Warp* is a narrative role-playing game about people with unnatural abilities. Often it involves secret government organizations and their opposition, either by rival organizations or rebellions. These rebels may just be trying to live in peace.

*Reality Warp* owes its inspiration to a host of sources including films like *Push*, *Jumper*, *Chronicle* and *The Matrix*, as well as comic books like *Mind MGMT*.

## **What should a game feel like?**

A single game session (usually a 4-hour game) should feel like a fast paced movie jam-packed with ideas and action. It features protagonists who are rapidly gaining and coming to grips with uncanny powers. A single session's *narrative* will often be self contained. However, sequels are possible.

Players have narrative control, which they can use to augment their characters, as well as to introduce *persons*, *assets* and *secrets*. Like most films the main characters are in no real danger until the climax. Exerting narrative control brings risk to the player's character. Risk is resolved in the endgame, when the fate of the characters, or Protagonists, is decided.

## **What kind of Group is suited to playing Reality Warp?**

A group of 3 - 5 is best suited to play *Reality Warp*. These people should love being creative and telling compelling stories together.

## **What roles do the Players take on?**

Depending on the *narrative's* concept the players may be agents, psychics, rebels, or other gifted individuals. Players in *Reality Warp* are called *Instigators*. Their main character's are called *Protagonists*. *Protagonists* are able to bend reality to their will. They should not be idle observers of what is happening to them, nor even merely reactive. *Instigators* introduce ideas, change the nature of their *Protagonists* and shape the narrative to their whims. *Protagonists* start the narrative with little ability to warp reality but they quickly develop tremendous power.

## **What role does the Game Master take on?**

One player is the Game Master or Mastermind. The Mastermind's objective is to provide conflict and move the story forward. He should have a good sense of the rules. The Game Master might refer to himself as the Foe, Rival, Mastermind or some other term depending on the Narrative's concept.

The Mastermind's role is to bring the Narrative together, to ensure that there are consequences for player's actions, and that the Narrative does not occur in a vacuum.

*What if we never knew each other before now . . . and everything you remember, and everything that I'm supposed to remember, never really happened, someone just wants us to think it did?*

- *Dark City*

*There is no spoon . . . it is not the spoon that bends, it is only yourself.*

- *The Matrix*

## **Pre-Game**

### **Concept**

The Mastermind and the Instigators collaborate on the *narrative's* Concept. Several vague details should be presented about the context of the story that will be told. They should be vague enough to provide for further creativity and innovation as the *narrative* progresses, but concrete enough that they provide some constraints.

Write down several details on a Concept sheet that all players can refer too. Common details are themes, time period, atmosphere, locations and key organizations.

Each player must contribute at least one detail.

### **Example Concept Sheet**

- Instigators' Protagonists are known as Psychics
- The Mastermind may be referred to as Order
- Year 2020
- Dystopian
- Hunted
- Organizations: The Order and Anarchy

### **Propose Endgame Questions**

Each player should provide a suggestion or two for Endgame questions. These questions are what the characters risk for participating in the *narrative*. Brainstorm a list of questions and then select a number of questions equal to the number of Instigators +1 by group consensus. At the Endgame the Mastermind will remove one question and resolve the others.

### **Example Endgame Questions**

- Who heroically dies?
- Whose powers burn out?
- Who is emotionally scarred?
- Who is consumed by hubris?
- Who loses their humanity?
- Who is imprisoned or institutionalized?
- Who becomes a hermit?
- Who loses the person they care about most?

### **Establish Success Threshold**

Some Concepts will suggest that success thresholds other than the standard 50% should be used (see *Significance, Tier and Dice* on the next page).

*You already know the ending to this story. You can only draw it so many ways.*

- Push

*So they started doing psy-research because they thought we were doing psy-research, when in fact we weren't doing psy-research?*

- The Men who Stare at Goats

# **Game Start and Narrative Tokens**

## **Narrative and Risk Tokens**

Instigators and the Mastermind both receive *narrative tokens*; this is the currency that is used to shape the story. When an Instigator spends a *narrative token*, they often gain or place a *risk token*. Masterminds never gain *risk*. *Narrative and risk tokens* are best represented by different coloured markers such as poker chips. Giving each player their own colour of *risk tokens* is helpful. Some groups may wish to have the Mastermind use a different colour for his *narrative tokens*.

*Addendum: I think the best implementation is to have each token be player coloured it's "risk" based on where it is on the table.*

## **Significance, Tiers, and Dice**

Instigators' Protagonist have variable Tiers in different kinds of reality warping. A Tier-3 characteristic would let the character roll 3 dice. Similarly, *assets*, *persons*, and *secrets* have narrative Significance, and may also have Tiers. Significance's chief function is to represent importance to the story. A Significance-4 *asset* would let whomever leverages it roll 4 dice.

Groups are encouraged to use whatever number of sided dice they prefer, from the standard d6, to d12s—even coins. Normally, there is a 50% chance that a die supplies a success. Some groups may decide their Concept warrants an easier or harder success threshold.

*Addendum: Might be interesting to play with using deck of cards as a randomiser, black could add to risk while red doesn't. Adding to a persons reality warping or significance. This actually makes me wonder about using them as both Narrative tokens and randomizer.*

## **Starting Characters and Narrative Tokens**

The Mastermind begins the game with a base of 2 *narrative tokens*, and adds 2 more per Instigator. Instigators begin with 2 Characteristics and 3 Narrative Tokens.

## **Conflict Scenes, Planning Scenes and Tokens**

Each new conflict scene, the Mastermind gains *narrative tokens* equal to the number of the Instigators times three. The Instigators each gain 2 *narrative tokens*. A conflict scene is any scene where either the Instigators or the Mastermind is trying to achieve a goal which may be opposed.

Planning and reflection scenes are requested by the Instigators. The Mastermind may overrule moving to a planning scene if there are story reasons for continuing swiftly to the next conflict scene, or if the Instigators had a planning scene before the last conflict. One Instigator must pay 1 *narrative token* to initiate a planning scene. All players (including the Mastermind) gain 1 *narrative token*. Players can remove 1 *risk token* and spend 1 *narrative token* during a planning scene. Planning and reflections scenes serve as a respite for the Protagonists that allows them to improve their resolve and prepare for expected dangers.

## **Warping Reality**

Instigator's Protagonist can warp reality. They are able to do things that are not humanly possible. They can warp physical reality or warp perception of reality. They must choose whether they are skilled at warping internal or external reality for both categories. Internal warping is focussed entirely on the individual doing the warping; their own physical abilities alter. A character might levitate with internal physical warping, or use remote viewing with internal perception warping (because it is their own perception that is being altered). You can use external physical warping to use telekinesis on objects or other people, or simply walk through a wall. External perception warping is used to influence what others see, think, and feel.

# **Spending Narrative Tokens: Protagonists**

## **Reality Warping Characteristics**

Instigators' characters (Protagonists) start with 2 Tiers allocated as they chose in the four reality warping *characteristics*. They can gain further Tiers in *characteristics* by spending *narrative tokens*. They can augment their basic four *characteristics* or they can develop Specialities and Exclusions.

- Basic Improvement: spend 1 *narrative token*, gain one Tier, gain 1 *risk token*
- Speciality: spend 1 *narrative token*, gain 2 Tiers in a Speciality, gain 1 *risk token*
- Exclusion: spend 1 *narrative token*, gain 3 Tiers in an Exclusion, gain 1 *risk token*

Specialities and Exclusions are very similar. They are one specific application of reality warping, such as mind control, telekinesis, or remote viewing. If you take an Exclusion, you cannot use that category of reality warping for anything else. By contrast you can still use your base Tier to warp reality in other ways if you have a Speciality, you may even have multiple Specialities in a single *characteristic*. Specialities and Exclusions can be almost any specific application of psychic phenomena.

Reality Warping *characteristics* can be given to other *persons*, or even to *assets*.

## **Protagonists**

It is the Instigator's Protagonist who bears all the Risk acquired throughout the game. Protagonists cannot be killed until the Endgame. Many groups will find a single cue card sufficient space to track their Protagonist.

## **Fleshing Out Protagonists**

Each Instigator decides their Protagonist's vital statistics (name, date of birth, gender, country of origin etc.). They also provide *one* of the three backgrounds. The other Instigators provide the other *two* backgrounds. Instigators may choose to include the Mastermind in this process. The three backgrounds are Past, Present and Aspiration. These help to guide the overall Narrative.

## **Example Protagonist**

Gerard, a hunted psychic

*Characteristics*\*:

*Warp Physical – Internal: 2 + 3 Exclusion (healing)*

*Warp Physical – External: 0*

*Warp Perception – Internal: 0*

*Warp Perception – External: 1 + 2 Specialty (emotion)*

*Backgrounds:*

*Past – Saw grandparents killed by psychic hunters.*

*Present – Works in a gas station.*

*Aspiration – To live in peace.*

\*Gerard's Instigator has spent 3 Narrative Tokens to augment his reality warping characteristics. Protagonists start with 2 Tiers allocated as desired.

*What I'd like to know is how you rob a bank without opening any doors.*

*- Jumper*



# **Assets, Persons, and Secrets**

## **Assets**

An *asset* provides a narrative bonus of some sort. It can be a physical object or a social advantage. *Assets* run the gamut from a gun, social status or secret languages, to serums, magic tomes, robots, and rings that can warp reality.

*Assets* should be written down on cue cards or sticky notes. They can be used by other Instigators or the Mastermind. Usually, the Mastermind will need to succeed on a goal to control the *asset* of a Instigator and vice versa. *Assets* last for one Scene, but may be reintroduced by spending another *narrative token*.

- Asset: spend 1 *narrative token*, the new *asset* starts with 1 Significance
- Grant Reality Warp: spend 1 additional *narrative token*, give the *asset* 1 Tier or a Speciality or Exclusion, place 1 *risk token* on the *asset* and note who granted it
- Reintroduce Asset: spend 1 *narrative token*, gain 1 Significance or 1 Tier
- Temporary Asset: spend 1 *narrative token*, the *asset* has 2 Significance

Temporary Assets are scene-specific, and should be discarded from play after a scene ends. An *asset* that is given reality warping *characteristics* costs *risk* to the first Instigator who gives the *asset* reality warping.

## **Persons and Groups**

A *person* or *group* provides a narrative bonus. They have some Significance to the story or the scene. A *person* or *group* can be almost anything. A *person* can be given reality warping *characteristics*. A *group* of 20 has no more Significance than if they were a *group* of 3.

- Person or Group: spend 1 *narrative token*, the person or *group* gains 2 Significance, place 1 *risk token* on the *person* and note who created them
- Add Reality Warping: spend 1 *narrative token*, you may move one Significance into a basic Tier, add 1 Tier or a Specialty or an Exclusion. Place 1 *risk token* on the *person* and note who added reality warping.
- Reintroduce a Person or Group: spend 1 *narrative token*, which increases Significance or a Tier by 1. Place 1 *risk token* on the *person* and note who reintroduced them.

## **Secrets and Hidden Actions**

*Secrets* are much like *assets*, but they cannot be used in the Scene in which they were created. A *secret* might be *Paul's ring is a decoy*, or *Gerard has an access code*. *Hidden Actions* are goals which are not revealed until they become relevant in a later Scene. This is often used for, "I mind controlled *person* Y to do X when they next see Z." The Instigator writes the *secret* down, and hides it from all other players. The *secret* may be introduced whenever it is dramatically appropriate at no cost, such as when Y sees Z. Planning and reflection scenes are excellent times to create *secrets*. After being revealed, a *secret* may be reintroduced at the cost of one Narrative Token, but unlike an *asset* or a *person* it does not improve.

- Secret: spend 1 *narrative token*, create a *secret* worth 2 Significance, hide it from everyone
- Hidden Action: spend 1 *narrative token*, write a goal that happened in the past, resolve the goal in a later scene when you reveal the *secret*.

# **Goals and Difficulty**

## **Goal Setting**

In a scene, free-play occurs until there is a goal set by either the Instigators or the Mastermind. Once any player sets a goal, all the other players decide how they react. A goal is set whenever there are two parties in direct opposition, or a player wishes to attempt something that might be difficult for them to succeed. Determining the type of goal and its difficulty is up to the Mastermind.

## **Goal Difficulty: Unopposed**

In a situation where there is no one directly opposing the goal, setting the difficulty is ultimately up to the Mastermind. The Mastermind should make a fair judgement on the difficulty of achieving the stated goal. A Instigator or Antagonist must roll as many successes as the difficulty set.

1 Trivial	4 Hard	7 Impossible
2 Simple	5 Very Hard	8 Epic
3 Moderate	6 Arduous	9 Godlike

\*Add 1 difficulty point for each player who can assist on the Goal

\*\* If the goal is instant only one roll is allowed, if the goal can be sustained over multiple attempts add 2

## **Goal Difficulty: Opposed**

If the goal is directed against a character, *person* or *asset* then the difficulty in affecting them is the sum of their Significance and Tiers. Anyone acting against Gerard (see [Example Protagonist p.6](#)) would need 5 successes to achieve their goal (Gerard has 3 basic Tiers + 1 Specialty + 1 Exclusion = 5). He may also be able to leverage *persons* and *assets* to increase that difficulty. Rolls are made by both sides at the same time.

Killing someone or destroying an *asset* is always an opposed goal and requires double the difficulty, (eg. if Gerard were a *person* instead of a Protagonist he could be killed with a lead of 10 successes). The *person* or *asset's* Significance may always be rolled to avoid the opponents goal. *Persons* or *assets* destroyed are removed from play. If created by an Instigator, the risk is moved to their characters. Protagonists cannot be killed in this manner.

- Difficulty is equal to Significance + Tiers of opponent (Specialties and Exclusions count as 1)
- Whoever matches the oppositions difficulty first achieves the goal.
- Defensive reality warping: if there is an internal warping characteristic that counters the goal, the defender may roll it and raise the difficulty by 0.5 per success.

## **Example Goal: No Defence**

An armed (*asset*: gun, 1 significance) psychic hunter (*person*: 2 significance) is trying to shoot and disable Meredith and take her in for questioning. Meredith's *characteristics* are: external Perception warping 2 +2 Specialty (illusions). She decides to confused the psychic hunter and escape. This is a passing goal because both individuals are trying to effect the other but in very different ways.

As a Passing goal Meredith needs only 2 successes to effect the psychic hunter (his



Significance, being armed does not help). The psychic hunter needs 3 to effect Meredith (2 Tiers +1 Specialty).

Both roll at the same time. Meredith rolls 4 dice and gets 2 successes, exactly what she needed. The psychic hunter rolls 3 dice and also gets 2 successes, one shy of what he needed. So Meredith conjures an convincing illusion of herself and escapes.

If both had succeeded on their difficulty then partial results would have occurred. Meredith might be shot and bleeding heavily as the psychic hunter leaves to chase an illusion.

### **Example Goal: With Defence**

The same armed psychic hunter is trying to capture Gerard. Gerard's goal is to capture and then question the psychic hunter. The difficulty for the psychic hunter is 5. The difficulty for Gerard is 3 (2 Significance +1 for the gun asset).

Gerard decides to roll his internal physical "healing" *characteristic* (5 dice) as a defence and the psychic hunter rolls 3 dice. Gerard gets 4 successes which increases the difficulty for the psychic by 2 to a total of 7. The psychic hunter gets 1 success. If the goals are not resolved they will continue to roll.

At the same time Gerard rolls to disable the psychic hunter. The Mastermind rules that it is to hard for Gerard to influence the psychic hunters emotions in the current situation. Gerard decides to spend a narrative token to create an asset: baseball bat 1 Significance. He rolls 1 die and gets one success. He needs two more success to disable the hunter.

*You do not feel guilty when you squash a fly . . .*  
- Chronicle

*You have their power. You can make things happen by will alone.*  
- Dark City

*Only God should have this power.*  
- Jumper

## **Risk and Endgame**

### **Risk**

Whenever an Instigator increases their Protagonist's Tiers they gain *risk tokens*. When a *person* that an Instigator helps create is killed they gain *risk*. When an *asset* enhanced by reality warp is destroyed they gain *risk*. *Persons* and *assets* that are under the Mastermind's control at the end of the *narrative* also increase the Instigators' *risk*.

*Risk tokens* can only be mitigated in planning and reflection scenes. The Instigators should provide a piece of fiction that explains how they are reflecting on their humanity, spending time with *persons* they care about, or living cautiously and humbly.

### **Endgame**

Endgame should start 20 - 30min before you end your game session, or any time there is consensus that the *narrative* should end. In rare cases a group might decide to play a second session before concluding the *narrative* and going to Endgame.

### **Endgame Questions**

Each player gathers dice equal to the *Risk* they have accrued throughout the game. The Mastermind removes one of the questions selected in the Pregame. If participants have unspent Narrative, the player with the most tokens decides which question of the remaining questions is asked first.

Each player secretly selects how many dice they will roll. Minimum one die for each question. The player with the highest total roll is the victim of the question. Tenderhearted Masterminds will roll 2 dice for each question. If for some reason the Mastermind is among the highest, there is no victim. If any Protagonists tie for highest, all participants re-roll.

Once all the questions are answered narrate the finale of the game using the results of the Endgame to help tie any loose ends together.

*You think it could go on like this forever? Living like this with no consequences?*  
- Jumper

*I'm gonna help people. I'm gonna find out what happened to us down there.*  
- Chronicle

## **Sequels**

Sometimes a *narrative* is so great that it deserves a Sequel. Sequels function a little differently than new *narratives*.

### **Pregame in Sequels**

Modify the Concept of the prequel. It should retain some of the details of the original *narrative*. Decide on new Endgame questions. Each participant should contribute to Concept and Endgame questions. Select the four questions that can be used in the Endgame.

### **Carrying Existing Assets and Persons Forward**

Both the Mastermind and the Instigators will likely wish to bring some of their creations forward into the sequel. Any *asset* or *person* brought forward loses 1 Significance or Tier. The Mastermind sums his own tiers and significance and compares it to that of all the Instigators' creations. If the Instigators' value is more than the Mastermind's, the Mastermind gains that many *narrative tokens*. If the Mastermind's sum - 3 is higher than the Instigators he deducts 1 *narrative token* for each point higher he is from his starting pool.

### **Starting Protagonists and Starting Tokens**

Protagonists lose 2 tiers and Instigators start with 4 *narrative tokens*. This allows Instigators to alter their Protagonists in significant ways. The Mastermind starts with more *narrative tokens* than in the prequel game as the stakes are higher. The Mastermind gets 3 + 3 per Instigator. The Mastermind's starting pool of *narrative tokens* is modified by any change due to carrying existing *assets* and *persons* forward.

### **Example of Carrying Forward and Prequel Tokens**

The Instigators choose to bring forward 3 *persons* and 1 *asset*, they are:

- Malcolm the street rat: 4 Significance (4)
- Hendricks the Seer: 1 Significance, 2 Tiers, 2 exclusions (5)
- Robert the Mechanic: 3 Significance, 1 Tier (4)
- The Mind Shield Ring: 1 Significance, 2 Tiers, 1 Exclusion (4)

The Mastermind brings forward 2 *persons*, 1 *group* and 1 *asset*, they are:

- Agent Stevens: 2 Significance, 2 Tiers, 2 Specialties (6)
- Prof Evans: 1 Significance, 3 Tiers, 1 exclusion (5)
- Order Agents: 4 Significance (4)
- Order Database: 5 Significance (5)

The Mastermind has an effective score between 17 and 20 being brought forward (6+5+4+5 [- 3]), the Instigators also have a 17 (4+5+4+4). Since they are tied at 17 there is no change to the Mastermind's starting narrative tokens.

If the Mastermind brought forward one more *asset* worth 3 Significance, he would start with 3 less narrative tokens. If the Instigators brought forward one more *person* with 4 Significance, the Mastermind would start with 1 more narrative token (20 vs 21).

*What is Real?*  
- *The Matrix*

# **The Mastermind**

## **Spending Narrative Tokens: Creating Conflict**

The Mastermind populates the Narrative with *persons*, *groups* and *assets* just like the Instigators do. His antagonists are created using the standard rules for persons. Masterminds should only rarely use *secrets*, instead simply creating conflict when needed. They should make frequent use of *groups*, while Instigators should seldom use *groups*.

## **Masterminds Privilege: The Gradual Reveal**

Anytime the Mastermind reveals something to the players about someone or something that is not present in the current scene, they can set aside a *narrative token* on card with that individual on it. *Narrative tokens* set aside like this are doubled. *Assets* and *persons* alluded to by 'gradual reveals' do not need a *narrative token* spent to reintroduce them, since they have yet been introduced.

## **Masterminds Privilege: Reintroductions**

The Mastermind can always reintroduce one *person* or *group*, and one *asset* for free. This does not cost a Narrative Token, but it also does not improve the *asset* or *person* being reintroduced.

## **Starting Scenes and Ending Scenes**

The Mastermind should usually start the Narrative with a dramatic Scene. This could be a dramatic flashback, a collective nightmare or a sudden conflict. It is the Mastermind's job to decide when scenes end. This should usually be done after a few goals have been achieved, and should flow naturally out of the fiction. After a scene ends, allow the Instigators to enter a period of free play. They will likely have clear objectives in mind. Often it will seem obvious when to start a new Scene. As soon as an Instigator declares a goal or spends a *narrative token* declare a new scene.

## **Flashbacks**

Flashback Scenes can be used to create *assets*, *persons* and even explain sudden enlightenment in how to warp reality. No additional *narrative tokens* are gained for flashback Scenes. Opposed goals should not occur in flashback scenes. They simply add more fiction to the *Narrative*. Existing *assets* and *persons* can be in flashback Scenes at no cost. However Instigators may spend the *narrative tokens* on them to improve them if they wish.

## **Solo and Parallel Scenes**

Not all scenes will have all the Protagonists present. In such a situation, decide if it is a solo scene or a parallel scene. In a solo scene the present Instigator's Protagonist gains the normal 2 *narrative tokens*. All other protagonists gain 1 *narrative token*. The Mastermind gains 3 X the number of present Instigators and one token for each absent Instigator. Instigators whose protagonist are not present may still spend *narrative tokens*.

Most often Masterminds will choose to run parallel Scenes when Protagonist separate. In this case *narrative tokens* are allocate just like when all the Protagonists are together.

*We might ask the same question, yes? Sleep . . . now.*  
- *Dark City*

## **Example Opening Scene: Bellevue**

This uses the *Example Concept* [page 4](#). The Mastermind decides to begin with Parallel opening scenes. This example only shows what happens in one Protagonist's scene. The protagonist Avaline is controlled by an Instigator name Jessica. Jessica, currently has 3 *narrative tokens*.

### **Avaline**

*Characteristics:*

*Warp Physical – Internal: 0*

*Warp Physical – External: 1*

*Warp Perception – Internal: 0*

*Warp Perception – External: 1*

*Backgrounds:*

*Past – Orphan.*

*Present – Teenage marriage.*

*Aspiration – Become a nurse. Help people.*

### **Scene: Bellevue Medical Institute**

#### **Part 1: Meeting Agent Stevens**

Avaline is at the Bellevue Medical Institute, going through an entrance examination in hopes of becoming a nurse. She is going from station to station and talking with faculty in various scenarios.

The Mastermind spends a *narrative token* to creates a *person*: Agent Stevens – 2 Significance.

As Avaline enters her next station she sees not a member of faculty but the suit-and-sunglass-wearing Agent Stevens. Agents Stevens informs her that they want to bring her in for testing. She denies having any idea what he is talking about and says that she is leaving immediately. Agent Stevens smiles and tells her that the door is locked, but that this shouldn't be any trouble for someone with her talents.

None of this setup so far is beyond the Talents of a Significance 2 agent to set up. No special abilities needed, merely careful planning, so the Mastermind does not need to spend further *narrative tokens*. Especially since Avaline was not expecting trouble.

Jessica sets a goal to open the door and uses Avaline's ability to warp external physical reality. This is an unopposed action so the Mastermind decides the difficulty is trivial: 1 success is needed. Jessica rolls 1 die for Avaline and succeeds (she rolls a d6 and gets a 4).

Avaline opens the door and says "Guess you were wrong about it being locked." Agent Stevens smiles, "You'll want my help soon enough."  
"The hell I will!"

#### **Part 2: Missing Station**

As the interviews and tests end Avaline realizes that she somehow missed a station. She finds herself arguing with a staff member, who insists that she isn't even registered and



who has none of her results from the stations that she did visit.

The Mastermind creates a *person*: Prof Evans – 2 Significance; for Avaline to talk too. Avaline’s Instigator could just as easily have created a helpful member of staff to fix the problem.

Avaline pulls up her confirmation email on her phone for the day’s tests to shows it to Prof Evans.

The Mastermind raises an eyebrow at Jessica. She stares blankly at him for a second. “Oh right, I need to spend a narrative token?” The Mastermind nods. Jessica spends a *narrative token* and creates the *asset*: Entrance Documentation – 1 Significance.

Prof Evans stares at the phone that Avaline hands her. He fiddles with it.

The Mastermind decides that Prof Evans is in the Orders pocket. He is working with Agent Stevens and has some Reality Warping abilities of his own. The Mastermind spends 1 *narrative token* and changes Prof Evans card to the following: Prof Evans – 1 Significance, 1 Tier in external physical warping with 1 Exclusion (Technology).

The Mastermind sets the goal: hide and change entrance documentation. This has a difficulty equal to the entrance documentation’s significance which is 1. (If the entrance documentation was being destroyed it would be double the significance.) Prof Evans rolls his 4 dice (1 tier + 3 for the Exclusion). He gets 3 successes – far more than the 1 he needed. The Mastermind takes the entrance documentation’s card and places it on his side of the table.

Prof Evans hands the phone back to Avaline and says, “Miss I’m really not sure why you are showing me an email about a sale on Adidas shoes.” Avaline grabs her phone and starts perusing it frantically.

Jessica decides to use Avalines external Perception Warping to try and influence the Professor. Her goal is to sort out this mess and do her last station. She spends a *narrative token* to improve her external Perception Warping *characteristic* from 1 to 2, and in doing so she also gains a *risk token*.

Trevor, one of the Instigators in a Parallel scene decides to chip in. He creates a *person* to help Avaline: Charlotte the Secretary – 2 Significance. Trevor places 1 risk token on Charlotte’s card.

This is a directly-opposed goal because Prof Evans does not want to be mentally manipulated and is trying to keep her from completing the stations. The difficulty is 3 (Prof Evans Significance + Tier + exclusion). Jessica rolls 2 dice for Avaline, Trevor rolls 2 dice Charlotte, and the Mastermind rolls a single die for Prof Evans Significance. Trevor and Jessica get 3 successes and the Professor gets 1. They roll again and get 2 more successes for a total of 5, and the Professor gets none. This gives the Instigators a lead of 4 (5 -1), which is more than the 3 difficulty they needed. Jessica and Trevor narrate the results.

Charlotte bustles into the reception area and hears Prof Evans arguing with Avaline, and argument he seems to be losing. “Now hon, there’s no need to be upset. What’s your name? Unhuh, well I’ve got you right here in the system . . . and look five of your station reports are right here. I’m sure its just a mix up. Why don’t you come back tomorrow and we can get you in your last station. 10 ‘oclock? Perfect.”

Prof Evans looks at Avaline, “My apologies, some sort of mix-up.” He stalks off confused.



## **Gameplay Questions**

### **So who narrates?**

In the case of goals, the victor usually narrates the results. Instigators usually roleplay what is said by their Protagonists and any *persons* they create. Likewise the Mastermind usually role-play what everyone else does or says. In Reality Warp players have a great deal of influence over the story. Masterminds should relax and focus on weaving all the disparate ideas into a cohesive whole.

### **Who owns the Asset/Person/Group?**

Usually the player who created it. However, all of these should be treated as a kind of shared resource. Anyone can spend a Narrative Token on any existing *asset/person/group*.

### **Who can spend Narrative Tokens and on What?**

Anyone can spend *narrative tokens* on anything. It is not as common for a Mastermind to spend a *narrative token* on an Instigator's *asset/person/group* (and vice versa), but it does happen.

There are two exceptions: Only the creator can enhance a *secret* or *hidden action*. Instigators cannot enhance the Masterminds 'Gradual Reveal' *persons/assets*.

### **Is there Veto Power?**

Yes, at a cost. A creator can veto a modification by spending a Narrative Token. Both Narrative Tokens are discarded.

There is an exception: if another player is proposing an Exclusion that clearly renders the *protagonist/person/asset* less effective the creator may veto it for free.

## **Game Terms**

**Asset:** A item or other situational bonus that provides narrative Significance. They are created by spending *narrative tokens*.

**Characteristic:** One of the four kinds of Reality Warping. Characteristics may be increased by spending *narrative tokens*.

**Difficulty:** The number of *successes* required to achieve a goal. This is usually the sum of an opponents Tiers and Significance.

**Goal:** An objective set by the Instigator or Mastermind. Goals are given a *difficulty*.

**Group:** A group is functions like a *person*. In game mechanics the size of the group is irrelevant. It's Significance determines how effective it is.

**Internal Perception Warping:** One of the four *characteristics*.

**Internal Physical Warping:** One of the four *characteristics*.

**Exclusion:** A kind of Specialty *characteristic* that a user is extremely good at. However they cannot use their base Tiers for any other kind of reality warping.

**External Perception Warping:** One of the four *characteristics*.

**External Physical Warping:** One of the four *characteristics*.

**Narrative:** This refers to a single game session, but also in a broader sense to the collective story that is being told.

**Narrative Tokens:** These are the basic currency that is used in the *Reality Warp* to create the story.

**Person:** A individual with narrative Significance created by spending *narrative tokens*.

**Reality Warping:** The ability to effect the world or the self in ways that defy logic and science.

**Risk Tokens:** Spending narrative tokens often results in acquire risk. Higher risk increases the likelihood of being the victim of an Endgame question.

**Significance:** The numerical rating of a person, asset or secrets ability to influence the narrative. Significance may determine the number of dice that can be rolled to achieve an goal.

**Secret:** A *secret* is some asset or advantage created without the other players knowledge in one scene, which is revealed in a later scene. Secrets may have Significance, or they may actually contain *hidden actions* that may or may not have been successful.

**Specialty:** A specific application of one of the reality warping characteristics that the user is particularly competent at.

**Successes:** A die roll that is above 50% is considered a success. Successes are totalled to match a goals difficulty.

**Tiers:** The numerical rating of a reality warping *characteristic*. The value of the Tier determines the number of dice that can be rolled to achieve a goal.

## **Game Design Questions**

### **What were the Games that inspired Reality Warp?**

There are two games that had great influence on *Reality Warp*. Both are indie narrative games: *Universalis* and *Black Cadillacs*.

There is also a nWoD supplement called *Second Sight* which deals with psychic phenomenon, and the *Amber Diceless Roleplaying Game*, which has its own form of simple stats and has a unique kind of world-bending.

### **Was Reality Warp Created in 7 days?**

Yes, from inception to this product you are reading. I discovered the challenge Monday evening. I was inspired on Tuesday by a comic I had been reading called *Mind MGMT*, by Matt Kindt. I began writing Wednesday for the Sunday deadline.

### **Who are you? What is Compose Dream Games?**

I am Joshua Kitz. I am also Compose Dream Games. I have written a competition-winning D&D adventure. I've also designed and written a RPG called *Superheroes Unleashed* which is in pre-release. You can learn more at [www.ComposeDreamGames.com](http://www.ComposeDreamGames.com)

*I'm an apex predator!*  
- *Chronicle*

## **Filmography**

Heslov, G. 2009. *The Men Who Stare at Goats*. Smokehouse Pictures.

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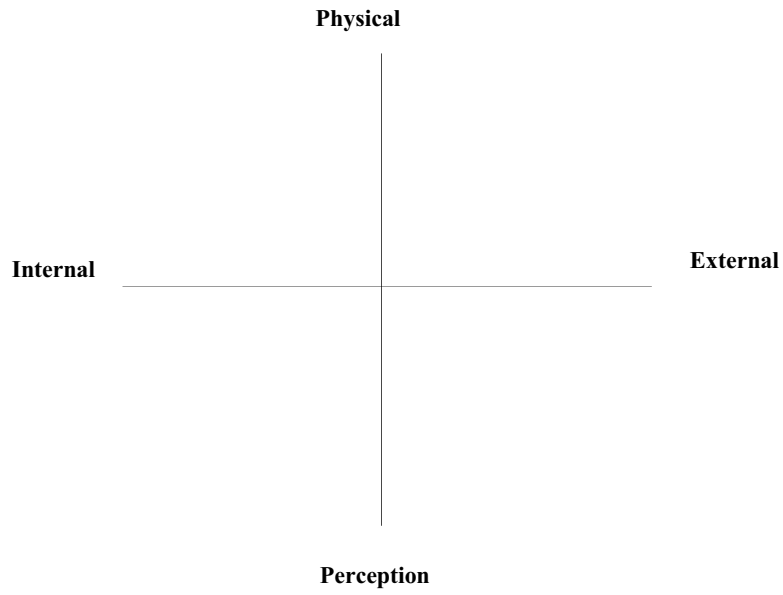
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# Reality Warp

**Protagonist:**



Past:

Present:

Aspiration: