JADEPUNK™
tales from Kausao City

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POWERED BY **FATE**™

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Contents

Foreword

This is a game about doing the right thing.

That's unusual in the RPG world. Many games never invite players to wonder how moral their characters are. Some offer support for interesting consequences for whatever the characters may do. *Jadepunk* stands out in providing both a setting that it wants players to acknowledge as unjust and a system that enables characters to make it better.

    Jadepunk is set in history seen from underneath. Your character begins in a status that countless people have known: cut off from power and rendered a stranger in your own homeland. This has been the experience of people in cities and territories throughout history--Shanghai, Macau, Guantanamo Bay, Rhodesia, Tibet, and on back to the subjects of Akkad and Babylon. The usual RPG emphasis would be on being a nicer member of the occupying force, maybe helping the victims of colonization assimilate or keeping everything reasonably fair without questioning the occupation itself. I like *Jadepunk* for its completely uncompromising stance in favor of people's right to own and govern themselves.

    Liberators tend to become heroes long after they've left the scene. There's a saying often attributed to Mohandas Gandhi that was actually said by American union activist Nicholas Klein in 1918: "First they ignore you. Then they ridicule you. And then they attack you and want to burn you. And then they build monuments to you." *Jadepunk* heroes aren't guaranteed any victory, let alone an easy one, and only play will reveal whether it's likely that their cause will ever get to the monuments part. The one certainty in their lives is that if they don't act, the bad guys will continue to win.

    Every so often a game comes along that makes me realize I've wished for it all along. *Jadepunk* is one of them. I am so very glad it's here now. The crew at Reroll Productions have put into our hands a manual for doing the right thing in exciting, interesting ways. Let's get on with it!

Bruce Baugh
Co-developer, *Adventure!*
Author and/or developer for many books for *Trinity*, *Gamma World*, *Wraith: The Oblivion*, *Vampire: The Masquerade*, *Apotheosis Drive X*, and more.

"Quickly, this way! I saw her!" The city watchman called to his compatriots before bounding down the side alley after the girl.

Jonica ducked under an empty crab trap behind one of the many saké houses that lined the bay, hoping against hope that the watchman hadn't actually seen her. The fishy smell from the crab trap was unbearable. Suppressing the urge to vomit, she looked at the leaf-wrapped package in her hand. *All this for a ball of rice?*

The stomps of the watchman running came closer. Jonica held her breath. If she got caught, that was it. They wouldn't let her go a third time. Not for stealing *this*. No way.

They stomped past. Jonica heard them reach the corner and then stop. Something hit the ground. There was a shout. An elderly man? The watchmen were questioning him in that way they did best. It made Jonica's blood boil, but she didn't react. *Sorry old-timer.*

After a few moments of questioning the man in vain, they turned down an alley and were gone. Jonica leaned against the wall and relaxed. The pangs of hunger returned to Jonica's stomach and she was aware of the rice ball in her hand again. She rolled it out of the leaf-wrapping that covered it, taking extra care not to tear the leaves. Once it was out, she dropped the rice on the ground. She was starving, but there wasn't time for it; not that she could eat it anyway, what with the smell of the crab trap being so close and all.

She flattened out the leaves. There, underneath some stuck rice she carefully removed, was the message from her contact in the triads. Jonica struggled to read the Old Aerish text, so different from what was commonly spoken today, which made it perfect for secret messages like this.

The message described a meeting between the triad leader and a high-level administrator with the Four Winds Trading Company. They were going to discuss...an alliance. This was bad. An alliance between those groups could spell the end for the Jianghu. *René needs to see this.*

Jonica tucked the leaves into the sash around her waist and got up. She carefully made her way east, thankful to get away from the crab trap, yet still sickened by the bloody work that would lie ahead. She knew what it would take to ensure this meeting never takes place—knew what René was going to ask of her.

Introduction

Welcome to Kausao City

For many of you, this will be your first glimpse into the world of *Jadepunk*. For others, the trip to the "center of the world" will be the next step in exploring this fantastic setting.

Kausao City was originally created by Ryan M. Danks to be the backdrop of a short film and literature series. Those plans are still in the works, but it made more sense before jumping into such a large (and expensive) endeavor as producing a film to first delve into what Ryan knew best: gaming. After recruiting Jacob Poss in early in 2013, the world of *Jadepunk* really took off.

What you hold in your hands is the culmination of hard, passionate work to create a setting that we love to play in as much as we loved writing it.

Welcome to our vision. Enjoy your stay.

Theme and Tone

Jadepunk started with a discussion between Ryan M. Danks and Junel Arante (old martial arts buddies, and close friends). The subject: what would it be like if gunslingers from the Western literary genre were present in a wuxia world? Exploration of this idea found that the code of Xia (followed by many wuxia heroes) has very similar values to the code of honor many gunslingers follow. A perfect fit. Add to that an original take on the steampunk genre, with all its quirky fabulousness, and you have an original setting.

The world of *Jadepunk* is one of danger and wonder. Jade, a natural resource that takes on mystical properties once refined, grants near-modern technology while still keeping that old-world feel. With the help of white jade, ships (and even some cities) sail through the sky. Red jade explosives are used in construction, while the strength of green jade shores up skyscrapers.

Kausao City is the center of the economic world. Black jade, rare and once thought merely a legend, was found in the region in abundance. Now the city is a melting pot of different cultures, all vying to exploit the area's rich veins of jade.

But despite the glamorous stories of the fabled city, all is not well within its high walls. The current governor of the Kausao region backs evil corporations, feeding off low-level workers who are perceived to be, at best, expendable. The rich care for nothing but personal gain, and the poor have had enough.

A rebellion has begun. The Jianghu, a loose society of warriors and Jadetech engineers, have risen up against the governor in open conflict to better the position of the people and free Kausao City from the clutches of evil officials.

Which side will you join?

Media To Inspire
Wuxia movies and westerns inspired us. We have done our best to fill these pages with plot hooks and thematic passages to properly convey the feel of *Jadepunk*, but sometimes you just need more. These movies and television shows can help you get a feel for the tone and themes of *Jadepunk*, and maybe even inspire your own stories in Kausao City.

The Legend of Korra (2012) [**T**]
Sherlock Holmes (2009) [**PG-13**]
The Man with the Iron Fists (2012) [**NR**]
Tai Chi Zero/Hero (2012-13) [**PG-13**]
Wild Wild West (1999) [**PG-13**]
The Four (2012) [**NR**]

How to Use This Book

Jadepunk: Tales From Kausao City is a tabletop roleplaying game, where you and your friends gather around and tell stories full of danger, excitement and adventure. *Jadepunk's* mechanics are a derivation of the popular *Fate Core* and *Fate Accelerated Edition* rules system, both of which you can download for free at www.evilhat.com.

5 Things You Need to Know

Jade makes the world go round. It powers cities, makes fantastic devices function, and gives a semblance of modernity to the setting of *Jadepunk*. It's the most valuable resource in the world. For more detailed information, see *Jade*, page 55.

Kausao City is the "center of the world". Sitting atop the world's largest jade deposits (and the world's only black jade veins), the city is the most economically powerful location in the world. Everyone wants something from Kausao City, and if someone has never been there, it's likely a lifelong dream to visit one day.

The Great Nations discovered the Kausao region. They set aside their differences to build the infrastructure that is now Kausao City. As such, everything from the city's culture to its architecture was influenced by each of these nations. There are others, some even having large embassies within city limits, but no nation controls swathes of city districts like the great nations do.

The Council of Nine is the elected body to oversee the Kausao region. Consisting of two members for each of the great nations, and headed by the region's governor. The Council of Nine rules with an iron fist.

The Jianghu is a loose society of martial artists and Jadetech engineers. They all fight for the betterment of the common citizenry of the city, but not everyone agrees on what "better" actually means. As such, the Jianghu consists in roughly equal measure of benevolent, righteous souls and underworld bosses and street gangs.

Here's what you'll need to play:

➕ **Three to five people.** One of you will be the game master, the others players. We'll talk about what those mean later.

➕ **Fate or Fudge Dice**, at least four, preferably four per person. These are a special kind of six-sided dice that are marked on two sides with a plus symbol (➕), two sides with a minus symbol (➖), and two sides blank (⬛). You can get these dice from many hobby and game stores, or online at *www.evilhat.com* or at *www.fudgerpg.com*.

➕ **Character sheets,** one for each player. You can download these from www.*jadepunk.com*.

➕ **Index cards** or **sticky notes**, or something equally handy to write on. Alternatively, you can use the *Jadepunk* play mat. It's a dry-erasable, double-sided play mat with all of the information and areas you'll need to write on during play. You can find it at *www.jadepunk.com*.

➕ **Tokens for** fate points. These can be poker chips, beads, pennies or anything similar.

Now, you've got your stuff. What do you do with it?

If you don't want to use Fudge dice, you don't have to—any set of regular six-sided dice will work. If you're using regular dice, you read 5 or 6 as ➕, 1 or 2 as ➖ and 3 or 4 as ⬛. You can also use two six-sided dice of different colors. Roll them both at the same time and subtract one from the other to get your result. This has "swingier" possibilities, but works well.

The Shared Storytelling Experience

You've gathered your friends and your dice, pulled out your *Jadepunk* play mat and you're ready to go end oppression in Kausao City. What next?

Jadepunk is all about telling stories. You create a group of characters and follow them through a high-stakes, imaginary adventure of which you all take turns telling little parts of.

Take a look at the *Media to Inspire* section (page 11). Are you familiar with any of those? Now imagine a similar sort of story, where you and your friends around the table make the decisions for the characters as they move through the story, and the story changes as you make those decisions.

Sometimes someone makes a decision to try something and you don't know for sure how it would turn out; that's when you roll dice to see what happens next. The higher you roll, the better the chance that things work out the way you want them to.

So How Do We Do It?

Well, first you need to decide who will be the players and who will be the game master. Of the people around the table, all but one are referred to as players. Each player takes on the role of one player character or PC in the story, and puts themselves in their character's shoes to make the decisions that their character would make. The remaining person is called the game master or GM. The GM's job is to present challenges to the players and to portray all the characters that aren't controlled by the players (non-player characters or NPCs).

Next, the GM has to create the framework for the story. This is the scenario, filled with challenges, NPCs and locations that will lead the players through the scenes and plot hooks as they tell their story. See *Chapter 7: Being The Game Master*, page 109, for information on how to create a scenario. Pre-made scenarios are available online at *www.jadepunk.com*.

Once you decide who the GM will be, it's time for the players to make their characters (see *Chapter 2: Character Creation*, page 29).

Telling Stories Together? What Do You Mean?

All the people at the table, GM and players alike, are responsible for telling the story. When you make a decision for your character (or for one of the NPCs, if you're the GM), think about two things.

First, put yourself in your character's shoes and think hard about what they would do–even if it's not the best idea. If you're playing a character that sometimes makes poor decisions, don't be afraid to make a poor decision for them on purpose.

Second–and this is really important–think about the story that's being told. Think about the choice that would make that story even better: more interesting, more exciting, funnier. Would a certain choice give another player's character a chance to be awesome? Strongly consider making that choice.

That's how you tell great stories *together*–by not being afraid for your character to make mistakes, and by making choices that make the story more interesting for everyone at the table, not just you.

"*Laddies* - that's Aerish for 'friend' by the way - I visited the Kaiyumi islands for the first time when I was your age." The children rolled their eyes at Old Man Lang, always sitting on the same corner telling anyone who would listen some fantastic tale of his supposed past. He was a bum, not worth anyone's time. The children listened only to poke fun at him.

"The islands, *riiiight...*" one of the older children mocked.

Old Man Lang smacked the child upside the head with his cane. "It's true, you insolent brat! When I was your age, I was already traveling the world, learning the martial arts of faraway lands so that I could better defend myself and the people of this fair city."

The insolent brat rubbed the top of his head, angry but mindful of who might be watching. "You don't know martial arts, you old fool, and we've got the city guard to protect us. What could you do?"

"You think the city guard is..." Old Man Lang began before being interrupted.

"What are you doing?" A woman wearing a fine dress yelled as she walked up and coddled her son's head, carefully inspecting where Lang's cane had struck it. "Hitting children, are you?"

"I wouldn't have to if parents these days would teach children to respect their elders."

"Maybe their 'elders' should give a reason to be worthy of respect," she chided the old man. "Let's go, dear."

The mother and her son turned to walk away but their path was blocked by two large men. Behind Old Man Lang stood another, all three grinning at the woman.

"That dress is a little too nice for this neighborhood, lady," one of the men in front of her said. She gasped as he grabbed her purse. "What else ya' got?"

The child gaped at the large man taking his mother's things. *If only dad were...* His thought was cut off by a dull thud, like the sound of something soft hitting stone. He turned to see Old Man Lang standing over the crumpled form of one of their assailants.

"I think it's best you were on your way," Lang said to the men in a calm, demanding voice. He was standing straighter than usual. The child suddenly felt guilty for making fun of him.

"Old man," one of the thugs said as he pushed past the mother and her child, the other following close behind, "you're gonna regret that."

He reached for the old man, but was too slow. Lang's cane was a blur. In less than a second the man's hand was broken. Then, with well-practiced footwork, the old man side-stepped a blow from the other thug and spun to strike the ruffian behind the knee with his cane, sending him to the ground.

Old Man Lang rested his cane on the thug's throat, ignoring his gurgled cries. "I learned that move from a Naramel nomad," he said while giving a wink to the awe-struck children watching nearby.

They never made fun of Old Man Lang again.

The World

of Jadepunk

The world in which Kausao City rests has not learned to exploit familiar natural resources, such as crude oil, gas, or the ingredients to make gunpowder. What they do have instead is mystic jade, which, when refined, provides power and utility to mechanical devices known as "Jadetech". These devices are responsible for all manner of technology, from the gunslinger's red jade six-shooting pistol to the alchemist's green jade tattoo of protection and airships that don't sail on the sea, but on the very wind itself!

The Founding of Kausao City

A little over a century ago, a Kaiyumi tradeship happened upon an abandoned port town in the neutral Kausao region. Its ruins revealed an impossible discovery: black jade, commonly thought by the world at large to be a myth. Recognizing it for what it was, but having no idea what to do with it, they traded it at various ports, getting many times the substance's weight in gold.

All of the nations they traded with thus became aware of the existence of the rare jade. They traced the ship back to the forgotten port town, nestled amongst the Xibu Bati mountain range. Each of the nations sent expeditionary teams to survey the area for the mythical jade.

At first, the teams were at cross purposes, sectioning off areas of the town and outlying lands to work their own excavation activities. Eventually, however, they began working together. This joint expedition discovered huge jade deposits, of all colors, in the mountains surrounding the town, and a single, large vein of black jade that spread all the way across the region.

The teams began informing their respective governments of the find and within weeks the port town was crawling with officials, both military and dignitary. Veiled threats were issued to one another as the nations explored military options to take the town for their own. But every nation had too great a presence in the town already, which was quickly expanding. The rulers of each nation agreed to meet in a conference at the city, now referred to as Kausao City, to discuss options.

Despite hostility and posturing by most parties, it was agreed upon that each nation with areas of the city and outlying lands sectioned off by the early expeditionary teams would retain control of that land. The rest of the city, and any expansion to occur in future years, would be controlled by the first international council to decide policy for the city as a whole. The Council of Nine, consisting of two members of each of the great nations, was led by a rotating governor's seat.

A Century Later...

The seat of the governor, having the power to dictate policy within the Kausao region, has become the most important position in the world. Over the last hundred years, there have been many governors, each with ties to one of the great nations. The election of a governor has become synonymous with a prosperous period for one of those nations, as policy would tend to lean in their favor more often than not with their official in the governor's chair.

It didn't take long for another concept to become synonymous with the seat of the governor: corruption. An elected official's power doesn't last forever. Helping their nation secure better excavation and trade rights within the region ensured a position of honor within their nation upon which a governor can retire after stepping down.

The thirteenth governor is the most corrupt of all. Having obtained his seat over two decades ago, he has managed to remain in power long after his term had expired. His balanced political approach toward all the nations originally won him unanimous support within the Council. So when the oppression began, the Council backed the governor's actions.

Using widespread theft and terrorism, perpetrated through his own underworld contacts, the governor was able to justify declaring martial law within the city. The populace struggles under his iron-handed rule. Policies regarding working hours and rates of pay favor the rich, taxes are levied higher than usual to make up for the increased 'need' for police presence, and policies restricting the free trade of jade resources ensures the common people will never be able to rise above their rank in society. The divide further increases the power of middle officials within the city, each controlled by the Council of Nine.

Suffering under the corruption of the governor, the people have cast a muffled cry for someone to champion their cause. They took their cases to their home nations, but to no avail. The fat-cats in charge were satisfied with the economic windfall coming from Kausao City and cared about little else.

The people's cries were heard, but not by some gallant city official. The underworld, reeling from the governor's strict laws, began using the same violent actions that helped him stay in his seat of power to attack his rule. In turn, the governor increased his suppression activities, which were again countered.

This back and forth went on for some time, with the common people trapped in the middle. Eventually, martially skilled and benevolent men and women rose up against both the government and the underworld. They championed the people first, and unknowingly started a rebellious movement throughout the city.

Operating in small cells, these unorganized, but highly skilled, rebels began improving the lives of those around them. The more they made a difference, the more they recognized each other as allies of the same cause. A loose society formed around these cells of honest and benevolent individuals. They became known as the Jianghu, and for the first time, a name appeared in Kausao City that was synonymous with justice.

The Great Nations

The world of *Jadepunk* is made up of many nations, but only four had the good fortune of discovering black jade within the Kausao region early enough to claim a portion of its territory.

The Aerum Empire

The most distant nation to be visited by the Kaiyu tradeship that discovered Kausao Village, Aerum lies to the northwest of the Kausao region, far within the Cairn mountain range.

Personality: The Aerish are an industrious and adventurous lot. They thrive in high-stakes situations. Enjoying the finer things in life, materialism and a sense of self-worth are highly valued in Aerish society. Many will spend their entire lives striving for fame and fortune, and they aren't afraid to get their hands dirty. Insulting an Aerish is asking for a brawl at best, and a duel at worst.

Relations: Aerum has long been an ally of the Naramel, although a rough stretch of time several hundred years ago still lingers in the memories of both nations. Despite their alliance, the Naramel share the views of the other nations that the Aerish are an arrogant lot, concerned only with industry and the betterment of their own society. This doesn't lead to mistrust, however, as the other nations have come to depend on the ambition of Aerish ambassadors as leverage in negotiations.

Aerish Lands: A majority of Aerish lands reside in the vast Cairn mountain range, which are extremely tall and narrow mountain peaks towering over valleys where dangerous wildlife thrives. While castles built in the clouds were often seen as a sign of power and achievement of nations in the region, the invention of red jade firearms has caused a shift in this point of view. Red jade is found in large amounts in the southern regions of Aerum, where past volcanic events have leveled the land and created a more arable landscape. Now many are braving the dangerous fauna and migrating to the volcanic areas in what's being referred to in the region as the "Great Jade Rush." A major feature of the Aerish lands is the floating city of Kinardbal, which is considered a Jadetech marvel and the perfection of the combined use of white and red jade. The city floats among the Cairn peaks, a mobile trading port for airships from all over the world.

Access to Jade: The high peaks of the Cairn Mountains are prime locations to find white jade, and Aerum lands are the primary source of white jade outside of the Kausao region. In

their southern regions, which are typically lower-lying farmlands nestled around long dormant volcanoes, an abundance of red jade can be found.

Technology: The Aerish have long been masters of innovation. They created the first airships, giving them a dominating advantage in wartime, as well as trade superiority in their region as their reach expanded. Even before the discovery of Jadetech, Aerish clockwork industries were creating devices to make life and work easier, like the automatic crank lift and the perpetual time tracker. Applying mystic jade to these already extant technologies, inventions like the stalwart steam engine and hydro-powered crankshaft changed the face of modern engineering.

Language: The official language of Aerum is Aerish, which is highly dialectic depending on proximity of the speaker's home to other national borders, and sports quite a few religious influences, primarily from the Book of Ehal. Because of many widely-traveled, zealous missionaries spreading their religious texts throughout the world, the Aerish language has become the most common tongue in many lands, including Kausao City.

Common Male Names: Alastair, Derek, Ewan, Kirk, Nevin, Ranald.
Common Female Names: Arabella, Catriona, Fiona, Nessa, Sheena.
Common Surnames: Boyd, Cairns, Duncan, Lachlan, Mackay.

Kaiyu

The southern island nation of Kaiyu was the first to rediscover Kausao Village. Their island chain resides directly across the Storm Sea from Kausao Bay.

Personality: The Kaiyumi prize family and honor above all else. It's a common notion that there's no such thing as a dishonest Kaiyumi. The "Shugyō" rite of passage that all Kaiyumi undertake, venturing into the Storm Sea with a group of other young Kaiyumi, engenders respect for their fellow clansmen and great personal strength in those who make it back. There is concern within the Kaiyumi clans that successful trade interactions with other nations have begun to taint the Kaiyu sense of honor, and while there is evidence of this in some individuals, the majority hold to traditional Kaiyu values.

Relations: Given the Kaiyumi's reputation for upholding the virtues of honor and integrity, they have had successful trade relations with many minor nations, but they have few allies in the great nations. The Naramel particularly enjoy their company, and relations between the two are almost as close as the Naramel-Aerum relationship. Kaiyu's proximity to Túyang has led to some cultural exchange between the two nations, but they are

ancient enemies, although the origin of their grudge has been lost to history. Given their stark differences, the Kaiyu avoid dealing with the Aerum whenever possible.

Kaiyu Lands: The Kaiyu Islands are comprised of hundreds of paradisiacal, tropical islands of various sizes on the far side of a perpetually violent ocean. For centuries the Kaiyu were forced into isolation due to the impassability of the Storm Sea, which was exacerbated by the violent winds that sweep through the rocky cliffs that line the shores of islands around the Funarino Channel, a treacherous, quick-moving, wide strip of water that spans the length of the thousand-mile archipelago. It wasn't until the creation of the jet drive that voyages through the Funarino Channel and across the Storm Sea were made relatively safe, opening trade to the rest of the world.

Access to Jade: The Kaiyu Islands possess the most plentiful sites of blue jade in the entire world; so plentiful, in fact, that some beaches sparkle visibly with the mystical stone from miles offshore. White jade can also be found in the cliffs of the Funarino Channel, though the high winds make extraction from the cliff-sides risky business.

Technology: Kaiyu nautical engineering is renowned through-out the world. The B/W jet drive, a Jadetech device that propels water beneath a kaiyumi skiff, has become a staple export to nations all over the world. Given the difficulty of crossing the distance between islands near the Funarino Channel, the Kaiyu have had a vested interest in long-range communications for centuries, and were the first to use white jade to create the Windcaller, a Jadetech device that uses white jade to direct an imperceptible gust of wind to carry a message between two such devices.

Language: Kaiyumi is the official language of the isles. Given their need for quick communication in a storm, the Kaiyumi language consists of short words that have only one meaning, as multiple meanings of a single word can create indecisiveness, both in action and in society.

Common Male Names: Arata, Eloni, Hiro, Keiji, Maru, Siaki, Taneo
Common Female Names: Akela, Chieko, Emi, Kali, Lailani, Vailea
Common Surnames: Anae, Hashi, Kita, Maugtai, Naea, Tui, Ueno

Naramel

Hailing from treacherous deserts to the southwest, the Naramel were the last to arrive in the Kausao region, despite a relatively close proximity to it. In a short time, however, they were able to establish a diplomatic foothold that gained them great power within the city walls.

Personality: The Naramel are the calm in the storm of the volatile political environment of Kausao City. Centuries of nomadic living in the desert have engendered in the Naramel people a respect for the natural world and a ruthlessness when dealing with others. Calm and calculating, it is very difficult to gain the upper hand in negotiations with them, which is the basis of their power in the city, as they boast the smallest, yet wealthiest, city districts.

Relations: Due to their proximity to Aerum, Naramel has a strong alliance with the air-dwellers; however, that didn't stop the Aerish from refusing an airship fleet to the Naramel to help them get to Kausao City a hundred years ago, as the Aerish did not want the Naramel to get a foothold in the city before them. This slight the Naramel quietly remember to this day. The Naramel enjoy a strong political relationship with the other nations. Their districts boast the banking quarter, giving them the seat of wealth in the city, and because of their skill at negotiation, they are commonly sought after as mediators. This strengthens their ties with the other nations, as well as making the Naramel information network the most powerful in the world.

Naramel Lands: Only the strongest and toughest individuals can survive the harsh southwestern deserts. This makes their more arable northern lands particularly sought after by their various tribes. The political climate surrounding ownership of these lands has been violently contested for centuries. It is one of the most conflicted areas in the known world. There are still those who reside in the much larger desert locales, however, despite the difficulty of doing so. Some live there because they have nowhere else to go, others live there to mine jade.

Access to Jade: The northern lands have sizable deposits of green jade, another reason it is contested by many tribes. The southern deserts boast large red jade deposits. Those with the resources to mine it have turned an unbearable existence under the desert heat into vast profits.

Technology: The Naramel were the first people to develop red jade firearms. Early on, this was a source of great wealth for the nation, as they sold the weapons to all corners of the world. Now that the technology has been reverse engineered by many nations however, they have had to return to older technologies to give them an edge in the global market place. Centuries ago, the Naramel discovered a way to infuse iron smelting with green jade, a long and arduous process known as Demalian smelting that produces the world's hardest steel. Given the difficulty and resources required for production, a Demalian blade can net a year's worth of income in the markets of Kausao City.

Language: With so many tribes moving about thousands of miles of desert, the Naramel language is constantly changing. Some linguists have tried to find the root language of the region, but to no avail. The Naramel see the difficulty of learning their language as a strength, one they exploit to great effect in their information network.

Common Male Names: Arrad, Cyril, Jaron, Magen, Raheem, Suhail
Common Female Names: Daima, Hana, Levana, Orial, Sadira, Talia
Common Surnames: Amari, Chaikin, Hanania, Naser, Reis, Sokol, Zur

Túyang

Being the only great nation with a land crossing to Kausao Village, difficult as that crossing may be, Túyang quickly claimed ancient ties to the now wondrous city. Many nations discredit these claims as an attempt to gain more power in the city's government, and the Túyangans have yet to bring a convincing argument as to why they would have deserted the region in the first place.

Personality: The Túyangans are an inquisitive and intelligent people. They boast the longest written history and pride themselves on their advanced education systems. It is uncommon to find a Túyangan that is not well-trained in some field or another. Perceiving themselves as the smartest people in any room, they have a haughtiness that many find disconcerting. Despite their almost culture-wide superiority complex, many count a Túyangan as a close friend, given their intense loyalty, particularly to their families and those they enter into business relationships with.

Relations: There is no love lost between the Túyangans and the Kaiyumi. Although they have all but forgotten why they hate each other, they only deal with one another when absolutely necessary. Túyang has better relations with the other nations, however, and they find good friends among both the Aerish and the Naramel districts.

Túyang Lands: From the forested northern expanse to the tropical jungles of the south, and the fertile hill lands between, their nation is almost perfectly hospitable. This paradise is shared with dangerous wildlife, however, causing the Túyangan people to converge into close communities in ancient times, which have turned into vast cities in the modern day. The stark contrast between urban sprawls and untamed wilderness makes Túyangan lands dangerously beautiful. Politically, the Túyangan nation is divided between several small nations that have come together in a large, multinational coalition. As such, travel from one city to the next within their lands can expose one to many cultural and linguistic differences.

Access to Jade: The fertile lands of Túyang create the largest deposits of green jade, larger by many times than any found in the rest of the world combined. The wild rivers that move through these lands also boast sizable amounts of blue jade. Getting to these abundant sources of jade with such dangerous wildlife around is a matter the Túyang, with their great respect for the living world, have only recently begun to handle with any sort of industry, a move that has angered many of their more

liberal-minded populace, whom would like to see the environment remain untouched.

Technology: With such access to green and blue jade, and trade relations that allow other types of jade to flow freely within their cities, the Túyangans have perfected the alchemical arts, creating jade-infused potions that cure disease and strengthen the body, as well as colored ink used in tattoos that confer different properties on the wearers.

Language: Túyangan language actually consists of several different languages that are all similar in speech patterns, but different enough that they are not compatible. Many outside of the nation call them all Túyang, but those who try to learn the language quickly learn that how and what they speak to a Túyangan depends on where the individual originates within their homeland.

Common Male Names: Bolin, Enlai, Hyo, Jianyu, Myon, Shen, Xiang
Common Female Names: Ara, Bao-yu, Dáwei, Hyori, Jia li, Mina
Common Surnames: Chen, Guo, Kwan, Li, Ng, Song, Yuen

Other Nations of the World

While the great nations discovered the Kausao Region and have ownership of lands there, they are not the only ones to reside in the city. Nearly every nation in the world has an embassy, business venture or other vested interests in Kausao City. The most notable of these are:

Ahlmac

The nation with the furthest territory from the Kausao Region, the Ahlmac must sail thousands of miles from their homeland to reach Kausao City, but access to advanced Jadetech is a reward well worth the journey. Because of their distance, they have only recently been introduced to the world's popular religions. In their home country, an agriculturally-based collection of stone-built city-states, the Ahlmac are blood worshippers, believing that power even beyond what jade can give is found in one's own blood. Many of their practices are illegal within Kausao City, but they have recently established close ties with the Naramel, who are committed to establishing Ahlmac's religious freedom.

Gahul

Gahul is no longer a sovereign nation. Ten years ago, their lands were conquered by the ever-expanding Aerum Empire. Many refuse to give up their national identity, however, and have chosen a life of exile in Kausao City over integration with their conquerors. When they were sovereign, the Gahul were some of the world's fiercest warriors, powerful in an era where physical might mattered. Their almost religious rejection of jade proved to be their downfall, as they were no match for Aerish technology. But their descendants are learning from their mistake.

Kushmet

In one of the most violent parts of the world, the Kushmet are rulers. To replenish their food stores, they send their horse raiders across their own lands, stealing from their own destitute subjects. For decades they have spread like a plague throughout their land, conquering a tribe here and a city-state there, but a recent acquisition, the Nahdisan, remain steadfast despite the demon at their doors. Their resolve has inspired a much-needed rebellion in the region. Recently, the Túyang have agreed to aid the Kushmet, a decision that is proving unpopular in the Council of Nine.

The Dominant Religions in Kausao City

This is not a list of world religions, of which there are too many for a single listing, but rather the most commonly practiced religions in Kausao City. Every district in the city is likely to have a place to worship most, if not all, of these religions.

The Church of Ehal

Ehal is the one true God, as testified by his many prophets. On his own, Ehal is unknowable. Only through his prophets can his message of individuality and self-improvement be reached. Adherents of Ehal follow **The Twelve Virtues of Ehal:** faith, hope, love, valor, mercy, diligence, honesty, patience, chastity, obedience, logic, and justice. There are three distinct branches of this religion, each with its own version of the holy text: The High Holy Church of Ehal, the Orthodoxy of True Faith and the Words of the Prophet.

The Path of Virtue

The Pathist Priests teach the principles of the interaction between positive and negative energy, called Qi, and of a pantheon of revered deities that are necessary for the universe to exist. The focus of their teachings is on harmony and understanding one's life path, keeping both the spiritual and material world in balance. If all things in one's life are in balance, and taken in moderation, one is healthy and experiences good luck. Excess in any one area leads to an imbalance of Qi, which causes sickness and bad luck.

Nottila

A seafaring nation of honorable gentleman that rivals the Kaiyumi both in naval power and individual integrity. It was a Nottilan captain who introduced their neighbors, the Aerum Empire, to the Naramel. Ever since, Nottila has fought to remain competitive with their ambitious neighbors. But Nottila's recent discovery of an island that boasts sizable amounts of green, blue and white jade has caught the attention of the Aerish. The island's location, and proof of its existence, remains in question to all but Nottila.

Way of Suffering

The material world is an illusion. Self is an illusion. Life is a cycle of birth and death, spread throughout the five realms: Hell, the Animal Realm, the Human Realm, the Realm of The Holy and the Realm of the Gods. You will live as many lives as required for you to learn to overcome suffering and achieve emptiness, which can only be done by the cessation of the four carnal actions: craving, ignorance, attachment and aversion.

Customs of the Old Gods

There is no greater importance than honoring the fallen, many of which have become deities through the honorable acts they performed while they were still among the living. When one serves the best interests of their family and follows the **Five Virtues** of courage, face (honor), filial piety, and cunning (wisdom), they can attain an honorable death and go to the Valley of the Fallen. If one fails to follow the virtues, they risk an afterlife spent in the Fields of Forgetting or The Land of Nothing.

KLAK! KLAK! The sound of the dummy being struck resounded through the courtyard of Jin's home. It was a nice place, much nicer than the shack Levana shared with her father years ago. *KLAK! KLAK!* Her hands hurt with every strike, and when they began to bleed, she stopped, out of breath and weeping slightly.

"Hit the dummy," Jin chided her.

"I can't...no more." It was senseless anyway, beating your hands until they bleed. What was the point? She needed to learn to fight men, not a piece of wood.

Jin regarded her thoughtfully for a moment. "Get out."

"What? You're...but..." Levana was beside herself. All her plans, her vengeance. None of it would come about if her training ended now.

"You said you wanted to avenge your father. But all you ever do is quit."

"My hand is almost broken!" She screamed.

"Then break it!"

Levana looked incredulously at her teacher. Was he serious? What good could that possibly do? For his part, Jin was regarding his student carefully. She was driven by anger. Always angry. She needed to understand.

"Follow me," he said, leading her into his home. They entered a room she had never been in before. Inside, hung on an ornate rack, was an old set of city guard armor.

Levana couldn't believe it. Owning any official equipment was illegal, unless you were a member of law enforcement. She looked at him cautiously. "Where did you get this?"

He said nothing. It was then that she noticed the scar on his face, which she had always assumed had come from some long forgotten duel, was shaped remarkably similar to the jade tattoo given to city watchmen when they are commissioned.

"Never mind that," he said, waving her curiosity away, "look." He motioned towards the hardened breastplate and helmet. "If you want to free your father, that is your opposition. To fight this, your body must be hardened. You must be hardened."

Levana looked at her mentor's face one more time, noting the scar, thinking of how painful it must have been to remove. She finally understood the sacrifices that came with vengeance.

Without saying a word, she returned to the dummy in the courtyard.

KLAK! KLAK! KLAK!

Character Creation

Characters in *Jadepunk* consist of a collection of traits: **aspects** (describing your character's story), **professions** (describing their capabilities), **refresh** (a spendable resource), and **stress** (their physical and mental "health").

What Kind of Character Can I Play?

Players in *Jadepunk* typically take control of rebellious individuals, rising up to defend the weak and fight the oppression in Kausao City. Incredibly proficient in various skill sets, and armed with customized Jadetech devices, you will join the Jianghu as a freedom fighter and rebel against city officials, stop plots by the evil Council of Nine and their army of guardsmen and watchmen, and protect the weak against the city's criminal underworld.

Discuss with your table what the group will be doing in the game. Are you going to play rebellious members of the Jianghu, rising up to defend the common people (the default setting), or are you going to flip the script and play minions of the oppressive Council of Nine—maybe even as officials overseeing your own district? You could also go off the beaten path and ignore the rebellion altogether, exploring the ancient temples that dot the Xibu Bati mountain range as sacred artifact hunters, or you could all be a team of engineers, caring only about discovering new sources of jade and inventing never-before-seen Jadetech devices. The options are endless.

Once you have decided what you'll be doing, think hard about how you want to do it. If you're going to be defending the weak and downtrodden of your home district within Kausao City, a gunslinger who relies on his red jade six-shooter to dole out justice is going to have a different approach than a monk who's trained her entire life in the martial arts, and will play altogether differently than an aristocrat who talks his way into, and out of, trouble.

Kiera, Chris, and Mike are discussing characters for their new game. Kiera decides to play a young girl who is just learning about the world. She saw a martial arts duel when she was ten, and now practices day and night to try and be as awesome as the fighters she saw. Her character's name is Taia, and she is of Túyang decent.

Mike thinks that all of this talk of Jadetech sounds fun and wants to play a Jadetech engineer. He's a fresh-off-the-boat Aerish gunslinger. His character's name is Gerard, after his favorite actor.

Chris likes what he heard about the Council of Nine and already wanted to play a rich socialite. He asks the GM is it's alright to play a Councilor who's sympathetic to the Jianghu and joins their cause. The GM doesn't see a problem with that, and having a rich benefactor could help the group overall, and Chris' character's position is perfect for dropping plot hooks on the group. Excited, Chris chooses Jaron as his character's name and makes him of Naramel descent.

Aspects

A character aspect is a word, phrase, or sentence that describes something centrally important to your character.

Aspects allow you to change the story in ways that tie in with your character's tendencies, experiences, or problems. You can also use them to establish facts about the setting by including additional elements within the aspect description, such as the presence of a useful ally, dangerous enemy, or secret organization. We'll discuss aspects in detail in *Chapter 5: Aspects and Fate Points* (page 79)—but for now, this should help you get the idea.

Composing Good Aspects

Character aspects should be of immediate use. This may seem obvious, but this is the area most people fail to recognize. Creating aspects that merely describe the character in a vague way limits how often it can be used. Being compelled is how you gain fate points, and you want that to happen a lot.

If you construct your aspects with some kind of action you always take or decision you always make, or thing you must always do, then you'll be able to bring them into play more often by working that action into the scene somehow, for invoking or compelling. Think of the types of action you want your character to make and build some aspects that will encourage the story to move in that direction.

Decision aspects are a lot like action aspects in that they are the things your character believes and ways they think the world should work; the things your character must do no matter what. Build your aspects to create situations that will bring this side of your character into conflict in some way and you have an instant compel. Things like a propensity to always tell the truth or a responsibility that must be met are good examples of these.

Lastly, character aspects should be both useful and a hindrance, but they don't have to be, at least not in equal parts. It's fine to have an aspect that is mostly good or mostly bad, as long as you are satisfied with the rate you're earning and spending fate points in play. However, it's usually not that difficult to reword a "good" aspect so it has some negative direction it could take, and a "bad" aspect can almost always be slightly reworded to give it positive uses in specific circumstances.

See *Aspects and Fate Points* (page 79) for a more in depth discussion on this.

Creating Characters: The 30-Second Version

1. Work your way through the story process.
2. Give your character a name and describe their appearance.
3. Choose professions.
4. Set your refresh to 7.
5. You may spend your refresh on assets, if you wish, or you may do that during play.

Portrayal

First, decide on your portrayal. This is a single phrase or sentence that neatly sums up who your character is, what they do, and how they will be depicted in the game. Depiction is just as important as what your character can do, as it describes not only how you'll play the character, but how other characters will see him. Consider writing the aspect in the present tense, describing something the character does rather than did. Keep in mind the action of displaying who the character is.

Examples: Benevolent Master of the Merchant Guild; Monks Should Be Silent; An Engineer Can Fix Anything; Shifty-Eyed Rogue.

Background

This aspect describes the sum of where you are from and what experiences you have had. Take your portrayal and describe how you came to be that way. It should not contradict your portrayal. If you're an experienced temple raider, for instance, then it makes little sense for your background to have you trapped in an academy studying applied red jade science.

Examples: My Father Was a Merchant, It's In My Blood; I Studied Martial Arts at the Fu Hao Monastery; I Couldn't Afford Academy Tuition, So I Taught Myself; The Streets Have Been My Home Since Before I Can Remember.

Inciting Incident

You decided to rebel for a reason. Why? What forced you into this life? What did you see or experience that made you act out? To keep your character interesting, strongly consider the reason they do what they do. If you're not playing the default rebellion game, use your Inciting Incident aspect to describe what happened to land you in your current circumstance.

Examples: The Council Took Everything!; I Watched Them Kill a Man In Cold Blood!; The Aerum Trading Company Fired Me After 20 Years of Service!; They Burn My Streets, I'll Burn Their Mansions!

Belief

Consider the aspects you've written up to this point. Collectively, how do they color your perceptions of the world? Or, how have they changed you? Phrase this aspect as a motivation. It's not only how you see the world, but what you want to do to affect it.

Examples: The Council Isn't Capable of Ruling; My Masters Taught Me To Forgive, But Can I?; The Bonds of Loyalty Mustn't Be Broken; I'm Better Than Anyone.

Trouble

Finally, consider all of the above and decide how they collectively cause you recurring trouble. Is there an overarching theme in the aspects that hasn't been stated yet? Do you have another belief that drives you to trouble more often than not? Is someone after you? Your trouble should be primarily negative in how it affects you, and it should be something that will come up at least once a session. As this is your primary aspect for gaining fate points in play, make it something that is an obvious and constant hindrance to you.

Examples: Restoring the Family Business Is a Huge Responsibility; Stranger in a Strange Land; Not All of My Tech is...Legal; I'm a Wanted Man.

Kiera has a pretty good idea of what she wants Taia's backstory to be. Wanting her to be the best martial artist of the group, she decides that her portrayal will be Youthful Martial Arts Master. Her background and Inciting Incident are easy: she Grew Up on the Streets of Kausao City, and Witnessed a Martial Arts Duel. Kiera sees Taia as one struggling with the concept of sacrifice, adding My Sacrifices Define Me, but decides that isn't immediate enough to be useful and changes it to I Have Sacrificed Too Much to Stop Now. Her trouble is that she's Never Able to Cut Loose, because she has to hide her training, since practicing martial arts is illegal in Kausao City, and every time she passes a city guardsmen in the streets all she wants to do is hit him, but she knows she can't, yet.

For his part, Mike goes through the list with little more than the gist of his character in his head. He writes Jadetech Gunslinger as the portrayal aspect and decides that he likes that, since it allows him to work with jade and be a gunfighter. For a background, Mike decides that Gerard was Apprenticed on Kinardbal and his inciting incident is that he Witnessed a Watchman Kill a Man in Cold Blood. Someone who would take offense to that inciting incident would have definite beliefs on how people should be treated, so Mike gives Gerard the belief Respect is a Two-Way Street. For Gerard's trouble aspect, Gerard decides to make him an outsider in the city, he's Fresh Off the Boat.

Chris gives Jaron the portrayal Councilor of the Jianghu, to represent his dual nature. Then, after hearing everyone else's story, he decides the group needs some tragedy to drive home the feel of oppression, then notes how ironic it is that a Councilor of the Nine is the one with the tragic past. After they share a laugh, Chris gives Jaron the background of Naramel Representative of the Council of Nine and decides that he didn't get that position through being nice. His inciting incident: Committed Murder in the Name of the Council gives him a reputation that will challenge him in social situations, which he likes because Jaron is supposed to be a social character. His actions have colored Jaron's perceptions of the world, so he believes that No One Should Have Absolute Power. For a trouble, he decides Jaron is Secretly in Debt.

Professions

Your **professions** describe your collective innate talent, experience, or training in an area of expertise. They are added to nearly every dice roll you make and reflect your character's broad base of knowledge and ability, but not advanced or specific training, see Chapter 3: Assets for rules on building Techniques to represent advanced training in a particular area.

Each profession is rated with a bonus. Choose one at Good (+3), two at Fair (+2), two at Average (+1), and one at Mediocre (0). You can improve these when you hit a major milestone (see *Milestones*, pg. 40).

The professions are:

Aristocrat

The Aristocrat influences and socializes. Aristocrats are adept at fitting in at a party, negotiating treaties and intimidating a Triad thug to stand down by virtue of their authority or overwhelming presence.

Overcome: Aristocrat is used to influence others to do what you want, either through charm or coercion, and to establish connections with others. Entertainers charm their customers, police interrogate suspects for information and merchants barter their goods or services. For nameless NPCs, this is a single overcome action, but for named NPCs and PCs, you may have to enter into a contest.

Create Advantages: Use Aristocrat to create advantages representing momentary emotional states, like Enraged, Shocked, Hesitant, Joyful, or Excited. You can also establish positive moods in a scene or get someone to trust you. You could give a speech to Inspire, or stir a crowd into a Crazed Mob, or simply make someone Talkative or Helpful.

Attack: Aristocrat only performs attacks as part of social duels. (See *Dueling*, pg. 73)

Defend: Aristocrat defends against any attempt to damage your reputation, change a mood you've created, or make you look bad in front of other people.

You'll notice that each profession describes how it works with the four actions. For more information on actions, see *How to Play*, page 63.

34

Engineer

The Engineer builds and sabotages. Engineers are gifted with advanced technical expertise, able to perform jade refining processes, build clockwork devices or steam engines, and sabotage machinery.

Overcome: Engineers build, break, or fix machinery, presuming they have the time and access to a workshop or the proper tools. Often, actions performed by an Engineer are one component of a more complex situation, making it a popular profession for overcoming challenges.

Create Advantages: The primary use of the Engineer profession is to create advantages representing Jadetech devices and, if you want them to stick around, turning them into assets (see *Chapter 3: Assets*). But an advantage created by an Engineer could be a temporary feature added to a device (Armor-Plated or Targeting Scope), or they could represent something useful the Engineer notices (Flaw in the Cross-Sectional Support Shaft or Hastily Put Together).

Advantages created by Engineers can also take the form of a quick and dirty sabotage or jury-rigging on mechanical objects. For example, you might create a Makeshift Pulley to get to a location above you, or mess with the iron sights on an opponent's weapon before a duel to make it Hard to Aim.

Attack: Engineers use heavy weapons, like cannons and siege weaponry, to attack airships and buildings (or something that's typically not a character). Engineers can also attack Device assets, provided they can muck about with their gears or wiring in some way.

Defend: Engineers can defend their own crafted items from being sabotaged, but unless they are controlling a piece of machinery that allows them to block a physical attack, Engineer isn't used to defend.

Explorer

The Explorer evades and navigates. Whether it's behind the yoke of an airship, hiking the Fuksao Mountain range, or navigating the streets of Kausao City, Explorers are masters of their terrain.

Overcome: Explorers overcome obstacles by moving over, under or through them, or just by moving the object. Explorers are physically fit – capable of running, jumping, swimming, lifting, and climbing – adept navigators – capable of plotting courses and knowing directions – and skilled pilots, capable of guiding airships through difficult maneuvers and landing sequences. Explorer is also the profession you use to chase or race in contests involving those types of actions.

Create Advantages: When you're creating advantages as an Explorer, you're jumping to high ground, performing dazzling acrobatic maneuvers, throwing objects into your path, or flying your airship through terrain that makes it difficult for any opposition to follow.

Attack: Explorer is not meant to attack. If you want to use your airship or other mount to ram something, you can attack with Explorer, but take the same shifts of harm that you inflict.

Defend: Explorer is a catch-all profession for avoiding physical harm. An Explorer's reflexes are honed to avoid environmental dangers and violent attacks with the same level of proficiency. You can also use Explorer to defend against advantages being placed on you by another's use of Explorer, and to stop characters trying to move past you, if you're in a position to physically interfere with whoever's making the attempt.

Fighter

The Fighter attacks and maneuvers. Either as members of a formal military or focusing on personal combat, Fighters are trained in the use of a wide-range of weaponry and combative techniques.

Overcome: Fighter is used to conduct duels of combative skill (see *Dueling*, pg. 73), as well as commanding troops in large scale battle.

Create Advantages: Most advantages created in a battle are created by Fighter. Any number of special moves can be covered with advantages – a targeted strike to stun, tripping your opponent, disarming, etc.: any action that requires technical, combative skill to perform.

Attack: This is where the Fighter shines. You make physical attacks with Fighter at all ranges and with all weapons.

Defend: You can use Fighter to defend against create advantage attempts from Fighter, representing having better technique than your opponent. Fighter can also be used to defend against melee attacks by parrying.

Scholar

The Scholar thinks and discovers. Interpreting the world around you, recalling knowledge, and gathering relevant information are all part and parcel of what it means to be a Scholar.

Overcome: Scholars can apply their knowledge to achieve a goal, like deciphering ancient text on a tomb wall or recalling a bit of information they may have researched in the past. Scholars are also able to uncover unknown information through researching old tombs or performing inquiries with relevant contacts.

When disputing facts or discussing some kind of social issue, a contest is usually performed to see who wins the debate, which may or may not be a duel, depending on how high the stakes are.

Create Advantages: Scholar is one of the most versatile professions for creating advantages, as long as you're willing to take the time to do some investigative research. Most of the time, you'll use Scholar to create a story detail, some obscure bit of information that you uncover or know already. By studying, searching, or analyzing a subject, you can create an aspect representing what you've discovered about nearly anything in the setting that your character could reasonably unearth or know. This is also useful for assessing the aspects on another character's sheet or getting a read on their emotional state, provided you have some kind of interpersonal contact with them.

Attack: Scholar is not used for attacks.

Defend: Scholar is the profession used to defend against social actions taken against you by seeing through false information or figuring out the opposition's intentions, such as when a Scoundrel tries to get you to believe a lie or an Aristocrat attempts to sway your opinion or mood.

Scoundrel

The Scoundrel sneaks and deceives. A master of lies and infiltration, a Scoundrel can sneak past guards, come up with a good cover story, and commit acts of crime.

Overcome: Scoundrels bluff their way past guards, tell convincing lies, and misrepresent a situation to get something out of it. For nameless NPCs, this is just an overcome action, but for named NPCs or PCs, it requires a contest–the target opposes with Scholar to see through your falsehood. If their believing your lie could help you in the future, winning such a contest justifies the creation of a situation aspect on the target.

Scoundrels don't just lie and cheat, however: they are also capable thieves. This profession is used to create convincing disguises, sneak past a guard, pick a pocket, and create a convincing cover story in case you get caught.

Create Advantages: Use Scoundrel to create momentary distractions, cover stories, false impressions, or concealment. You could feint in a duel and put your opponent Off-Balance, hide in the Perfect Spot for an Ambush, or establish a Wealthy Aristocrat Cover Story to get access to an upperclass event.

Attack: Scoundrel is a great profession for setting up ideal opportunities to strike, but it doesn't attack directly.

Defend: Scoundrels can throw off investigations by placing misinformation and efforts made to discern the Scoundrel's true motives.

Taia is extremely focused on her goal, not wasting her time on unrelated endeavors, so Kiera gives her: Aristocrat at Mediocre (+0), Engineer at Average (+1), Explorer at Fair (+2), Fighter at Good (+3), Scholar at Average (+1), and Scoundrel at Fair (+2). She's a great athlete and an excellent fighter who has to lie and hide a lot.

Gerard is a little more spread out, not so one-sided in his focus on making people respect each other. Mike gives him: Aristocrat at Average (+1), Engineer at Good (+3), Explorer at Fair (+2), Fighter at Average (+1), Scholar at Fair (+2), and Scoundrel at Mediocre (+0). He's great with a wrench, a decent pilot and knowledgeable about the world, but he's going to need to rely on his assets to save him in a fight.

Jaron emphasizes social and scholarly endeavors. Chris gives him: Aristocrat at Good (+3), Engineer at Average (+1), Explorer at Average (+1), Fighter at Mediocre (+0), Scholar at Fair (+2), and Scoundrel at Fair (+2). He's a gifted diplomat, is educated and is adept in the art of spinning falsehoods, but he will rely on his stronger companions to protect him in a fight.

Finishing Touches

You've almost finished creating your character. All that's left to talk about are their Refresh, Assets, Stress, and Consequences.

Refresh

Your refresh is the number of fate points you begin each game session with - unless you ended the previous session with more unspent fate points than your refresh, in which case you start with the number you had left last time. By default, **your refresh starts at seven and is reduced by purchasing assets.** As your character advances, you'll get opportunities to add to your refresh - and you can decide at that time if you want to spend it on more assets or keep it around to bolster your per session number of fate points.

You may not reduce your refresh below one.

Assets

Every character begins play with one or more assets, purchased with refresh. These are your specific areas of expertise in a profession, advanced fighting techniques, Jadetech devices, and companions that assist you in your adventures. (See *Chapter 3: Assets* for more information)

Stress and Consequences

Finally, every character begins with three stress boxes and has three consequences (a mild, moderate, and severe). See *Stress and Consequences*, pg. 74, for more information.

Character Advancement

People change. Your skills sharpen as you practice them. Your life experiences accumulate and shape your personality. *Jadepunk* reflects that with character advancement, which allows you to change your aspects, add or change assets, and raise your profession ratings. You do this when your character reaches a milestone.

Milestones

Whenever a scenario, story arc, sub-plot, or campaign wraps up, you've reached a milestone. Sometimes these are small, for short stories, or really big ones, like a season finale of a TV show. *Jadepunk* recognizes three types of milestones, and each one allows you to change your character in certain ways.

Minor Milestones

A minor milestone usually occurs at the end of a session of play, or when one piece of a story has been resolved. Rather than making your character more powerful, this kind of milestone is more about changing your character, about adjusting in response to whatever's going on in the story. Sometimes it won't really make sense to take advantage of a minor milestone, but you always have the opportunity in case you need to.

After a minor milestone, you can choose to do one (and only one) of the following:

➕ Switch the ratings of any two professions.
➕ Rename one aspect that isn't your portrayal.
➕ Exchange one asset for a different asset.
➕ Choose a new asset (and adjust your refresh accordingly).

Also, if you have any moderate consequences that have been around for two sessions, clear them now.

Significant Milestones

A significant milestone usually occurs at the end of a scenario or the conclusion of a big plot event (or, when in doubt, at the end of every two or three sessions). Unlike minor milestones, which are primarily about change, significant milestones are about learning new things—dealing with problems and challenges has made your character generally more capable at what they do.

In addition to the benefit of a minor milestone, you also gain *both* of the following:

➕ If you have a severe consequence that's been around for at least two sessions, you can clear it.

➕ Raise the rating of one profession by one.

Major Milestones

Major milestones should only occur when something happens in the campaign that shakes it up a lot—the end of a big story arc, the final defeat of a main NPC villain, or any other large-scale change that reverberates around your game world.

These milestones are about gaining more power. The challenges of yesterday simply aren't sufficient to threaten these characters anymore, and the threats of tomorrow will need to be more adept, organized and determined to stand against them.

Raising Profession Ratings

When you raise the rating of a profession, there's only one rule: you can't raise a profession bonus above Superb (+5).

Achieving a major milestone confers the benefits of a significant milestone *and* a minor milestone. In addition, you may do *all* of the following:

➕ Gain an additional point of refresh, which you may immediately use to purchase or improve an asset, if you wish.

➕ Rewrite your character's portrayal (optional).

"I've been working on a rather large order of late, but I have your item in the back, Mr. Kwan. Just give me a moment to retrieve it," Eli said as he walked into the back room. He had Mr. Kwan's long box in his hands before he sensed the presence. Turning quickly, he saw Boyd and his two cronies standing on the docking bay that serviced Eli's small workshop.

Eli gulped audibly. "Mr. Boyd."

"It's just Boyd, you twit," the taller man said as he played with some broken device on one of Eli's workbenches, obviously trying to figure out what it was. He gave up and dropped it on the floor. "Is my order ready?"

Eli set Mr. Kwan's box down and walked over to a closed crate. "It is, Mr...I mean, Boyd." Grabbing a crowbar, Eli forced the crate open. He usually didn't store things in this manner, but Boyd's order wasn't something he wanted other people discovering. "Red jade casings. Two thousand, like you wanted."

Boyd put on a large smile that made Eli cringe inside. He didn't know where Boyd got the refined jade in the first place, didn't want to know. When he showed up asking Eli to make ammunition casings for him, he didn't give Eli a choice. '*Make them, or else.*'

"You'll need a clockwork firearm for them to function. I don't have any on hand but..."

"Don't you worry about that. I've got all the clockwork we'll be needin'." Boyd drew a pistol, considered it for a moment, then aimed it at Eli. "You wouldn't tell anyone who you were making these for, would you?"

Eli's whole body tensed and he let out a slight whimper. "No. No! I would never! Do you know how illegal the work I did is? I'd go to prison, too."

Boyd reflected on that for a moment, then released the hammer on the weapon. "I didn't think so." He motioned for his cronies to grab the crate. "You do good work. We'll be back with more jade in a few weeks."

Boyd and his men left and Eli almost fainted. He wiped the sweat that had formed on his forehead and retrieved Mr. Kwan's box.

"Sorry, Mr. Kwan. I found it," Eli said as he entered the front of the shop, placed the sword box on the counter, and opened it. "The blade is made entirely of green jade. An expensive piece, but just as hard as Demalian steel, and all of the permits are in order. Mr. Kwan?"

Mr. Kwan looked worriedly at the engineer. Eli knew it was too much to hope that he hadn't heard the exchange in the back. Was his first duress-driven, clandestine activity to be reported so quickly?

"Eli," Mr. Kwan said as he finally inspected the sword. "You've owned this shop a long time, and your work is exquisite. Don't you think it might be time to move on? Maybe work for a larger organization."

Eli laughed incredulously. "A larger organization? I hope you're not suggesting I go work for the Council."

Mr. Kwan smiled again. "No, not the Council. Quite the opposite, in fact."

Assets

Every character can start play with one or more **assets.** These can be anything from your specific areas of expertise in a profession, a powerful Jadetech device, an esoteric martial-arts maneuver, a loyal servant, or anything in between. You can also acquire new assets during the course of play. For example, you might craft a weapon, gain an informant, or unlock the mysteries of the Sugo-Chi style.

During character creation, building an asset for your character costs refresh. The minimum cost for an asset is 1 refresh.

When creating an asset during play, the exact cost varies depending on how powerful the asset is and whether it's temporary or permanent. See *Creating An Asset During Play* on page 56 for details.

Building An Asset

First, let's go through the process of building an asset during character creation.

Step One: Asset Type

Assets come in three types. Choose one:

Asset	Description
Ally	A helpful NPC associate, like a sidekick, contact, or secret society
Device	A weapon, tool, or other piece of equipment, including Jadetech
Technique	Personal capabilities gained from special training, secret knowledge, or natural talent

Step Two: Function/Guiding Aspect

If the asset is an Ally or a Device, it automatically comes with an aspect that describes its intended purpose–who or what it is and how it works. This is called its **function aspect.** Your Ally might be an **Informative Barmaid** or a **Wealthy Courtier**; your Device could be a **Green Jade Jian** or the **Best Lockpicks in Kausao City**.

You can think of the asset's function aspect as its portrayal aspect. Like any other aspect, you can invoke or compel it, and it can be compelled against you. The only real difference is that a function aspect is much more focused toward the asset's role in your character's life, and tends to be a bit less double-edged than most of your character's aspects might be.

Generally speaking, Technique assets you start with at character creation don't have function aspects. The reasons for this are twofold. One, most Techniques will provide a straightforward bonus to a profession or some other relatively simple mechanical benefit, and adding an aspect would unnecessarily complicate them.

Two, Techniques are likely to be the most common type of asset. If everyone were to also come up with an aspect, you'd quickly have an unwieldy number of aspects to track.

Instead, every Technique you have must be connected somehow to one of your *other* aspects. This is called its guiding aspect. If one of your Techniques gives you a bonus when using edged weapons, it could key off of a guiding aspect like Master of Blades, or Old Soldier. Likewise, a Technique that improves your ability to work with jade might have a jade-related guiding aspect, such as Jade Mining Runs in the Family, or I Know Jade Like Others Know Themselves.

In other words, if you have a Technique, there should be a good reason—it's an integral part of your history or personality. If you have a particular Technique in mind but lack a good guiding aspect for it, you may want to rethink either that Technique or your existing aspects, because something isn't lining up. Your aspects might not be saying the things about your character that you want them to say, and that's a disconnect you probably want to address before play begins.

Techniques and Function Assets

If you and the GM are agreeable, and if there's decent narrative justification, a Technique acquired *during play* may indeed have a function aspect, separate from your character's aspects. For example, if you learn a move for the specific purpose of defeating practitioners of the Eight-Directions Pole-Sword Style kung-fu, in addition to its mechanical benefit, it makes sense to give it a function aspect of Strong Against Eight-Directions Pole-Sword Style, for some added oomph. This doesn't count as an additional feature.

Step Three: Features and Flaws

While a function aspect tells you what an asset's purpose is, its features tell you how it goes about *fulfilling* that purpose. Each type of asset has its own menu of available features, as shown below. Every point of refresh you spend on an asset gives it two features.

Regardless of its type, every asset also comes with one flaw. Flaws reflect the asset's limitations or inherent complications. Maybe the asset only works in certain circumstances, or entails a cost every time you use it. Some features require the asset to have a specific flaw, but otherwise, when building an asset for a new character, you're free to choose whatever flaws you want.

(Note that this *isn't* the case for assets you create during play; see *Creating an Asset During Play* on page 56 for more on how that works.)

You can choose to give an asset more flaws in exchange for more features, on a

one-to-one basis. Features added this way do not count toward the asset's refresh cost. Some features, like Exceptional, are so powerful that they require the asset to start with *two* flaws instead of one. This means that when you apply that feature to an asset, you need to apply an extra flaw to the asset over and above any other flaws it already has, *without* getting an extra feature in exchange.

Ally

Loyal servants, stalwart defenders, informative contacts—there are many kinds of Allies, but all of them have one thing in common: their purpose in the narrative is to assist your PC. When your PC is chained to the wall of a dank cell, stonewalled by an uncooperative bureaucrat, or teetering on the brink of defeat in combat, you'll be glad when your Ally rushes to your side. Clearly, Allies are the most powerful assets.

The primary way an Ally aids a PC is by adding a teamwork bonus to the PC's actions in the right circumstances. For a fate point, your Ally can act independently for one scene, performing actions as though they were a completely separate character.

Ally Features

Aspect	Professional	Independent
Resilient	Sturdy	Talented
Numerous		

Ship's Crew

Type: Ally

Function Aspect: Crew of the *Ancient Wind*

Features: *Professional 2* (Engineer +1, Exploration +2), *Numerous 3* (eight crew members), *Resilient* (one mild consequence), *Sturdy* (one stress box)

Flaws: *Troubling Aspect* (Expects Compensation): you have to pay, feed, and provide shelter for your crew, which can get expensive

Cost: 2 refresh

When you spend a point of refresh to create an Ally, in addition to any other features, they start with one application of Professional, Resilient, and Sturdy, for free.

Each additional point of refresh spent on Allies either adds a new Ally or gives one of your existing Allies two more features.

Device

Red Jade Six-Shooters, Green Jade Armor, Portable Analog Data Processors, Blue Jade Wellness Concoctions, Model-VII Airships, even a humble Toolkit– all of these are Devices. Devices can work wonders no mere mortal can hope to achieve. Wars are won, emperors toppled, and imaginations fired by the beautiful, deadly, fascinating Jadetech Devices of Kausao City. Clearly, Devices are the most powerful assets.

Jadetech Devices are built like any other Device, but they have a few special rules:

➕ The Device's function aspect must make reference to each color of jade used in its construction.

➕ The Device's features are limited by its colors of jade.

See *Jade* (page 59) for more details on the uses and limitations of jade.

Device Features

Aspect	Exceptional	Focus
Harmful	Numerous	Sturdy
Protective	Flexible	

Jade Sword

Type: Device

Function Aspect: Red Jade-Edged Broadsword

Features: *Harmful 2, Exceptional* (When an opponent takes a consequence from an attack made by your jade sword, increase the severity of the consequence by one level [if increased above Severe, the opponent is taken out instead])

Flaws: *Consuming* (Spend a fate point to use the device's Exceptional feature), *Limited* (The Exceptional feature can be used once per scene), *Troubling* (Requires Upkeep): after excessive use, compel this aspect to shut off all of its features, representing the red jade edge wearing down and requiring repair, which requires red jade and a workshop

Cost: 1 refresh

Technique

Powerful kung-fu, special training, long years of experience, natural talent–all of these are Techniques. Unlike Allies and Devices, Techniques are intrinsic to your character. No one can abduct or steal them; they're forever a part of you. What is a mere servant or fancy bauble compared to the limitless potential that waits, eager to be unleashed, in the heart and mind of a hero? Clearly, Techniques are the most powerful assets.

No Technique can have the Troubling flaw.

47

Technique Features

Exceptional	Flexible	Focus
Harmful	Protective	

Jadetechnician

Type: Technique

Guiding Aspect: (dependent on character aspects)

Features: *Focus 2* (+2 to Engineer rolls)

Flaws: *Situational* (When repairing a damaged Jadetech device)

Cost: 1 refresh

Martial Arts in Kausao City

Every nation in the world has some form of indigenous fighting art, and they've all brought them to Kausao City. Despite the governor banning the practice of martial arts, they are alive and well within the Jianghu. Some learned the old ways while in foreign lands, others learned the newer arts illegally from instructors in Kausao City.

We delve more deeply into the subject of martial arts in the Martial Expansion game supplement (downloadable at *Jadepunk.com*), but there are innumerable martial styles in the world, and infinite possibilities for creating martial arts assets for a PC.

When deciding on an art for your character, ask yourself what the primary focus of the style is. Do you practice a style that emphasizes counter-striking, fighting with a specific weapon, or using acrobatic maneuvers to confuse your opponents? Create a technique asset that best represents that core ability, the essence of the style.

Feature Descriptions

Aspect (*Ally, Device*)

Give the asset an aspect. This is in addition to its function aspect, if any.

Exceptional (*Device, Technique*)

Special: Counts as two features; this asset starts with two flaws instead of one.

Your asset lets you break the rules in one specific way. There's no definitive list–the exact nature of the feature is between you and the GM.

Here are a few suggestions:

➕ An attack that affects all targets in a zone.

➕ An attack that prevents the defender from checking a stress box to reduce the hit.

➕ On a successful defense, deal shifts of harm equal to your margin of success.

➕ Instantly leave or appear in a scene, as long as there's a way in or out.

➕ When creating an advantage, instead of putting a free invocation on an aspect, you can create an additional aspect.

➕ Choose a kind of aspect, such as a consequence, an aspect you've created, or an aspect an ally has created. When you invoke that kind of aspect for a bonus, get a +3 bonus instead of +2.

While any flaw can work with Exceptional, the Troubling flaw is usually going to be the least limiting in context, and therefore the most problematic. (And if the asset is a Technique, it can't have the Troubling flaw regardless.)

Flexible (Device, Technique)

Special: The asset must have the Situational flaw. Counts as two features.

When you add this feature to an asset, choose two professions. When rolling dice under the circumstances dictated by the Situational flaw, the first profession can be used in place of the second profession. For example, an expert with Jade-tech could roll their Engineer profession instead of Fighter when firing cannons or other siege equipment (as described under the Situational flaw).

Focus (*Device, Technique*)

Special: The asset must have the Situational flaw.

The asset makes you more effective under the right circumstances (as specified by the asset's Situational flaw). Choose a profession. You are particularly well-trained in a specific area of that profession, like a scholar who specializes in medicine or a soldier who's trained extensively with the chain whip. Gain a +1 bonus to that profession in the specified situation.

Harmful (Device, Technique)

When used as part of an attack, your asset does additional shifts of harm if the attack succeeds. If a Device, the asset is likely a weapon of some kind; if a Technique, it might represent a martial-arts strike that targets nerve clusters, or an uncanny accuracy with firearms.

For each application of this feature, the asset deals one additional shift of harm, but only up to the number of shifts scored on the attack. For example, a sword with Harmful 2 would do +1 shift of harm on a 1-shift hit and +2 shifts on a hit that deals 2 or more shifts.

These extra shifts do not determine success or degree of success; they only count when determining the shift value of a hit (except for when used in a duel, see sidebar, below).

If you have multiple Harmful assets, they don't stack—only one can apply at a time. For example, if you have a hammer with Harmful 1 and a Technique that gives you Harmful 2 with bludgeons, your attack will have Harmful 2, not Harmful 3.

Using Harmful and Protective in a Duel

At first glance, given that stress isn't a factor in the dueling rules (page 73), Harmful and Protective Devices and Techniques may feel worthless in a duel. Not so!

These two features help determine degree of success in a duel (and only in a duel) - increasing or decreasing shifts scored, as the case may be. While this can't be soaked as stress or consequences, it does increase your chance of gaining a success with style (for Harmful features), or decrease the chance your opponent will gain a success with style (for Protective features).

That second victory point could spell the difference between winning the duel and being left in the dust, embarrassed. Also, the more victory points you score, the more likely your opponent will take a consequence to mitigate that failure, allowing you to cause some real, lasting harm.

Independent (*Ally*)

You can direct your Ally to act on their own, without the usual fate point expenditure. Note that this feature doesn't grant any intrinsic means of communication with the Ally beyond what common sense would suggest–your PC can't see or hear what they do, for example, nor can they act on orders from or knowledge of your PC if they're off on their own.

Numerous (*Ally, Device*)

There's more than one of the asset. Each instance of this feature doubles the number of Allies or Devices the asset represents. For example, if you give a Red Jade Pistol the Numerous feature once, you have a pair of pistols; twice, and you have four; three times, eight; and so on. Likewise, you can use Numerous to turn a manservant into an entire household staff, or a pilot into a ship's crew, if you apply it often enough.

Regardless of how many copies of the asset you have, they're all identical. If you want several unique Allies or Devices, you have to create and pay for them individually.

Professional (*Ally*)

Special: Can be applied no more than twice to an asset.

Your Ally has a useful set of skills. Every Ally starts with this feature, and so has one profession at Average (+1), but applying this feature additional times improves their profession ratings further, as shown below.

Total Applications	Profession Ratings
1	One at Average (+1)
2	One at Average (+1) and one at Fair (+2)
3	Three at Average (+1) and one at Fair (+2)

Protective (*Device, Technique*)

Special: Counts as two features; if the asset is a Device, can be applied a maximum of twice; if the asset is a Technique, it starts with two flaws instead of one.

The asset offers a degree of protection from physical attacks. For each application of this feature, the asset reduces the shift value of a successful attack against you by one. If your asset reduces the shift value of an attack against you to less than 1, the attacker gets a boost (see *Aspects and Fate Points*, page 79, for more on boosts).

If you have multiple Protective assets, they don't stack–only one can apply at a time. For example, if you have armor that provides Protective 2 and a kung-fu Technique that provides Protective 1, you have Protective 2, not Protective 3.

Resilient (*Ally*)

Special: Can only be applied one additional time per Ally.

The Ally gains another mild consequence slot.

Sturdy (*Ally, Device*)

Special: Can be applied a maximum of three times on an Ally or twice on a Device.

The asset can withstand some degree of abuse. For each application of this feature, the asset has an additional stress box.

If applied to an Ally, the Ally gets additional stress boxes equal to their Sturdy rating. If applied to a Device, the extra stress boxes go to the Device's stress track, and whoever uses the Device can check those stress boxes to reduce the shift value of a hit as if they were their own.

If you have multiple Sturdy assets of the same type, you can only make use of one of them. For example, if you're wearing Armor with Sturdy 1 and a Green Jade-Inlaid Mask with Sturdy 2, you can use the mask's stress track or the armor's, but not both. However, an Ally with Sturdy 1 wearing that same armor and mask would have an extra stress box of her own and be able to use the mask's stress track, because even though we're talking about two assets with Sturdy, they're of two different types–she's an Ally and her mask is a Device.

Talented (*Ally*)

The Ally has talents of their own. For each application of this feature, the Ally gets one feature's worth of a non-Ally asset. In other words, if you want to give your Ally a weapon with Harmful 1, give them one application of Talented. However, Protective 1 will require two applications of Talented, because each application of Protective counts as two features. Whatever assets and features you give your Ally with Talented, you still have to obey whatever restrictions those assets and features normally have.

Maybe you want cannons on your ship, but you don't want to control that yourself, you want it to be something an Ally does. You can give the Crew of the *Ancient Wind* the Talented feature:

Device: Red Jade Cannons

Features: *Harmful 1*

Flaws: *Demanding* (requires an action to reload)

This works narratively, as well, since you need the crew to fire the cannons. If the crew isn't on deck, you simply don't have the manpower to man the cannons.

Flaw Descriptions

Unless otherwise noted, any flaw can only be applied to a single asset once.

Consuming

Special: Counts as two flaws.

A Consuming asset costs a fate point each time it's used. It's an especially good flaw to apply to an asset that requires an extraordinary effort to use.

Demanding

Special: Can be applied no more than twice to an asset.

A Demanding asset requires time or effort before it can be used. This could be the slow start-up of an airship's engines, the need to reload a six-gun, or a personal wireless telegraph that takes a moment to connect and print your message. Once the requirement has been met, the asset functions until it makes sense for it to stop–you turn off the engines, shoot six bullets, or lose your wireless connection. When in doubt, it functions until the end of the scene.

If you apply Demanding once to the asset, meet one of the following conditions to activate it:

- ✚ Time: One action
- ✚ Effort: A Fair (+2) profession roll (choose the profession when the flaw is applied)

If you apply it twice, meet *both* of the above conditions, *or* one of the following:

- ✚ Time: One scene
- ✚ Effort: A Great (+4) profession roll

Limited

Special: Can be applied no more than twice to an asset.

The asset can be used once per scene, in which case it counts as one flaw, or once per session, in which case it counts as two. A Limited asset is usually something like an Ally who doesn't travel with you, a kung-fu maneuver that's only effective the first time it's used on an opponent, or an ornate gun that takes several minutes to reload.

Situational

A Situational asset is one that only functions in narrow, specific circumstances. If it modifies a profession roll, as with the Focus feature, it must limit the profession in some meaningful way. Gaining Focus with Engineer rolls when working with Jadetech devices, for instance, is too broad, but when working on a Jadetech device that uses green jade, or when repairing a broken device, is a fine Situation.

Other examples include:

- ✚ Only when wielding a bladed weapon
- ✚ Only on a success with style
- ✚ Only when outnumbered

➕ Only when speaking with someone who trusts you
➕ Only with the overcome action
➕ Only when using a free invocation on an aspect
➕ Only when in a bad part of town
➕ Only with green jade

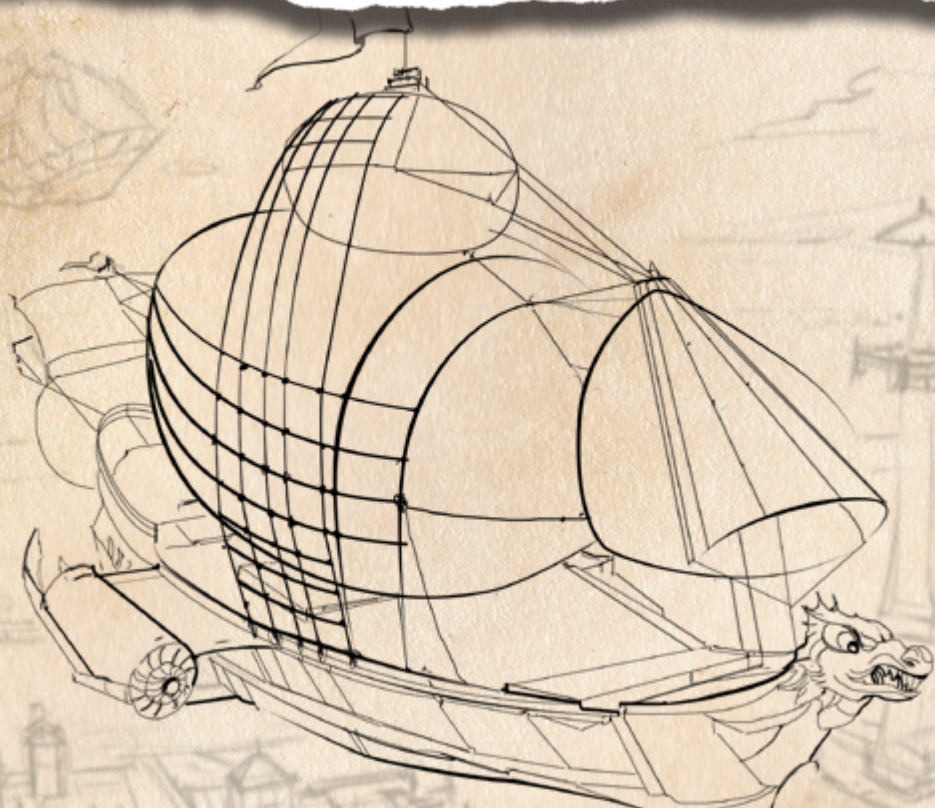Situational is a good flaw to put on nearly any asset, but especially one with Focus or Flexible.

Troubling

A Troubling asset complicates the PC's life on a regular basis by giving the asset a trouble aspect. A jade tattoo might mark you as a Member of the Despised Ice Devil Clan, or maybe that fancy grapnel gun of yours Almost Always Works Almost Half the Time.

If applied to an Ally–your Bumbling Servant, or the secret society you belong to that has Countless Enemies in the Shadows–the Troubling flaw becomes an additional trouble aspect for *you*, not the Ally.

Step Four: Refresh Cost

Finally, determine the refresh cost of the asset. Remember, one point of refresh gives you a new asset with two features and one flaw, or adds two more features to an existing asset. Any features added to an asset in exchange for adding a flaw don't increase the asset's refresh cost.

Building the *Ancient Wind*

Jake is ready to build the airship the Crew of the *Ancient Wind* will serve on. To begin with, he spends a point of refresh to add two features and choose a flaw. Since this is a device, he needs to select a function aspect, and decides to go with Restored Dirigible Airship, The *Ancient Wind*. That function aspect justifies the flight capabilities of the airship (despite it's ancient design of using hot air, instead of jade, to create lift), as well as the ability for the airship to hold crew, etc. (see *Chapter 5: Aspects and Fate Points* for more on how aspects establish facts about the setting, characters, and actions).

Jake wants the *Ancient Wind* to be the group's primary method of travel, so he picks up the Exceptional feature and describes its benefit as, "instantly leave or appear in a scene, as long as there's a way in or out." Exceptional counts as two features, so he's used up all that his single point of refresh has paid for.

Exceptional is a powerful feature, though, and Jake has to pick not one but *two* flaws. Because the *Ancient Wind* is an airship that requires a crew, he chooses one application of the Situational flaw that's described as, "only with a crew of at least six members who are dedicated to the task of working the ship, and nothing else," and an application of the Demanding flaw, requiring a Fair (+2) Explorer roll to get the ship underway.

But flying isn't all the *Ancient Wind* can do. Jake would like to add cannons and a reinforced hull to the ship. He takes an application of Sturdy (granting +1 stress box) to represent the reinforcement to the hull, but decides that the cannons would be too expensive to purchase fully right away, plus, it's illegal to fly Kausao City's airspace with readied weaponry and no permit to do so. Instead, Jake takes an additional aspect, War-Ready Ship, Almost, to act as narrative justification for the crew to create the cannons as a temporary asset during play. To pay for these two features, Jake can either spend a point of refresh or take two more flaws. He elects to pay the refresh.

The *Ancient Wind*

Type: Device

Function Aspect: Restored Dirigible Airship, The *Ancient Wind*

Features: *Aspect* (War-Ready Ship, Almost), *Exceptional* (instantly leave or appear in a scene, as long as there's a way in or out), *Sturdy 1*

Flaws: *Demanding* (requires a Fair [+2] Explorer roll to get the ship underway), *Situational* (only with a crew of at least six members who are dedicated to the task of working the ship, and nothing else)

Cost: 2 refresh

Gaining or Improving Assets Through Advancement

When you gain refresh at a major milestone, you can spend it to gain a new asset or add up to two new features to an existing one. If the GM is agreeable, you can also spend it to remove a flaw, although no asset can have fewer flaws than the minimum required by its features. For most assets, that minimum is one, but if it has a feature that says otherwise, like Exceptional, that's your minimum instead.

Whether you gain or improve an asset at a milestone, it must have roots in the story. If you can't provide narrative justification for that new or improved asset, ask yourself whether it even makes sense. And if it doesn't make sense, don't do it!

Creating An Asset During Play

Assets aren't just for character creation or advancement. During the course of play, you might gain the confidence of a palace guard, forge (or discover) a deadly weapon, brew a potent concoction, establish a new reputation for yourself, or do any number of other things that increase or broaden your character's power, either temporarily or permanently. All of these are examples of creating assets.

The process of creating an asset during play is much like building an asset during character creation, with one major difference: instead of choosing the asset's flaws, you'll make a profession roll to create an advantage. The outcome of that roll will determine who gets to assign the asset's flaws—you or the GM.

Step One: Asset Type

Decide whether the asset is an Ally, a Device, or a Technique, just as if you were building it during character creation.

Step Two: Function/Guiding Aspects

Allies and Devices you create get a function aspect, as usual, but Techniques you create only need a guiding aspect if they're permanent (see below).

Step Three: Features and Flaws

Here's where creating an asset really differs from building one. Pick the asset's features. By default, it has one or two features and one flaw. More features can be added by adding more flaws, like usual.

However, you don't get to choose the asset's flaws—not necessarily, anyway. Instead, just decide *how many* flaws it has, as long as it has the minimum required by its features.

Now, choose the profession most relevant to the nature of the asset—Engineer for a Jadetech Device, Aristocrat for a high-class social contact (or Scoundrel for a low-class one), Scholar for new, specialized knowledge, and so on—then make a roll to create an advantage.

The difficulty of the roll equals twice the number of features the asset has. The asset's flaws have no effect on the difficulty of this roll.

The outcome of the roll determines who picks the asset's flaws.

Outcome	Result*
Fail	GM's choice, plus the player chooses one additional flaw.
Tie	GM's choice
Success	Player's choice
Success with Style	Player's choice, plus the asset either lasts one extra scene (if a temporary asset) or the asset's refresh cost is reduced by one, to a minimum of one (if a permanent aspect)

*If a feature requires a specific flaw, then that flaw must be chosen first, whoever does the choosing.

Note that nowhere in this process is there the possibility of the character actually failing to create the asset. The heroes of Kausao City are far too competent for that. Instead, the profession roll is all about how much *control* the player has over the asset's creation.

The *Ancient Wind* is being chased by the city guard in a battle-ready airship! Jake points to the extra aspect he added as a feature, War-Ready Ship, Almost, and commands the crew to get the cannons brought up. Since the crew is assisting Jake's action to get the ship battle ready, they add a +1 teamwork bonus to him creating a new asset in play.

Choosing not to get complicated, Jake selects Cannons! as the function aspect and Harmful 2 as the features for it; there's one flaw that will be chosen by either Jake or the GM in a moment.

Since Jake and the crew are trying to get ready for combat with cannons that are supposedly already stored on the ship, the GM suggests this to be a practiced battle maneuver and suggests Fighter to be the relevant profession to get things ready. Jake's Fighter profession rating is Fair (+2), and he selected two features, so his difficulty is Great (+4).

He rolls and gets a +1 on the dice. Good enough for a tie with the crew's bonus. The GM gets to pick flaws. He selects: Demanding - requires an action to reload after every shot.

Creating Assets Means Creating Story

While there's no chance of failure when creating an asset, that doesn't mean doing so must be devoid of drama. On the contrary–guaranteed success doesn't mean producing something out of nothing. You'll still need red jade to make that Jade-tech firearm, not to mention the time and facilities to realize your vision. The same goes for mastering the Light Body Technique, earning your place in the Sun and Moon Society, or whatever other kind of asset you might create. In fact, you could easily build an entire scenario around such a thing!

The Ticking Clock

Related to this is how long it takes to create a new asset. The answer depends on two factors: common sense and drama.

Common sense should give you a ballpark idea of the time required. You don't need an exact number or days, weeks, or months; knowing that it'll take "an afternoon" or "a few days" or even "a while" and narrating your way through a montage is good enough. Because frankly, this is *Fate*, and we're more interested in drama than bookkeeping.

Speaking of which, how dramatic you want the process to be will influence the timeframe as well. This is totally a narrative decision. Prioritize the needs of the story. If there's a hard deadline in place—an approaching army, an imminent flood, a spreading plague—the PC will probably finish just in the nick of time. The important thing is, the PC *will* create the asset in time for it to be used for its intended purpose. Otherwise, it's no different than failing to create the asset in the first place.

If there *isn't* a time crunch, it's more likely to be something that happens in the background. The PC could just show up with that new retainer, armor, or Jadetech goggles. If there's nothing dramatic riding on the asset's creation, don't knock yourself out trying to make its completion dramatic.

Step Four: Lifespan and Cost

Next, decide how long this new asset you've created will stick around. If it's permanent, pay the same refresh cost as if you'd purchased it at character creation. If it's temporary, spend a fate point for it to last for one scene. You can spend more fate points to extend its lifespan for more scenes, one-for-one (this cost does not need to be paid in advance, but it must be paid for each consecutive scene). You can also convert a temporary asset into a permanent one by paying its refresh cost, as long as it makes narrative sense.

Jade

The most powerful substance on the planet. It's been 350 years since mankind discovered what jade can do. Before then, they were just pretty stones. But now...

The impact of jade cannot be overstated. Kausao City only exists because of it. The governor only rules because of it. The world only spins on because of it. Jade is the beginning and the end of civilization. Wars are fought over it. Trade is built on it. Travel is impossible without it. All modern technology, medicine, science, and alchemy are built around jade.

Jade is the substance that powers all technology. Once refined, jade takes on mystical properties that vary according to its color. Red jade, for instance, becomes volatile - the perfect explosive or catalyst. Green jade, is the direct opposite, becoming incredibly strong and durable, unable to be altered without shattering once it's been refined into its final shape.
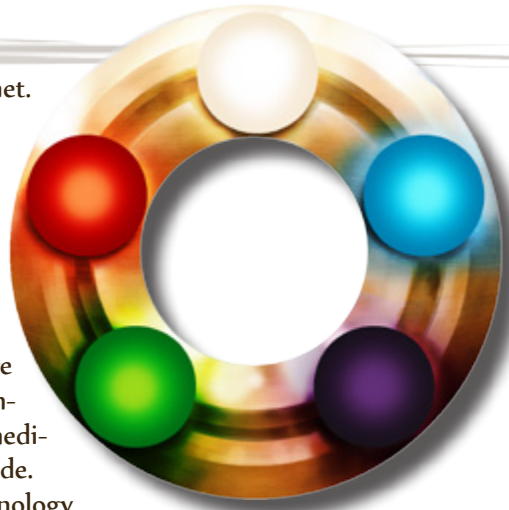
The effects of mystic jade don't only affect tools. Jade has many health benefits. If ground into a powder before refining, jade can be used in concoctions for a variety of effects. Blue jade enhances circulation and provides a powerful healing effect, while white jade calms the mind and enhances clarity, and black jade acts as a powerful hallucinogen, giving the subject visions of the future that usually come true!

The vast uses of jade are still being explored. In fact, many alchemists all over the world outfit their labs with elaborate devices to find new uses for the stuff in the hopes of inventing new Jadetech and striking rich.

The Refinery Process

Refining jade requires lots of skill and, when done on a large scale, lots of labor.

After jade is dug up from the ground, it must be thoroughly cleaned, and then cut. Cutting jade is an art form. In fact, many expensive jade sculptures reside in museums and art galleries. Cut, but never processed, these sculptures are the constant targets of thieves hoping to get their hands on decent amounts of jade to sell to black refineries (places

Synthetic Jade

Ever since the discovery of jade, alchemists have searched for a method of turning other minerals and precious metals into jade. Every attempt has ended in utter failure, despite the vast fortunes that many, now defunct, corporations have sunk into the endeavor.

But it just takes one alchemist to invent the proper formula, although the consequences of doing so would cripple the mining and refinery industries, creating an all new problem.

owned by all manner of unsavory sorts who will process stolen jade, for a steep price).

Once the stone is cut into its final shape, it is then burned at a precise temperature for differing amounts of time. If the heat is too low, you won't reach a catabolic catalyst in time and will ruin the jade; if too high, you'll overdo it and burn up all the energy within the jade. Some refineries specialize in alloying jade with other materials, with mixed results. Although this process has existed among the Naramel for over a century, it is still considered experimental and too risky a business venture, as failure results in a total loss of valuable jade.

Instead of being cut, jade is sometimes processed in powderies, where the raw ore is ground into a fine powder and heated in an alchemical solution to bring out its mystical properties. This type of refining, invented by the Túyang, is used to create various jade concoctions.

The term "Jadetech" was coined by Alfred Wrencoch, a brilliant Aerish alchemist who first adapted white jade to be used with a clockwork device.
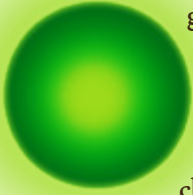
Jadetech

While refined jade takes on mystical properties, it's greatest use is as a component in a Jadetech device.

Modern industrial facilities, like those that line Refinery Row in Kausao City, are quickly making the production of Jadetech an automatic, almost factory-line process. There are still many parts of the process that require handmade components, but producing a Jadetech device is easier than ever.
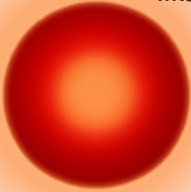
The Colors of Jade

Only five colors of jade are known to exist. They are listed in order from most common to rare.
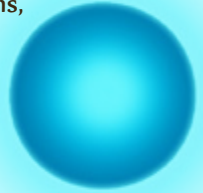
Green Jade: Associated with earth, stubbornness, vigor, and substance, green jade is found in places where vegetation and wildlife is plentiful. Its mystical properties strengthen and fortify, building Jadetech devices that are resilient and tough, like super-dense swords, specialty tools and armor. When added to concoctions, it enhances vigor, but causes one to become stubborn and difficult, easily irritated by changing situations.

Red Jade Associated with fire, courage, and power, red jade is found in desolate or hot places, like deserts and volcanoes. Its mystical properties are energy and extreme volatility, building Jadetech devices that utilize such energy and force, like jade engines, firearms and explosives. When added to concoctions, it bolsters one's courage and energy, but also makes them restless and easily enraged.

Blue Jade: Associated with water, cold, cunning, and change, blue jade is found near large bodies of water or ice. Its mystical properties are fluid and adaptable, building Jadetech devices that freeze, heal and require flexibility, like freezers to keep perishables, water skiff jet drives and perpetual energy generators. When added to concoctions, it heals the body and speeds up mental processes, but causes single mindedness and over attention to details.

White Jade: Associated with air, breath, reason, and freedom, white jade is found in extremely high locales or places continuously battered by high winds. Its mystical properties lighten and clarify, building Jadetech devices that defy gravity, increasing perception and labor efficiency, like airships and sliding pallets that allow one man to drag thousands of pounds with little effort. When added to concoctions, it makes the person physically lighter and calms the mind, but may cause the user to become easily distracted.

Black Jade: Associated with quintessence and faith, black jade was only recently discovered in the Kausao Region, and is found nowhere else. The full potential of black jade is still a mystery, but a few reliable and reproducible mystical properties have been found. It is used by alchemists to combine different colors of jade into multicolored jade, usually with unpredictable results, and builds devices that transmit signals and generate electricity. But that's not all black jade can do, and new uses for the stuff are being found all the time. When added to concoctions, it gives psychic qualities to the imbiber, allowing them to see into the future in a largely uncontrollable manner.

The Jaderail came to a stop and Arata spotted the squad of city guardsmen on the platform outside. They'd already heard about the bombing. They were looking for him. This was the final stop on the Jaderail before it pulled into the turnaround and each railcar would be thoroughly searched. He had no choice but to get off now.

Arata pulled his hood over and tried to blend in with the crowd as he exited, but a female guardsman recognized him immediately. Her ranking and armor noted her as a captain of the guard. *Dammit*!

The captain signaled her guardsmen to move in, but Arata wasn't about to let them get too close. He ran, deftly maneuvering through the crowd, knocking a few individuals over. The guardsmen followed, but were no match for Arata's speed. Growing up in Kaiyu, where he trained young adults for their Shugyo, Arata was no stranger to athleticism.

He reached the winding staircase that led to down to the street several storeys below and took the first flight in a single bound. The second and third, too. Then he heard the boots. Another squad of guardsmen were coming up the stairs from below, and the squad behind him just reached the first flight above. Soon he would be surrounded.

Without missing a beat, Arata leapt over the side railing, landing on one of the structure's crossbeams that supported the platform above. It was about two feet across, but below that was a seven story fall. Carefully, but quickly, he made his way across to the staircase on the other side of the platform. He got about halfway when one of the guardsmen he had evaded tried to leap onto the crossbeam, but the guardsman's heavy armor made it difficult for him to clear the railing. His foot clipped it and he tumbled down to the street below.

Arata smiled, then waved. "So long," he said in his native tongue. He thought he was home free, but then he heard that sound of boots on metal again. He looked towards his destination to find the captain of the guard on the crossbeam, blocking his way and drawing her jian longsword. She must have taken the other staircase to cut him off. He glanced back and saw the guardsmen trying to get to him again, this time more carefully.

Arata was between a rock and a hard place, with a drop into oblivion on either side. He drew his two short swords, unsure if he would survive this one.

How to Play

Rising up against the establishment requires action. You need to leap from a falling airship onto the safety of a skyscraper. You need to craft a Jadetech device in a cave with a box of scraps. You need to distract the guard so you can sneak into the governor's estate. How do you figure out what happens?

First, you narrate what your character is trying to do. Your character's profession ratings, aspects and assets provide a good guide of what you *can* do. If you have a weapon asset (like a sword or red jade six-shooter), draw it and attack. If you have an aspect that describes your near-supernatural ability at stealth, then get ready to skulk about.

How do you know if you're successful? **Often, you just succeed, because the action isn't hard and nobody's trying to stop you. But if failure provides an interesting twist in the story, or if something unpredictable could happen**, you need to break out the dice.

Taking Action: The 30-Second Version

➕ Describe what you want your character to do. Determine if someone or something can stop you.

➕ Decide what action you're taking: *create an advantage, overcome, attack* or *defend*.

➕ Decide which profession is most suitable to your action.

➕ If necessary, roll dice and add your profession's bonus.

➕ Decide whether to modify your roll with aspects.

➕ Figure out your outcome.

Rolling Dice

Fate dice (sometimes called Fudge dice, depending on where you bought them) are one way to determine outcomes. You always roll these dice in a set of four. Each die will come up as ➖, ◼ or ➕, and you add them together to get the total of the roll. For example:

➕➖◼➖   ➕➕➖➕
        −1   +2

Outcomes

Once you roll your dice, add your profession bonus (we'll talk about that in a moment) and any bonuses from aspects or assets. Compare the total either to the target number or the result of the opposed roll. Based on that comparison, your outcome is:

➕ You **fail** if your total is *less than* your opponent's total.
➕ It's a **tie** if your total is *equal* to your opponent's total.
➕ You **succeed** if your total is *greater than* your opponent's total.
➕ You **succeed with style** if your total is *three greater than* your opponent's total.

Actions

So, you've narrated what your PC is trying to do, and you've established that there's a chance you could fail. Next, figure out what **action** best describes what you're trying to do. There are four basic actions that cover anything you do in the game.

Actions and Outcomes: The 30-Second Version

Creating Advantages
➕ **Fail**: Don't create/discover, or you do but your opponent gets the invocation.
➕ **Tie**: Get a boost if creating new, or succeed if targeting existing.
➕ **Succeed**: Create/discover advantage with a free invocation.
➕ **Succeed with style**: Create/discover advantage with two free invocations.

Overcome
➕ **Fail**: Fail, or succeed at a serious cost.
➕ **Tie**: Succeed at a minor cost.
➕ **Succeed**: You accomplish your goal.
➕ **Succeed with style**: You accomplish your goal and generate a **boost**.

Attack
➕ **Fail**: No effect.
➕ **Tie**: Attack doesn't harm the target, but you gain a boost.
➕ **Succeed**: Attack hits and causes damage.
➕ **Succeed with style**: Attack hits and causes damage. May reduce damage by one to generate a boost.

Defend
➕ **Fail**: You suffer the consequences of your opponent's success.
➕ **Tie**: Look at your opponent's action to see what happens.
➕ **Succeed**: Your opponent doesn't get what they want.
➕ **Succeed with style**: Your opponent doesn't get what they want, and you get a boost.

Create Advantages

Creating advantages is anything you do to try to help yourself or one of your friends. Taking a moment to very carefully aim your red jade rifle, spending several hours studying ancient scrolls, or tripping the police official who's trying to catch you–these are attempts at making your, or your friend's, actions easier in future exchanges, or to make your opponent's actions more difficult. They also affect the narrative in meaningful ways. The target of your action may get a chance to use the defend action to stop you. The advantage you create lets you do one of the following two things:

➕ Create or discover a new situation aspect.

➕ Take advantage of an existing aspect.

If you fail: If you're trying to take advantage of an aspect you already know, you don't get any additional benefit. If you're trying to create or discover a new situation aspect, you either fail to do so, or you create or discover it but the *GM* gets to invoke the aspect for free. The second option works best if the aspect you create or discover is something that other people could take advantage of (like Rough Terrain). You may have to reword the aspect to show that it benefits the other character instead of you–work it out in whatever way makes the most sense with the player who gets the free invocation. You can still invoke the aspect if you'd like, but it'll cost you a fate point.

If you tie: If you're creating a new aspect, you get a boost. Name it and invoke it once for free–after that, the boost goes away. If you are trying to take advantage of, or discover, an existing aspect, treat this as a success. (See *Boosts*, p. 81)

If you succeed: You create a new aspect or take advantage of an existing aspect, and you or an ally may invoke it once for free. Write the aspect on an index card or sticky note (or in the aspects section of your play mat).

If you succeed with style: You create a new aspect or take advantage of an existing aspect, and you or an ally may invoke it *twice* for free. Usually you can't invoke the same aspect twice on the same roll, but this is an exception; success with style gives you a BIG advantage!

Overcome

You use the overcome action when you have to get past something that's between you and a particular goal–picking a lock, escaping from manacles, leaping across a chasm, flying an airship through the center of the city. Taking some action to eliminate or change an inconvenient situation aspect is usually an overcome action; we'll talk more about that in *Aspects and Fate Points*. The target of your action may get a chance to use the defend action to stop you.

If you fail: You have a tough choice to make. You can simply fail–the door is still locked, the thug still stands between you and the exit, the police are still On Your Tail. Or you can succeed, but at a serious cost–maybe you drop something vital you were carrying, maybe you suffer harm. The GM helps you figure out an appropriate cost.

If you tie: You attain your goal, but at some minor cost. The GM could introduce a complication, or present you with a tough choice (you can rescue only one of your two captured friends), or some other twist.

If you succeed: You accomplish what you were trying to do. The lock springs open, you duck around the thug blocking the door, you manage to lose the police on your tail.

If you succeed with style: As success, but you also gain a boost.

Attack

Use an attack when you try to hurt someone, whether physically or mentally—swinging a sword, shooting a red jade rifle, or yelling a blistering insult with the intent to hurt your target. If someone gets hurt too badly, they're knocked out of the scene (see *Stress and Consequences*, pg. 74). The target of your attack gets a chance to use the defend action to stop you.

If you fail: Your attack doesn't connect. The target parries your sword, your shot misses, your target laughs off your insult.

If you tie: Your attack doesn't connect strongly enough to cause any harm, but you gain a boost.

If you succeed: Your attack hits and you deal damage. See *Stress and Consequences* (pg. 74).

If you succeed with style: You hit and deal damage, plus you have the option to reduce the damage your hit causes by one and gain a boost.

Defend

Use defend when you're actively trying to stop someone from doing any of the other three actions—you're parrying a sword strike, trying to stay on your feet, blocking a doorway, and the like. Usually, this action is performed on *someone else's turn*, reacting to their attempt to attack, overcome or create advantages. You may also roll to oppose some non-attack actions, or to defend against an attack on someone else, if you can explain why you can. Usually, this is fine if most people at the table agree that it's reasonable, but you can also point to a relevant situation aspect to justify it. When you do, you become the target for any bad results.

If you fail: You're on the receiving end of whatever your opponent's success gives them.

If you tie or succeed: Things don't work out too badly for you; look at the description of your opponent's action to see what happens.

If you succeed with style: Your opponent doesn't get what they want, plus you gain a boost.

How To Perform an Action

There are six **professions** that describe how you can perform actions. See *Professions* (pg. 34) for a more detailed analysis of each profession.

- ✚ **Aristocrat**: Influences and socializes. Use this when trying to convince someone to do something (be it by charm or by bribery), or when trying to change their attitude towards you.
- ✚ **Engineer**: Builds and sabotages. Use this to build, operate, repair, or sabotage a Jadetech or mundane device.
- ✚ **Explorer**: Evades and navigates. Use this to run an obstacle course, pilot a vehicle, or dodge a bullet.
- ✚ **Fighter**: Attacks and maneuvers. Use this to execute martial arts techniques, parry a sword strike, or shoot someone.
- ✚ **Scholar**: Thinks and discovers. Use this to research in a library, decipher ancient writings on tomb walls, or search an area for clues.
- ✚ **Scoundrel**: Sneaks and deceives. Use this to infiltrate a room unnoticed, to come up with a good cover story, or for sleight of hand.

Rolling Dice

Time to take up the dice and roll. Choose the profession that most coincides with your action, take the bonus associated with that profession and add it to the result of the dice. If you have an asset that applies, add that too. That's your total. Compare it to what your opponent (usually the GM) rolled.

Using Aspects to Modify a Roll

Finally, decide whether you want to alter your roll by invoking aspects—we'll talk about this more in *Aspects and Fate Points* (pg. 74).

Getting Help

An ally can help you perform your action. When an ally helps you, they give up their action for the exchange and describe how they're providing the help; you get a +1 to your roll for each ally that helps this way. Usually only one or two people can help on an action roll before they start getting in each other's way; the GM decides how many people can help at once.

Challenges, Contests and Conflicts

We've talked about the four actions (create advantages, overcome, attack, and defend) and the four outcomes (fail, tie, succeed, and succeed with style). But in what framework do those happen?

Usually, when you want to do something straightforward—swim across a raging river, sabotage a Jadetech device—all you need to do is make one overcome action against a difficulty set by the GM. You look at your outcome and go from there.

But sometimes things are a little more complex.

Challenges

A challenge is a series of overcome and create advantage actions that you use to resolve an especially complicated situation. Each overcome action deals with one task or part of the situation, and you take the individual results together to figure out how the situation resolves.

To set up a challenge, decide what individual tasks or goals make up the situation, and treat each one as a separate overcome roll.

Depending on the situation, one character may be required to make several rolls, or multiple characters may be able to participate. GMs, you aren't obligated to announce all the stages in the challenge ahead of time—adjust the steps as the challenge unfolds to keep things exciting.

The PCs are the crew of an airship caught in a storm. They decide to press on and try to get to their destination despite the weather, and the GM suggests that this sounds like a challenge. Steps in resolving this challenge could be **calming panicky passengers**, **repairing damaged rigging or Jadetech engines**, and **keeping the ship on the right heading**.

Contests

When two or more characters are competing against one another for the same goal, but not directly trying to hurt each other, you have a contest. Examples include a chase scene, public debate, or an archery tournament.

A contest proceeds in a series of exchanges. In an exchange, every participant takes one overcome action to determine how well they do in that leg of the contest. Compare your result to everyone else's.

If you got the highest result, you win the exchange—you score a victory (which you can record on your *Jadepunk Play Mat*, or with a checkmark on scratch paper) and describe how you take the lead. If you succeed with style, you mark two victories.

If there's a tie, no one gets a victory, and an unexpected twist occurs. This could mean several things, depending on the situation—the terrain or environment shifts somehow, the parameters of the contest change, or an unanticipated variable

shows up and affects all the participants. The GM creates a new situation aspect reflecting this change and puts it into play.

The first participant to achieve three victories wins the contest.

Arata is getting off of a train and attempting to avoid the notice of the guardsmen searching for him. The GM announces that this will be a contest between Arata's Scoundrel profession (governing concealing something) against the guardsmen's Scholar profession (to discover something).

While on the train, he's got a good chance of blending in with the crowd, so he and the guardsmen roll a check, but the guardsmen score a +3, gaining two shifts over Arata's Scoundrel roll of +1, and gain a victory point. The G M describes the reason for the result as a process of elimination. He's not on the platform, so he must be on the train still. Arata's player considers spending a fate point to increase his roll by 2, which would make them tie (and the GM would announce a twist to the situation), but decides that he may need that fate point if things continue on as they are.

With one victory against him, Arata exits the train and rolls Scoundrel once more and gets a -1, while the guardsmen continue to roll well and score a +3 again. That's four shifts of success, good enough to succeed with style. The guardsmen earn two more victory points, winning the contest. The GM describes how Arata is spotted by the captain of the guard. Looks like he's going to need that fate point after all.

Conflicts

Conflicts are used to resolve situations where characters are trying to harm one another. It could be physical harm (a sword fight, broadsiding a City Guard's airship, a gunfight), but it could also be mental harm (a shouting match, a tough interrogation, or the use of a Jadetech device that affects the mind).

Setting The Scene

Establish what's going on, where everyone is, and what the environment is like. Who, or what, is the opposition? The GM should write down the appropriate scene aspects (see *Chapter 5: Aspects* and Fate Points, for more information on these). Players can suggest additional situation aspects, too.

The GM also establishes zones, loosely defined areas that tell you where characters are in the fiction. You determine zones based on the scene and the following guidelines

Generally, you can interact with other characters in the same zone—or in nearby zones if you can justify acting at a distance (for example, if you have a ranged weapon or are shouting).

You can move one zone for free. An action is required to move if there's an obstacle along the way, such as someone trying to stop you, or if you want to move two or more zones. It sometimes helps to sketch a quick map to illustrate the zones in a conflict.

Thugs are attacking the characters in a teahouse. The main room where the tables are is split into two zones due to size, which separates the waiting area on one side of it from the kitchen on the other side—so the two zones of the main room is between the waiting area and the kitchen.

Anyone in the same zone can easily throw punches or kicks at each other. From the waiting area, you can throw things at people in the main room, or move into the main room as part of another action unless the way is blocked. To get from the waiting area to the kitchen requires an action to pass all of the zones.

Determine Who Goes First

When you begin a conflict, the GM decides who goes first based on how the scene was intro-duced and the consensus of the group. It could be the character who pushed the scene into a conflict, or the person with the highest relevant profession, if a decision can't be made.

If the GM wants to have an NPC act first, he must spend a fate point from the NPC's fate point pool (see *How many Fate Points does the GM get?* pg. 74).

After the first character has acted, that player decides who goes next. This gives the player who just resolved their action tactical control over the exchange.

Conflicts: The 30-Second Version

- ✚ Set the scene.
- ✚ Decide who goes first.
- ✚ Start the first exchange.
  - ▬ On *your turn*, take an action.
  - ▬ On *other people's turns*, defend against or respond to their actions as necessary.
  - ▬ At the end of *everyone's turn*, start a new exchange or end the conflict.

After an exchange has been completed, and every character has acted, the last player to act chooses who goes first in the next exchange. The same character cannot act twice in a row, but the same player can—so the GM, whose NPC just completed an exchange, can pass initiative to another NPC, or group of NPCs.

When the decision is made to determine who goes next, the GM, or another player, can override that decision and go next instead, provided their character has not already acted during this exchange. This works just like a compel, with the interrupting player paying a fate point to the person who was interrupted. And like any other compel, the player can pay a fate point to refuse, retaining their right to go next.

Exchanges

On their turn, a character can take one of the four actions. Resolve the action to determine the outcome. The conflict is over when only one side has characters still able to act.

Taia finds herself surrounded by ruffians from the Green Axe Gang, known for attacking en masse with green jade axes. The GM sets the stage by describing three groups of the thugs, all armed with a single green jade axe, and says that movement is limited by Tables and Chairs and a Panicked Crowd. He also draws out the zones of the conflict on the play mat.

Being the only PC, Taia gets to go first. The GM has the option of spending a fate point to challenge her right to go first, but elects not to do so. Taia's player describes how she draws her sword and lunges at one of the groups of axemen, her sword transitioning between parries and attacks in the blink of an eye. She rolls Fighter against the group's Fighter roll. Taia rolls exceptionally well, scoring five shifts and succeeding with style, easily defeating the group.

Being the last to act, Taia gets to decide who goes next. She chooses one of the other two groups. After that group acts (failing to score a hit on Taia), they get to choose who goes after them. Since Taia has already gone, and one of their groups was defeated quickly, they only have one choice—the third group that hasn't acted.

The third group rolls to create an advantage against Taia using Explorer, and succeeds, making her Surrounded. Now that everyone has acted in the exchange, this group gets to decide who goes first in the next round. They can't choose themselves, because the same character can't act twice in a row, but they can choose the other group. They decide that sounds good, and the second group moves in, attempting to create another invocation on Surrounded, putting Taia in a tight spot.

Dueling

Drawing down at dawn, public kung-fu matches, high stakes debates. Ritualized duels are different from standard conflicts in that they have rules of engagement and etiquette, and are usually over with much faster than a typical fight (to prevent players at the table who are not involved in the duel from getting bored). Even though these scenes involve harming another individual, they are handled using the rules for contests, with the exception that you have the option of preventing your opponent from gaining victory points by taking a consequence.

If you take a mild consequence, you reduce your opponent's victory point gain by 1. By taking a moderate or severe consequence, you reduce the gain by 2. Taking consequences in this fashion only affects points gained in a single exchange, not your opponent's total for the duel. If they gained a victory point on a previous round, and you didn't take a consequence to prevent it, it's locked in and can't be removed.

A duel is over, and the victor proclaimed, when one participant scores three victory points.

Most duels use the Fighter profession to make their overcome rolls, but debates or acts of forced coercion could use Scholar or Aristocrat, depending on the context.

Outside of the teahouse, Gerard is ten paces away from the leader of the Green Axe Gang, Jonny Axel. Gerard's hand is dangerous close to his hip, where his Red Jade Revolver sits in its fast-draw holster. Jonny has a Green Jade Axe in each hand. Since both characters are intent on fighting, one-on-one, but no one else at the table is involved in this battle, the GM decides that this will be a duel.

Gerard and Jonny both roll Fighter, with Jonny coming out on top with a single shift (his axe's Harmful 1 increasing that to two shifts). The GM describes how Jonny throws one of his axes at Gerard, forcing the gunslinger to roll his shoulder back to dodge, preventing him from drawing his revolver. When Gerard looks up, Jonny is already on him, swinging his axe at his face.

They both roll for the second exchange, and Jonny wins by one shift again (increased to two shifts by his axe's Harmful 1). The GM describes Jonny chopping furiously at Gerard with his axe. But Gerard's player decides he doesn't want that victory point to stick, so he takes a mild consequence (Torn Trench Coat). Jonny connected slightly, leaving evidence of their fight on Gerard's clothing.

When they roll next, Gerard succeeds by two shifts, which is increased to five shifts by his revolver's Harmful 3 rating, but Jonny is wearing a Tough Leather Vest with Protection 1, so Gerard *only* scores four shifts total, a success with style, earning Gerard 2 victory points. Gerard describes how he draws his revolver and unloads three shots at Jonny, one of them grazing off of Jonny's vest.

Going into the next round, Gerard has 2 victory points and Jonny has 1. Gerard wins by one shift, immediately gaining a success with style due to his high Harmful rating, gaining 2 more victory points, enough to win the duel. He finishes off Jonny while he's still on the ground, flips his revolver back into its holster, and walks nonchalantly into the teahouse to check on Taia.

Stress and Consequences

When you're hit by an attack, the severity of the hit is the difference between the attack roll and your defense roll; we measure that in shifts. For instance, if your opponent gets +5 on their attack and you get a +3 on your defense, the attack deals a two shift hit (5 - 3 = 2).

Then, in the case of a normal conflict, one of two things happens:

➕ You suffer stress and/or consequences, but you stay in the fight.

➕ You get taken out, which means you're out of the action until the end of the scene.

Stress and Consequences: The 30-Second Version

➕ Each character starts with three stress boxes.

➕ Severity of hit (in shifts) = Attack Roll - Defense Roll.

➕ When you take a hit, you need to account for how that hit damages you. One way to absorb the damage is to take stress; you can check one stress box to handle some or all of a single hit. You can absorb a number of shifts equal to the number of the box you check; one for Box 1, two for Box 2, three for Box 3.

➕ You may also take one or more consequences to deal with the hit, by marking off one of more consequence slots and writing a new aspect for each one. Mild consequence = 2 shifts; moderate = 4 shifts; severe = 6 shifts.

➕ If you can't (or decide not to) handle the entire hit, you're taken out. Your opponent decides what happens to you.

➕ Giving in before your opponent's roll allows you to control how you exit the scene. You also get one or more fate points for doing this!

➕ Stress and mild consequences vanish at the end of the scene, provided you get a chance to rest. Other consequences take longer.

What is Stress?

If you get hit and don't want to be taken out, you can choose to take stress.

Stress represents you getting tired or annoyed, taking a superficial wound, or some other condition that goes away quickly.

Your character sheet has a **stress track**, a row of three boxes. When you take a hit and check a stress box, the box absorbs a number of shifts equal to its number: one shift for Box 1, two for Box 2, or three for Box 3.

You can only check one stress box for any single hit, but you *can* check a stress box and take one or more consequences at the same time. You can't check a stress box that already has a checkmark in it!

What Are Consequences?

Consequences are new aspects that you take to reflect being seriously inconvenienced in some way. Your character sheet has three slots where you can write consequences. Each one is labeled with a number: 2 (mild consequence), 4 (moderate consequence), or 6 (severe consequence). This represents the number of shifts of the hit the consequence absorbs. You can mark off as many of these as you like to handle a single hit, but only if that slot was blank to start with. If you already have a moderate consequence written down, you can't take another one until you do something to make the first one go away!

A major downside of consequences is that each consequence is a new aspect that your opponents can invoke against you. The more you take, the more vulnerable you are. And just like situation aspects, the character that creates it (in this case, the character that hit you) gets one free invocation on that consequence. They can choose to let one of their allies use the free invocation.

Let's say that you get hit really hard and take a 4-shift hit. You check box 2 on your stress track, which leaves you with 2 shifts to deal with. If you can't, you're taken out. So it's time for a consequence. You can choose to write a new aspect in the consequence slot labeled 2—say, Sprained Ankle. Those final 2 shifts are taken care of and you can keep fighting!

If you're unable to absorb all of a hit's shifts—by checking a stress box, taking consequences, or both—you're taken out.

Getting Taken Out?

If you get taken out, you can no longer act in the scene. Whoever takes you out narrates what happens to you. It should make sense based on how you got taken out—maybe you run from the room in shame, or maybe you get knocked unconscious.

Giving In

If things look grim for you, you can give in (or concede the fight)—but you have to say that's what you're going to do *before* your opponent rolls their dice.

This is different than being taken out, because you get a say in what happens to you. Your opponent gets some major concession from you—talk about what makes sense in your situation—but it beats getting taken out and having no say at all.

Additionally, you get one fate point for conceding, and one fate point for each consequence you took in this conflict. This is your chance to say, "You win this round, but I'll get you next time," and get a tall stack of fate points to back it up.

Recovering From Stress And Consequences

At the end of each scene, clear all of your stress boxes. Recovery from a consequence is a bit more complicated; you need to explain how you recover from it—whether that's a visit to the local healer, taking a walk to calm down, or whatever makes sense with the consequence. You also need to wait an appropriate length of time.

- **Mild consequence**: Clear it at the end of the recovery scene, provided you get a chance to rest.
- **Moderate consequence**: Clear it at the end of the next session, provided it makes sense within the story.
- **Severe consequence**: Clear it at the end of the *scenario* provided it makes sense within the story.

Renaming Moderate And Severe Consequences

Moderate and severe consequences stick around for a while. Therefore, at some point you may want to change the name of the aspect to better fit what's going on in the story. For instance, after you get some medical help, Painful Broken Leg might make more sense if you change it to Hobbling on Crutches.

77

Coming home to Kausao: something I swore I would never do. My father died working the mines here. Wasn't going to happen to me. When I was tall enough to hold a sword, I joined up. The places I saw were dreamlike. Nightmares are dreams, too, right? I killed Ahlmac blood worshippers in the jungles and mountains across the sea. I killed Nahdisan by the score in Kushmet. Their Three Hundred Gods held no power over our Jadetech weaponry. In this world you are born ruled by jade, and you die at the whims of the same. And now I am coming home to this forsaken place.

It's the smell that hits you first. Jade smoke and burning garbage float on the air when you pass through the Narrows. The cliff workers go about their business on catwalks and cliff paths. The children watch the ships slip by, laughing and pointing. The city has not killed their joy yet. It will.

I'd forgotten how big Kausao Bay was. Always catches you by surprise. A great dish of brackish water, milky and multicolored from all the jade runoff coming down the rivers. The Tongzhe is the cleaner of the two rivers, but that is not saying much. The Miznu River is a permanent fog of shifting colors, fueled by the belching stacks of Refinery Row day and night. They say dark things lurk in the depths of the Miznu and in the bay. Don't believe it. Nothing can live in the waters surrounding Kausao City. If you look hard enough you can see past the riverfront and see to the governor's palace, curse his name.

This city towers over me. Tallest city in the world, I am told. The axis upon which the world turns. From a distance it is all towers and clouds and overbearing architecture. Up close the city is rotting, dying. I was born here. Jade is in my blood. Even away from the city for years, my hair still gleams. It marks me, this city. It tells others I do not belong. I step off the boat into the smell of fish markets and the sounds of jade merchants. Low Port welcomes me back. Much as I hate it, I am home.

Aspects and Fate Points

An **aspect** is a word or phrase that describes something special about a person, place, situation, or group. Almost anything you can think of can have aspects. A person might be the Greatest Swordswoman in Kausao City. A room might be On Fire after you knock over an oil lamp. While being tortured by the City Guard, you might be Terrified. Aspects let you change the story in ways that go along with your character's tendencies, skills, or problems.

You **spend fate points**—which you keep track of with pennies or glass beads or poker chips or some other tokens—to unlock the power of aspects and make them help you. You **earn** fate points by letting a character aspect be compelled against you to complicate the situation or make your life harder. Be sure to keep track of the fate points you have left at the end of the session—if you have more than your refresh, you start the next session with the fate points you ended this session with.

You earned a lot of fate points during your game session, ending the day with five fate points. Your refresh is 2, so you'll start with five fate points the next time you play. But another player ends the game session with just one fate point. His refresh is 3, so he'll begin the next session with 3 fate points, not just the one he had left over.

What Kinds of Aspects Are There?

There's an endless variety of aspects, but no matter what they're called, they all work pretty much the same way. The main difference is how long they stick around before going away.

Character Aspects: These aspects are on your character sheet, such as your portrayal and trouble. They describe personality traits, important details about your past, relationships you have with others, problems you're dealing with, goals you're working toward, or reputations and obligations you carry. These aspects only change under very unusual circumstances; most never will.

Examples: Captain of the Ancient Wind; On the Run from the City Watch; I Must Protect My Brother

Situation Aspects: These aspects describe the surroundings that the action is taking place in. This includes aspects you create or discover when you create advantages. A situation aspect usually vanishes at the end of the scene it was part of, or when someone takes some action that would change or get rid of it. Essentially, they last only as long as the situational element they represent lasts.

Examples: On Fire; Bright Sunlight; Crowd of Angry People; Knocked to the Ground

To get rid of a situation aspect, you can attempt an overcome action to eliminate it, provided you can think of a way your character could accomplish it—dump a bucket of water on the Raging Fire, use evasive maneuvers to avoid the City Watch that's got you Under Observation. An opponent may use a Defend action to try to preserve the aspect, if they can describe how they are able to do it.

Consequences: These aspects represent injuries or other lasting trauma that happen when you get hit by attacks. They go away slowly, as described in *Stress and Consequences* (pg. 74).

Examples: Sprained Ankle; Fear of Spider-Dogs; Concussion; Demoralized

Boosts: A boost is a temporary aspect that you get to use once (see *What Do You Do With Aspects?*, next), then it vanishes. Unused boosts vanish when the scene they were created in is over or when the advantage they represent no longer exists. These represent very brief and fleeting advantages you get in conflicts with others.

Examples: In My Sights; Distracted; Unstable Footing; Rock In His Boot

What do you do with Aspects?

There are three big things you can do with aspects: invoke aspects, compel aspects, and use aspects to establish facts.

Invoking Aspects

You invoke an aspect to give yourself a bonus or make things a bit harder for your opponent. You can invoke any aspect that you a) know about, and b) can explain how you use it to your advantage–including aspects on other characters or on the situation. Normally, invoking an aspect costs you a fate point– hand one of your fate points to the GM. To invoke an aspect, you need to describe how that aspect helps you in your current situation.

- I attack the City Watchman with my sword. I know he has been drinking too much and is Sluggish, so that should help me.
- I want to scare this guy. I've heard he's Scared of Dragon-Mice, so I'll release one in his bedroom.
- Now that the guard's Distracted, I should be able to sneak right by him.
- This Jadetech device needs a power boost–I'm a Master of Jadetech Design, and powerful devices are my bread and butter.

What does invoking an aspect get you? Choose one of the following effects:

➕ Add a +2 bonus to your total.

➕ Reroll the dice. This option is best if you rolled really lousy (usually a -3 or -4 showing on the dice).

➕ Confront an opponent with the aspect. You use this option when your opponent is trying something and you think an existing aspect would make it harder for them. For instance, an opponent wants to draw his weapon, but he's Buried in Debris; you spend a fate point to invoke that aspect, and now your opponent's level of difficulty is increased by +2.

➕ Help an ally with the aspect. Use this option when a friend could use some help and you think an existing aspect would make it easier for them. Your friend gets a +2 on their roll.

If you're invoking an aspect to add a bonus or reroll your dice, wait until *after* you've rolled to do it. No sense spending a fate point if you don't need to!

Important: You can only invoke any aspect once on a given dice roll; you can't spend a stack of fate points on one aspect to get a huge bonus from it. However, you *can* invoke several different aspects on the same roll. The only exception to this is free invocations on an aspect, which can all be invoked at the same time and stack with an invocation you purchase on that aspect with a fate point.

Free invocations: Sometimes you can invoke an aspect for free, without paying a fate point. If you create or discover an aspect through the create advantages action, the first invocation on it (by you or an ally) is free (if you succeeded with style, you get *two* freebies). If you cause a consequence through an attack, you or an ally can invoke it once for free. A boost is a special kind of aspect that grants one free invocation, then vanishes once the action is resolved.

Compelling Aspects

If you're in a situation where having or being around a certain aspect means your character's life is more dramatic or complicated, anyone can compel the aspect. You can even compel it on yourself. Compels are the most common way for players to earn more fate points.

There are two types of compels:

Decision compels: This sort of compel suggests the answer to a decision your character has to make. If your character is the Kaiyumi Princess, for example, you may need to stay to lead the defense of the Imperial Fleet rather than fleeing to safety. Or if you have a Defiant Streak a Mile Wide, maybe you can't help but mouth off to the City Watch when they question you.

Event compels: Other times, a compel reflects something happening that makes life more complicated for you. If you have Strange Luck, of course that green jade Jadetech device you're working on accidentally turns its user's hair green. If you Owe Magistrate Henric a Favor, then Magistrate Henric shows up and

demands that you perform a service for him just when it's least convenient.

In any case, when an aspect is compelled against you, the person compelling it offers you a fate point and suggests that the aspect has a certain effect–that you'll make a certain decision or that a particular event will occur. You can discuss it back and forth, proposing tweaks or changes to the suggested compel. After a moment or two, you need to decide whether to accept the compel. If you agree, you take the fate point and your character makes the suggested decision or the event happens. If you refuse, you must *pay* a fate point from your own supply. If you don't have any fate points, you can't refuse a compel.

How Many Fate Points Does The GM Get?

As GM, you don't need to track fate points for NPCs, but that doesn't mean you get an unlimited number. The GM starts each scene with a pool of one fate point per PC that's in the scene. You spend fate points from that pool to invoke situation (or consequence) aspects against the PCs. If that pool is empty, you can't invoke a situation aspect. When a PC invokes a situation aspect against the GM, that fate point goes into the pool.

When a PC accepts a compel of a character aspect, the fate point they earn does NOT come from this pool. That fate point comes from an unlimited pool you have for this purpose.

Establishing Facts

The final thing that aspects can do is establish facts in the game. You don't have to spend any fate points, roll dice, or anything to make this happen–just by virtue of having the aspect Captain of the Ancient Wind, you've established that your character is a captain and that he has a ship called the *Ancient Wind*. Having the aspect Mortal Enemy: The Red Ninja establishes that the setting has an organization called the Red Ninja and that they're after you for some reason.

When you establish facts of the setting this way, make sure you do it in cooperation with other players, and that you take the setting's themes under consideration. For instance, *Jadepunk* doesn't have magic, or "chi powers" by default, but if you allow aspects that describe them, then your game does. That creates implications on the setting as a whole that you need to configure. How does the presence of such abilities affect the rest of the setting? Be careful when allowing aspects that establish facts that create major changes in the setting.

Kausao City

Welcome to Kausad City

History of Kausao City

Since its founding over a century ago, Kausao City has been the center of the world. Trade, industry, even disputes and negotiations all center here. So integral is Kausao City to the rest of the world that the most commonly used calendar gauges its "year zero" as the founding year of Kausao City. Currently, that calendar sits at 112 SF ("Since Foundation").

3 BF: Discovery. The ruins of Kausao Village are discovered by a Kaiyumi tradeship. After exploring the ruins, they discover black jade, a forgotten substance lost to myth centuries before, on the bed of what they called "the black lake," later renamed "Loch Mythus" by the Aerish. With no historical basis upon which to use the legendary substance for themselves, the tradeship travels to all corners of the Storm Sea using it for very profitable trade.

2 BF: The Great Expedition. The great nations of the world trace the Kaiyumi ship back to the region and send expeditionary teams to survey the area. While at first they don't see eye-to-eye, the teams eventually begin working together. This joint expedition is responsible for the discovery of incredibly large jade deposits, of all the various colors, in the mountains surrounding the village. The teams immediately inform their respective governments.

1 BF: Stand-Off. Veiled threats and military posturing prevent any further discoveries for some time. Boundaries that were drawn when the expeditionary teams first arrived become the equivalent of national borders. But as alliances begin to be forged and the threat of a world war looms, a Naramel ambassador suggests a conference of the great nations to discuss options for the city.

Founding Year: Establishment of the Council of Nine. Despite their hostility, each of the great nations agree that they will retain rights of land ownership for the areas currently under their control, and that mining rights of the discovered jade veins will be divided equally amongst them. To prevent any one nation of gaining an unfair advantage over any other, and to command the expansionary regions of both the village and the outlying lands and mountain range, the first international council is established. The Council of Nine consists of two members of each of the great nations, and is run by a governor's chair, which rotates among the nations every eight years.

3 SF: Agricultural Boom. With the quickly growing population of the city, Naramel and Túyang agriculture companies set up a lavish farming infrastructure in the fertile fields and mountains around the city. Kutstari Agriculture, a Naramel company, comes out ahead of all others in the agriculture industry.

11 SF: Global Domination. The jade beneath the mountains and waters of Kausao City has made the great nations incredibly powerful. In their homelands, no other nation can resist them. Some of the nations march on others, gaining land, wealth and power as they go. Seeing the danger ahead,

The Council of Nine

Consisting of two members of each of the great nations and an elected governor, the Council is the official ruling body of the Kausao region. They control all trade in and out of the city, as well as define its laws. While anyone can petition the Council's ruling in a matter, rarely do any but the largest companies take advantage of this right. Corruption is their modus operandi: anyone with enough money can make the Council bend to their will. Each member of the Council is richer than most kings, easily more powerful than the ruler of their home nation, and has great political clout in the city. Businesses court their votes on various laws and edicts. It's a cutthroat position. Upper-level city officials strive to gain a seat on the Council, and their peers seeking greater control of the region's jade rights plot against one another.

The governor's chair is traditionally elected by rotation. Every 8 years, a new nation gets the governor's seat, taken by one of the two Councilors representing that nation, creating an opening for promotion to councilor for an ambitious politician from that nation. The thirteenth governor, however, has managed to stay in power for over two decades, effectively ending the rotation.

Councilor and Governor Write Ups

We have purposely excluded stat blocks for the Council and the Governor from this text. These are things that have a huge impact on the power balance between the different nations. Who is the current governor? From which nation does he hail? Wherever the governor hails from, that nation will be the most powerful, and likely perceived as the most oppressive by the population at large. We want to leave such a game-changing decision up to your table.

and with quite a bit of envy of the great nations' access to such abundant sources of jade, the lesser nations of the world unite together and march on Kausao City. Their defeat is decisive, but their resolve remains unbroken. Thus begins the conflict that will define the political landscape of the world for generations to come.

12 SF: The Jade Wars Begin. With the help of an unknown traitor from within the Council of Nine, the Jade Wars rage on for years. Through small border skirmishes, acts of terrorism, and insurgencies within the home territories of the great nations, a balance of force is found. The great nations can respond to such small-scale, yet very dangerous, threats, but in 13 SF, the lesser nations are able to sneak

Kutstari Agriculture

Kutstari Agriculture was the first Naramel industry in the city. It has never dealt in mining or any direct jade acquisition: instead it deals with providing food to the city. In this way Kutstari has managed to gain vast power and jade resources without having to drill into rock or build factories. It is estimated that the company controls over thirty-five percent of all farming done around the city and has indirect control over another fifteen percent. Kutstari tends to stay out of politics—at least, that is how it appears to the public. In reality, Aysal Kutstari, the company's current CEO, has her hooks in almost half of the Council, in one way or another. Aysal's eldest brother was actually the legal heir to the company when her father died, but through shrewd political maneuvering and some subtle (and not so subtle) assassinations, she now possesses controlling interest. She is ruthless and dedicated to becoming the governor of Kausao city one day.

Aysal Kutstari
Portrayal: Ambitious CEO
Need: Power is Everything
Secret: Killed My Way to the Top

forces into Kausao City, which has been locked down under martial law since the wars began, and take several districts hostage until their lands and people are returned to them. Refusing to give in to terrorist demands, the Council decides to level the districts. The genocide inflicted on the city's citizens the day the bombs dropped has never been forgotten, nor forgiven. To remember the dead, lanterns are lit in these districts on each anniversary of the bombing, known as the "Day of Tears", in remembrance of the fallen.

15 SF: The Siege of Kausao City. In a final, desperate push against the great nations, the lesser nations send one thousand sailing ships, two hundred airships, with a combined complement of over two hundred thousand strong, against Kausao City. But the great nations come together as never before, building forts on the cliffs around the narrows and protecting the dunes with thousands of troops. The Siege of Kausao City lasts for three months, until the navy and armies of the lesser nations are shattered in the narrows and left for dead in the mountains. The lesser nations are broken. Some never recover from the devastation to their lands after the great nations launch retaliatory campaigns.

16 SF: Rebuilding Kausao City. Rather than repairing the buildings and streets destroyed during the Jade Wars, the Council orders many districts to be evacuated, reduced to rubble and rebuilt with all new architecture that combines the greatest

building techniques of each of the great nations. This is a calculated propaganda move as a way to show unity amongst the peoples of Kausao City, despite the different cultures they come from. The people, however, see only their homes being destroyed, and "new building fees" to move into their modern replacements.

20 SF: The Expansionary Period. Having permanently solidified their hold over Kausao City, the Council of Nine begins to expand on the city and mining infrastructure in the region. Citizens who can't afford to move into the new high-rises are forced to move into the free districts, unclaimed by any of the great nations. However, their tent cities are unsightly, and the Council already has plans for building in the free districts within and around the city. Citizens are once again moved as construction begins on city districts outside of any nation's holdings, but controlled entirely by the Council of Nine.

22 SF: Battle at Four Corners. The port district called "Four Corners", because people and ships from all four corners of the world can be found there, is renowned for its slums. People wanting to leave or enter the city, but who have no currency to pay for departure or shelter, make alleyways and abandoned buildings their homes. As such, large hostels are set up in the area to support the homeless that build up in the streets. Slowly, the denizens of these hostels come to identify with each other and gangs are formed. A disagreement between two of these gangs erupts in the streets of Four Corners during the summer of this year. The riots rage for two days, and are followed by weeks of smaller skirmishes and looting. Peace isn't fully restored until Aerish troops enter Four Corners and bring a violent end to the riots.

29 SF: Industrial Revolution. Rebuilding the city into a modern wonder brings with it the discovery of new industrial inventions, like assembly lines where construction materials are made. It doesn't take long for the market-minded of the city to extrapolate the concept into a mass-refining process for jade ore. Dayuu Corporation, controlled directly by the emperor of Túyang, but not yet the mining superpower that it will later become, sets up refineries on both sides of the Miznu River. The lands west of Túyang territory within the city become the first free districts to be heavily populated as more refineries are set up in the area by lesser companies. Jobs in the refining sector become plentiful, and the banks of the Miznu River get a secondary name, "Refinery Row."

27 SF: The First Airdock is Constructed. More problems coming out of Four Corners cause the Council to decommission the hostels and tear down the area. In its place, the Four Winds Trading Company builds the city's first airdock. Ten years later, construction is finished and the city gains a new gateway.

38 SF: Kinzo Kaia Modernize Mining. With the invention of assembly-line jade refining, the jade ore no longer comes fast enough. The long hikes up and down the mountainside are inadequate for the new pace of production. Partnering with the Four Winds Trading Company out of Aerum, Kinzo Kaia creates a mass-transit system, the Jaderail, to get workers to and from the mines in minutes, rather than days.

41 SF: Loch Mythus Runs Dry. The Dayuu Corporation and the Python Mining Corporation, a subsidiary of the Four Winds Trading Company, scrape the bed of Loch Mythus for black jade for the last time this year. Formerly the greatest source of black jade, the mining companies now have to look for the valuable substance as they do every other, in the dark tunnels of the mines.

47 SF: Evidence of Pollution in Kausao Bay. Processing factories create what is known as "jade waste". While still potentially valuable if not completely processed, it is mostly unusable muck. With little regulation handed down by the Council of Nine, refineries along Refinery Row have been dumping jade waste into the Miznu River for years. The pollution colors the waters of the river and bay, as well as the rainfall in recent years. The unique fish that once thrived in the bay begin to die off, now only to be found in the still pure Loch Mythus and surrounding, smaller lakes.

58 SF: The Jade-Tainted Generation. Jade waste is everywhere, in the rivers, the drinking water, the rain. Some children born in the last decade are "jade-tainted". Since only the poor work closely with jade in the mines or refineries, their children are the ones most commonly tainted. As such, taint is seen as a sign of poverty, and the rich actively avoid them.

65 SF: The Miners Rebellion. Corruption grows as the rich get richer and the poor become destitute. Miners are forced into debt to obtain the tools they need to do their jobs, and are paid barely enough to feed their families. Never able to work off their debt, they pass it on to their next of kin, who work in the mines for the same pay. Sick of corporate oppression and government corruption, the miners take to the streets in open arms. Their day-long march ends at the steps of the Council of Nine, where they are met by hundreds of city guardsmen. It does not take long for violence to begin: in a matter of hours, hundreds of miners are slain, with many more locked up and bound for sentencing. The actions of the miners do little to change corporate policy, as government propaganda blames them for the revolt. They are remembered as an example of what happens to those who openly speak out against the government.

68 SF: Build-out Over Kausao Bay Begins. Due to increased shipping demands, the need for a larger sea port becomes apparent. The Arash Kigai lead the effort to create a landfill in the northern section of the bay. This extends the port area, now called "Low Port", considerably. Few of the buildings from the original port have been altered since this time, retaining their old, seaside architecture.

72 SF: Construction Begins on the Governor's Palace. After two governors are assassinated, the governor's manor is deemed insecure. The governor's residence is moved to Mythus Isle in this year. A lavish palace that will take several years to fully construct is built over the entire island. In the decades since, no person or group has ever infiltrated the palace.

75 SF: The Severe Depression. Reports from the Bureau of Economics and Trade begin to show a drastic drop in the Jade Weight during this year. It is assumed the reason for the reduction in price is due to the market being over-saturated with all types of jade. By 77 SF, the city enters a severe depression, with jade

prices a fraction of what their historical lows were. Even the middle class is left destitute.

76 SF: Global Repercussions. The world is rocked by the depression in Kausao City. Only now is the economic impact of the Kausao region fully realized. Every nation in the world has become dependent on the magical city for their jade resources, which plunges some of those nations into economic depressions of their own.

79 SF: Economic Restructuring. As the free market continues its downfall, the Council of Nine steps in and establishes strict regulations. Through a complicated series of laws, the Council is able to regulate many small companies out of business. Those that manage to survive struggle to get by and are quickly bought up by the larger corporations. With this consolidation of wealth, the jade flow is easily regulated and the market begins to normalize.

84 SF: Global Recovery. The world begins to stabilize as the economic depression ends in Kausao City. Recovery is slow, but many regions find a healthy balance mining what jade they can from their own lands and trading in Kausao City for the jade they don't have access to. Many others continue to rely on Kausao City as their primary source of jade, and continue to be affected by the economic ebbs and flows of the city.

89 SF: High Crime Rates. The thirteenth governor enters office in a time of widespread theft and terrorism. While some of the crime is the result of the majority of Kausao City's population being made poorer and poorer, much of the chaos is actually perpetuated through the new governor's own underworld contacts in an effort to further destabilize the city.

92 SF: Massacre of the Council of Nine. A series of coordinated assassinations, secretly orchestrated by the governor himself, wipes out all but three of the Council of Nine in the course of one week. A state of emergency is announced by the governor and he locks the city down under martial law. His city watchmen wrongfully accuse a small refinery owner and his fifty-two employees for the assassinations. Their death sentence is carried out immediately, though martial law remains in effect for some time after.

93 SF: Fumbled Elections of a New Council. After the massacre, several candidates from each nation fight a brutal election against one another. Several times, supporters of the various officials riot against each other in the streets and at various functions. The governor takes advantage of this chaos by dealing with the rulers of each nation directly in matters usually handled by the Council. He deals fairly with each nation, gaining great support with each.

95 SF: The Puppet Council. Well after the governor's term should have ended, a new Council is ushered in. Each member was chosen by the governor himself, relayed through the ruler of the great nations who then supported the candidate. Thus, the governor holds the political careers of each councilor in his hands. If they step out of line, the governor needs only to contact their home nation and report his disapproval. Fearing losing the approval of the governor, the nation quickly reprimands the councillor in question. Because no one in the Council would dare speak against the governor, and the great nations' rulers are very happy with his fair dealings with them, he has solidified his position as the permanent governor of Kausao City.

99 SF: The Underworld Rebellion. Reeling from the governor's strict laws, the underworld begin an insurgency against the governor's city watchmen. This begins a back and forth as the governor counters the violence with increased civilian suppression. Martial law is once again enacted, which causes the underworld to rise up even more violently.

102 SF: The Rebellion Grows. While the Underworld Rebellion is successful in resisting the governor, they fail to recognize, or care, how their actions impact the common people. Innocent civilians are caught in underworld attacks, only to suffer the governor's increasingly oppressive martial law in return. Eventually, even the rich feel the weight of the governor's strict laws. The more benevolent of their number begin funding small groups of skilled individuals to take up various social causes. Commoners see this and begin to be inspired themselves, beginning poorly-funded groups of their own that often end up as little more than street gangs.

107 SF: Rise of the Jianghu. These loose cells of unorganized, but highly skilled rebels begin making a difference. They ease the suffering of civilians within districts they operate in, thus improving the lives of the common people. The more they make a difference, the more they recognize each other as allies fighting for the same cause. A loose society forms around these cells of honest and benevolent individuals. They come to be collectively known as the Jianghu, and are seen as champions of the people.

108 SF: The Governor Outlaws Martial Arts. As most of the Jianghu insurgency are proficient in the martial arts, the governor passes the "Harmonious Proclamation", a law which promises security through an increased law enforcement presence. Part of the proclamation was the forbiddance of practicing martial techniques. As a result, many martial artists spent their days in working-class jobs, and their nights practicing martial arts in a basement or back alley.

112 SF: Present Day. The underworld and city guardsmen continue to suppress the people for their own purposes. They claim their actions are for the common

good, but the people know them to be the true villains. They support the Jianghu in whatever small way they can–providing food, shelter, even a fighting arm from time-to-time–but while the Jianghu have made a difference, they are divided on many fronts, and are overall too few in number to take on the city guard. Meanwhile, the governor steps up his watchmen's efforts to putdown this rebellion once and for all. With capable individuals fighting for all sides, the city's population ebbs and flows between oppression, despair and hope.

Life in Kausao City

From the heights of High Port to the lows of Refinery Row and Low Port, the city practically oozes industry, money, and desperation. Airships come and go at all hours of the day. Boats are poled, rowed, and pushed with blue jade jet engines up and down the twin rivers and tributaries of the city. They carry jade and food and people. Stilt walkers use special nets to gather jade runoff in the middle of the river while mudskimmers ply the same in the muddy banks. In Low Port the sails and smokestacks of the great ships flow in a steady stream through the narrows, bringing in foods and necessities while taking out vast hauls of jade. The city is all noise and work, from the upknockers who wake the city's workers at shift intervals to the stevedores working the massive cranes and cargo movers. It is a dark and dingy life filled with despair and endless toil, but it is life nonetheless. Everything feels alive in the city, from the refineries working in raw jade to the street vendors in the various markets peddling their wares. Kausao City has something for everyone, and that something always comes at a cost.

City Life

The City is a bustling, barely controlled free-market. The majority of people work in the mines or in the fields. They take the Jaderail out to their workplaces at the beginning of the day, and then again to return to the city in the evening. No one lives in the surrounding countryside as the land is too valuable for mining and farming. The city borders have not expanded much in the last forty years. After the expansionary period they just stopped allowing the build outs, creating an abrupt cut off between urban sprawl and nature. Virtually all expansion since then has either been upwards or built out onto the bay.

Kausao City Aspects
Everything is for Sale
Only the Shrewd Thrive
Jade-Infused Society

Most folks come to Kausao City seeking to "strike it rich" by discovering a new jade vein somewhere in the mountains or building a market empire. While that is possible, only the most dedicated and ruthless have ever managed it. The rest end up dying alone in the mountains or working their life away in someone else's mine, farm, or market stall. Most of the city is rookeries, slums, and ghettos inhabited by generations of immigrant workers. The rest of the city is warehouses, markets, refineries, and manors for the rich.

At the start of the day, whether that is a literal day or just the beginnings of a shift, a worker is awakened by an upknocker rapping at all the windows and calling the time. They then head off to work an average of twelve to fourteen hours. If they are slightly better off, some will have a job in government infrastructure, making sure the sewers still work, the roads are repaired, or the accounting is done "correctly". The hours are worse than a miner or farmer, but the pay is better and there is a certain respectability to it.

Above those are the middle class. They generally work as specialist artisans or managers of the work force. There are never very many of them. Above them are the various aristocrats, nobles, business owners, and sundry rich folk. Above the rich are those who truly run things: the officials and the Council of Nine.

Languages

There are four dominant tongues in Kausao City: Túyangan, Aerish, Naramel, and Kaiyumi. Túyangan is the common language of the city. Everyone speaks it a little, and most speak it quite well. The mixing of these four languages has led to much cross pollination of terms and sayings from one language to another. This mix of culture and language marks a native of Kausao City as an outsider in their motherlands. With the level of corruption in the city, newcomers learn swiftly to adopt the lingo or mark themselves as fresh meat for confidence men and thieves.

Social Strata

The upper class live around Loch Mythus and the various markets throughout the city. They are the aristocrats, city officials, mine owners, and foreign investors. They make the rules and live in a world of constant political games and deadly intrigues.

The middle class are artisans and the overseers of the working class. They are the ones making sure the Jaderail runs on time, that the upknockers and hour-callers announce the various shifts throughout the neighborhoods in the city. They watch over the refineries, mines, farms, and most market stalls. Most of all, they look for an opportunity to move up in the world. They are eager and seek advancement in all things. Many of the horrors corruption brings are often carried out by men and women of the middle class who just want a better life.

The working class exists at a level just above destitution. Much of their life is spent working, and when they aren't doing that they are typically eating or sleeping. Kausao City runs on the backs of these oppressed people, many of whom are indebted to their middle class employers, who don't pay them enough to live on, much less make payments on time. The largest percentage or Kausao City's population are members of the working-class.

The poor are mostly former working class who were fired from the mines or market stalls. They failed to pay on their debts, caused trouble for their employers, or otherwise just couldn't cut it in the working world. Now they are reduced to the lot of beggars, mudskimmers, and stilt walkers. Most citizens of the city turn a blind eye on these individuals, though more than a few fear they are desperately close to joining them.

Education

Most of the lower classes are educated in temples or churches. The rich hire private tutors and the middle class go to private schools. Most are educated until they are between ten and fourteen years of age. Only a few, even among the rich, will ever go to a university or a library to earn a Certificate of Education. That is changing more and more every year, but it is slower in Kausao City, as the city's primary focus is on the jade industry.

Oddly, parents who have struggled their whole lives to get to Kausao City desperately work to send their children to one of the Túyangan universities, hundreds of miles away. But the difficulty of even so simple a thing as feeding those children make this a pipe dream, at best—something everyone says they are going to do, but rarely happens.

Economic Means

There are four major currencies in use in Kausao City, as well as dozens of other currencies from far off lands. Most mine workers know the jade market price better than the major traders. The farmers know the value of what they sell as well, in measures of jade. While no one gets paid in jade (it is far too valuable to use in such a mundane way) everything is traded in Jade Weight, which is handed out for a day's work in the form of scrip issued by the various mining or agricultural companies. These, in turn, can be converted into any of the local currencies by a money changer. Money changers are common in most neighborhoods. Every day the Bureau of Economics and Trade releases a master list of the Jade Weight exchange rates; if you can find an honest money changer you can get this price for your jade. Most money changers are corrupt as they come, though, as it is easy to substitute the wrong exchange rate for the day. Wise citizens learn to check the daily exchange rate before visiting a money changer, and they still expect to have to haggle with for a fair deal. In the end almost everyone accepts some form of markup when dealing with a money changer.

Industries

Being home to so many people, Kausao City is rife with industry of all kinds, but a few stand out as especially important to the city's well-being.

Mines

The mines are owned by many different companies and corporations, often in turn owned by larger conglomerates and super companies. The big five mining companies are the Python Mining Corporation, the Dayuu Corporation, Xiaiyo Mining, Yestas Mines, and Kinzo Kaia. The Python Mining Corporation is controlled by the Four Winds Trading Company. They were founded in the red jade mines of Aerum, and to this day have the most advanced methods for extracting that type of ore. The Dayuu Corporation is controlled directly by the emperor of Túyang, and is the second oldest mining company in the City. Xiaiyo Mining is the newest of the mining companies, founded by a couple of miners who managed to strike it rich and hold onto their rights, no easy feat. They are ruthless and make extensive use of indentured employees. Yestas Mining represents the middle-of-the-road mining operation. Founded by the second son of one of the Khalifas of Naramel, it has blossomed into a powerful force in the city. Kinzo Kaia, formerly the Kaiyu clan who first discovered Kausao Village and soon after broke all ties to their nation, is the oldest mining corporation in Kausao City. Having no nation to fall back on, Kinzo Kaia is heavily invested in several trading companies, forming a protective network of economic redundancies.

Farms

The Naramel established the farming infrastructure around Kausao City. Before then, it had been just a few individuals with small plots of land selling food to the growing city. A great many of the Naramel who run the farms are also heavily invested in the various alchemical research firms in the city, seeking more efficient agricultural methods that require less people to work the fields, thus increasing profits.

Though the Naramel control a large portion of the city's agricultural economy, they are challenged closely by the Túyang, who use their ancient methods of terrace farming to work the fertile soil of the mountains closest to the water. This technique was unheard of outside of Túyangan lands and has given them an edge in the market.

Refineries

Most refineries are owned by the big mining corporations, though there are a few smaller companies that operate smaller powderies and almost miniature refineries, many of them amount to little more than blacksmiths with access to the lowest grade jade ore available.

This hasn't deterred many companies from trying to break into the industry. Every day, it seems, a new powdery or refinery crops up hoping to become the next big name in Refinery Row.

Transport

A few companies maintain ricksha cab services, but they are usually little more than unions formed under the pretense of protecting the interests of ricksha drivers. In the end, they only serve as a means to exploit their members by charging high rates to maintain the many licenses and permits it takes to stay in operation.

Unfortunately for independent drivers, the Council has passed numerous laws enforcing the need for permits, typically only available through membership with a union, in order to conduct business in many city districts.

One alternative, which runs into as much trouble as it does progress, is the Jaderail. A major interest for the Four Winds Trading Company, the white jade railway has been the target of saboteurs since its maiden voyage across the city, presumably from ricksha unions afraid that the Jaderail will put them out of business. Add to this the late arrival times for many of the railcars and it's no wonder many citizens prefer to walk than to utilize the city's terribly organized transit systems, though some make use of the recent "bicycle" invention, and those with the means to stable them still ride horses and other beasts of burden to get around or carry their goods.

Government

The Council of Nine rule over the affairs of the city, but in modern days its members are little more than puppets controlled by the governor. There are various lower magistrates, who do the actual day-to-day legislating. Below them is a complex web of city watchmen, city guardsmen, tax collectors, and the various guilds and organizations of the city. But the system is rife with unscrupulous folk. So long as you are clever about it, being corrupt is the fastest way to power.

Law and Order

Even lawyers, who have studied the city's outdated and confusing laws and edicts their whole lives, only understand a fraction of them. The laws change from day to day, district to district, and sometimes from neighborhood to neighborhood. Most natives get a sort of feel for the rules in the areas they frequent.

There are major infractions which everyone agrees on, things like murder, major theft, and kidnapping. The minor infractions are far more tricky. These are written in convoluted language and often taken out of context by corrupt officials.

Kausao City Law for Noodleheads

Breaking the law isn't illegal if you don't get caught, grease the right palms, or know the right people. Otherwise, a crime is a crime and you will have to pay or work off your fine. It's best to just avoid the whole mess, though that is harder to do than it sounds.

If you are the victim of a crime do not expect the watch or the guard to help you, unless you are related to someone, or are paid up with the right people. Most minor infractions are enforced by various private security firms or vigilance committees. Each has their upside and their downside.

47

City Watch

The legal authorities and investigative branch of the law, they investigate and prosecute crimes within the city and its surrounding area. The Ministers of Justice have license to investigate any crime, and upon finding evidence assemble a group of five other ministers to decide upon the guilt of the accused. Their only true loyalty is to the governor. When one joins the watch, he must reject all authority, save for that of the governor and his hierarchy of magistrates. Each watchman has a jade tattoo over one eye that grants them heightened senses. There are rumors that these tattoos can also be used to instantly kill any watchman who proves disloyal to the governor. But no one has ever witnessed this, so none can say.

City Guard

The enforcement arm of the law, they keep the peace and make arrests for crimes in progress. It is they who seek to capture the accused once judgement has been pronounced. Like the city watch, guardsmen serve only the governor, renouncing all other authority, mortal or otherwise. All guardsmen have jade pins fused into their spines, making them stronger, faster, and tougher. Like the watchmen's tattoos, there is a rumor that these pins can kill any disloyal guardsmen at the whim of the governor, but is similarly untested.

Private Agencies

Nobeutma: Guards for hire, the Nobeutma are the most feared freelance "police" in the city. They are trained in ancient Naramel fighting techniques and raised to be warriors from a young age. They will take any job so long as the price is right.

Walezi: Originally a Túyangan mercenary company, the Walezi are now a private security firm. Anyone can join their ranks, provided they have a useful skill set. They usually work mine security for various corporations when they aren't roughing up unsuspecting citizens in Refinery Row.

Jingdei Wei: There are many private investigators in the city, but everyone knows you cannot escape the Jingdei Wei, provided they have been paid to find you. The origins of this organization are a mystery, but they work with the seal of the governor, making them especially dangerous.

Shi-Gado: The 'death watch', as they are called, have no care for anything outside of their jurisdiction. They guard the dead laid to rest in the Hakumoreita, tombs made from repurposed mining tunnels that stretch beneath the city and throughout the cliff walls. They bring an unusual zeal to their work, making grave robbing a dangerous business in Kausao City.

Vigilance Committees

There are many such organizations within the city, a mixture of a neighborhood watch, union, and political party. They often overlook crimes by people who share the same job or belief system as they do, while overreacting to the crimes of their political opponents. A vigilance committee will "solve" the crime, but often that just means they find some poor soul to pin the blame on.

Important Locations

Citadel of the Council of Nine

More a fortress than a meeting house, the citadel is a massive stone and mortar building, remodeled from one of the few ruins of old Kausao Village that remain standing. The halls and rooms of the citadel are huge, making anyone who walks through them to plead their case to the Council of Nine feel small and insignificant. The atrium where the Council meets features a half-circular table in front of the governor's throne-like chair.

The Governor's Palace

Covering the entirety of Mythus Isle, the governor's home is a lavish palace that features massive living quarters, gardens the size of most parks and a full barracks of city guardsmen. In times past, when a new governor took office the island would change residents. The thirteenth governor has been in office for 23 years, however, and the large-scale modifications he has made to the island for his personal comfort and security are testament to the fact that he isn't expecting to give up his title anytime soon.

High Port

The great airship docks of the city, first built by the Aerish to support their massive airships, High Port has blossomed and grown into the primary trade hub of the city, and many tradesmen from Low Port have a serious desire to see High Port lose business. Huge docking towers rise high above even the tallest buildings, receiving airships day and night. Most airships are built by Aerish shipwrights, and the few crafted by other nations are usually thinly-veiled modifications on the original Aerish design. The only areas in the city that compete with High Port for wealth and influence are the markets and Low Port. The Aerish are proud of their contribution to the city, feeling it superior to others.

Low Port

From one end of Kausao Bay to the other, massive wharves slip out into the water. Ships of all nations gather to bring the comforts of home to the people of Kausao City, and in exchange take back a fortune in jade to the rest of the world. The streets that feed into Low Port from the rest of the city are extremely dangerous. Many reports have been made to the city watch regarding missing persons, who are believed to be traveling to ports unknown with their kidnappers.

Refinery Row

All day and all night, the refineries blast thick, cloying smoke into the sky and noxious sludge into the rivers. Supply boats travel to and from these behemoths of industry to gather the precious refined jade. The banks of the Miznu River have become overgrown with these oppressive buildings.

Slave Markets
While slavery is illegal in Kausao City, that is not the case worldwide. Nations with a thriving slave trade will pay large amounts of local currency for "beautiful" jade-tainted slaves from Kausao City.

Riverfronts

The rivers of Kausao City are deep and wide, filled with the runoff of jade refineries. Many working-class and poor citizens work and live on boats running up and down the polluted rivers. These boats form a distinct community all to themselves. The stilt walkers skim the waters for residual jade while on the shores mudskimmers do the same to the infused muddy banks of the river. They risk getting washed away by runoff from the many storm drains and sewer outlets, but they do manage to scrape a meager living.

The Dunes and Pirate's Gate

Most independent traders cannot afford the docking permits and fees required to dock at the ports. For many the dunes are the cheaper option. The dunes consist of sandy hills that lead to a small strip of beach to the east of the city. The city hasn't expanded onto the dunes because of the soft and shifting sands, but that has not prevented a small shantytown of the displaced poor from rising up around Pirate's Gate.

The seas that bash against the southwest of the city are always stormy, and the draft leading up to Pirate's Gate is a shallow coral reef. Few ships will brave these dangerous waters, and for decades this was a favored port of pirates and smugglers brave enough, or crazy enough, to try for it. Since the creation of the shantytown, however, the city guard has begun taking notice of the area.

Pirate's Gate also features a series of small airship docks, but they can only support two or three ships each, as larger towers would likely topple over due to their soft foundations. These docks are not run by Aerish officials, and so have somewhat reduced shipping restrictions, though the city guard does patrol the area infrequently.

Rural Areas

For all its importance, the city covers a small area. The Council of Nine prefer to build up rather than out as it wastes less precious mining and farming land. To those unused to Kausao City, it is a startling transition from city to farm land. In the space of a hundred yards one goes from the most advanced city in the world to well-tended fields. The farmlands cover most of the mined-out mountains and hills surrounding the city. Utilizing the newest agricultural techniques and jade-infused fertilizers, they manage to produce almost enough food for the whole city. Great steel and timber constructions sticking out of the foothills and mountains just beyond the farms signal the locations of the mines. Whistles blow and smoke billows forth all hours of the day and night. People do not live around these places, but are transported to and from the city every day by the Jaderail and wagons. Every square inch of surrounding arable land is used to its maximum ability and beyond.

Kausao Bay

Ships constantly come and go through the Narrows, carrying treasure of one kind or another, and workers and cranes are always in motion keeping the vessels stocked and the jade flowing.

Kausao Bay is one of the most protected bays in the world. It is hundreds of feet deep, with no coral or rock outcroppings to get in the way of ocean going vessels, odd for the region. The brackish water mixes with the sewage and jade runoff from the city, creating a toxic environment. Some of the old folk talk of when one could fish in the bay, taking home strange indigenous catches, but no one has seen a fish in the bay in sixty years—though that doesn't prevent rumors of jade-infused mutant man-eaters swimming beneath the polluted waters.

No one swims in the bay. It's unsafe for many reasons, both real and imagined.

The Narrows

The only entrance to Kausao Bay is through the Narrows, a channel through the cliff wall that is very deep and only wide enough for one large ship to pass through at a time.

Cliff Walls

Some working-class families and soldiers that maintain or serve in the cliff forts live in houses carved into the sides of the cliffs. Many of these families have lived here for several generations, knowing no life other than the wall and the defense of the city. Their communities exist almost outside of city politics, until the annual firing of the cannons on the anniversary of the Siege of Kausao City, or some criminal act gains the attention of the city watch. The cannons on the cliffs are the largest in the world and can hit targets as far out as the horizon.

Xibu Bati Range

The Xibu Bati mountain range is the border between Túyang and the Kausao region. The tallest mountains in the world, they stretch from the Storm Sea to the lands of the Nahdisa in the far north. Until the creation of the airships it was the greatest barrier to land-trade. Many small kingdoms and satrapies dwell in the low-lying regions surrounding the mountains.

Jade Mines

The mines are deep and run through the entire substrata of the hills and mountain ranges immediately surrounding Kausao City. The mines are the epitome of efficiency. When jade is on the line, no government or company will tolerate the corruption that oppresses most of the city. The mines are one of the few areas where it does not matter who you know or how much money you have. If you are good at your job, the sky's the limit as far as promotion goes. Running a mine is a very lucrative position in the city, but there is no glory in it. Bottom to top the mines are the hardest work anyone will ever do.

Nearby Villages

Basically way stations for the Jaderail, moving people and goods into and out of the city by the few land routes available, villages surrounding Kausao City are small and house only those individuals necessary to manage the farms or rail stations. Every spare acre of arable land is used for farming and there isn't any to spare for town expansion. During the daylight hours, the hills and farms are bustling with activity as the farmhands are brought in well before dawn and taken back to the city at dusk.

The Ocean

The Storm Sea is a vast and tumultuous ocean to the south and east of Kausao City. The Kaiyu islands lie on the far side of the sea and their inhabitants know its waters well. The sea is the origin for many typhoons that smash against the outer cliff walls. There are only a few weeks out of the year when the ocean is calm.

Scavenger Island

The headquarters of the lesser nations during the Siege of Kausao City, Scav-

enger Island has since become a junkyard for the city's waste. So much trash has been dumped on it over the years that the refuse has created a landfill in the draft around it, vastly increasing the size of the island.

Every now and then a small skiff will venture to the island, or a desperate individual will stowaway on a trash barge to scavenge the island, giving it its name.

The Jianghu

This is not an explanation. This is a statement of intent. The powerful and the mighty live off the blood of the weak. They make plays at justice and righteousness. They sit in their towers growing fat off the lives they destroy. They will not go unavenged. We stand for justice, for righteousness. We are poets and warriors, monks and explorers, healers and engineers. We have seen, and upon seeing, cannot look away. Our swords are strong. Our words are sharp. We will not bend. We will not break. We are the Jianghu.
—Copied from the Xia Manifesto

A loose society of likeminded—yet quarrelsome—individuals and organizations, the Jianghu exists to oppose the evils of corruption and injustice, wherever it lies. They follow the code of Xia and believe that even one individual can make a difference. Anyone can claim to be a member of the Jianghu, for its ideals are based on actions taken against the corrupt, not on words written or speeches given.

To oppose corruption, one must stand for virtue. To oppose violence, one must espouse peace. To oppose negligence, one must bring about enlightenment. To oppose injustice, one must stand for justice. These are the principles that unite the Jianghu, but the best way to achieve these goals is still debated among the Jianghu's many members and organizations.

What The Jianghu Isn't

The Jianghu do not exist in shades of gray. The world of *Jadepunk* is based around black and white morality. There is definite, unapologetic evil in this world. That evil is in charge of Kausao City. Whether the PCs are ultimately right or wrong in their beliefs or approach is up to each table to decide for themselves. But regardless, their job, their whole reason for being, is to stand up against oppression and injustice.

Although that is how the Jianghu operates, they are not perceived as such. Enough malevolent individuals and organizations claim membership with the Jianghu to color the society as a whole as operating in that gray area. These individuals do not follow the code of Xia, and so are not *technically* of the Jianghu.

The Code of Xia

There are eight common virtues transcribed in the Xia Manifesto: altruism, justice, individualism, loyalty, courage, truthfulness, disregard for wealth, and desire for glory. The code also emphasizes the importance of repaying benefactors after having received favors, as well as seeking vengeance in righting wrongs and bringing villains to justice. The concept of vengeance is controversial, however, as many believe that it contradicts the virtue of altruism. This controversy is one of many that divides the Jianghu on the proper method of overthrowing the Council.

Duels of Honor

When a dispute arises between two followers of Xia, they will settle their issues through fighting in a duel of honor. Since these individuals are looking to settle a dispute, not seeking vengeance, these duels never result in death. In fact, if death were the result of such a duel, it would dishonor the winner.

While the virtue of loyalty was created to unify the Jianghu, it has led to complicated trees of master-apprentice lineages, and societies so close-knit they see themselves as families. Thus it has done more to further divide the Jianghu than unite it.

Benevolent Societies and Organizations

Ultimately, all legitimate Jianghu organizations operate without the support of others. If an individual takes up arms against the governor, she may find an organization to join, or create one on her own, but existing societies will not support her own actions unless they directly line up with their core beliefs, and every organization has a long list of core beliefs.

We leave the benevolent societies that populate your version of Kausao City up to your table to create. The other societies are heroes that share your spotlight. By creating them yourself, you decide exactly how much spotlight you have to share, if any. It's entirely possible that in your area of the city, no other benevolent Jianghu societies exist yet. You are the first, and only, heroes in your district, which is great for a small scale game that focuses on one specific area.

Creating Jianghu Societies

Creating a society is not very different from creating faces (see Chapter 7: Being the Gamemaster). In fact, you will probably need a few faces to populate it so the PCs can interact with the society, or the society can exist only as a background set piece, in which case it's only a description aspect on the district or scene. Here is an example of a society that scours ancient temples, labyrinths and tombs in the Kausao region in search of ancient Jadetech secrets:

Sacred Artifact Hunters

Portrayal: Knowledge is the Key to Our Freedom

Need: No Myths. Give Me Something Solid to Go On

Secret: Funded By a High Ranking Government Official

If this group is going to be something the PCs interact with regularly, then you'll want to attach one or more faces to it. If the group is only set dressing for your story, a single aspect (like Sacred Artifact Hunters Operate Here) is enough.

Malevolent Societies and Organizations

Given that anyone can claim membership of the Jianghu, some individuals and organizations use membership to further their own gains: to bully the little guy or shake their fists at the Council of Nine. Their existence threatens to reshape the Jianghu, as more and more they are regarded as a society that operates in-between good and evil.

These secret societies, vigilante groups, and organized crime syndicates all form a mishmash of ne'er do wells and scoundrels, saints and monsters, conspirators and crime fighters. The largest organizations claiming Jianghu membership are:

The Red Stars

"Dai Byong was real! Her descendant still exists. The rightful ruler of Kausao, the King in Waiting, is ready to take back his kingdom. His rule will bring the wisdom of heaven to the city. Justice and fairness are his watchwords. Rise up, true sons of Kausao! Rise up and strike down these oppressors who claim to own the city. Bring the King in Waiting his throne. Bring peace and justice to the city!"

Named after the supposed god of the original peoples of the Kausao region, these freedom fighters follow the Heir to the Forgotten Throne. He claims to be the last in the royal line dating back to before Kausao City was founded. He calls his followers to drive out these outsiders, after which he will reign with justice and compassion. A great many martial artists and disaffected youth have joined his cause.

Portrayal: Serve The One True King
Need: Converts
Secret: The Mad Rantings of a Lunatic

Heir to the Forgotten Throne

The Heir started out as your standard con artist. He had a crew, he scammed, grifted, and conned his way through the middle class and the rich. Years ago, while planning the next scam, his crew was hit, and hit hard, by the city guard. He returned to find them hanging from a bridge near their hideout. Something snapped in him that night. He now believes the stories he tells, stories of an ancient kingdom, of lineage and justice and peace. He is quite mad, but that has not removed his powerful personality and ability to sway people to his way of thinking.

Portrayal: The King in Waiting
Need: Claim the Throne of Kausao
Secret: Mad as a Jackal-Hare

The Will of the People

"Become the new man. Stand for the people, with the people. It is the will of the people alone that grants power. Those on high seek to repress the truth of things. Come citizen. Stand for science. Stand for the future. Stand for the people."

A faction that does not care who is in charge so long as the people are cared for. René Deuchampe speaks the truth. The books of Piotre Ivanoff and Xiu Hoshi are the path to freedom. Freedom from the rule of false kings and money men.

Portrayal: Of the People, For the People
Need: People are a Means to an End
Secret: Seeks a Regime Change, Not Freedom

René Deuchampe

When Aerum conquered Gahul, only one member of the royal family escaped. René was away at university and thus survived the short and brutal war. When he received the news, he dove deeper into his studies. He became convinced that the aristocracy was the cause of all problems. Every remove from the will of the people is a contamination of pure government. He seeks to bring the will of the people to the forefront and gain control of the governance of the world.

Portrayal: Effete Scholar of the People
Need: Someone He Can Trust
Secret: Deposed Royalty on the Run

Commissioner Naser's distaste for the cup of tea he was drinking was visible on his face. It was inferior to the coffee sold in the Naramel quarter in so many ways: it was quite bland, without the robust taste of coffee, and it lacked the kick one needed to really get moving. He was about to take another disgusting sample of the beverage when one of his detectives burst into the room.

"Sir, there's been another insurgency attack, and we've had a break in the case."

The commissioner gratefully set down the cup of tea. "Show me," he said, leading the detective to a wall in the office where a colossal map of Kausao City hung. It had numerous pins, some with strings connecting them, tacked onto it.

The detective referred to a piece of parchment he was holding, then placed a new pin over an area near Refinery Row. "A powdery, sir."

"That's the third one this week," the commissioner said, exasperated.

"Yes, sir. We believe we've found a connection. Each powdery specialized in a particular color of jade, and all three were primary suppliers to the city watch."

The commissioner rubbed his chin as he considered the map carefully. "They can't attack us directly, so they'll make it more difficult for us to operate by attacking our supply chain. But that's not a sustainable strategy. There's no endgame."

Almost unconsciously, he picked up his cup of tea. "What are they playing at?" He took a sip and immediately spit it back out, remembering that it wasn't coffee. He was about to curse before his meeting was interrupted by a presence at the door.

"I believe I can help you with that, commissioner," the Kaiyumi man in the doorway said.

Once again the commissioner happily set down his cup of tea. "Mr. Harada," he said in greeting. "Good of you to come. Please," the commissioner motioned to a chair in front of his desk. He nodded to the detective, who nodded and left immediately.

"I heard of the attack this morning. I believe my...organization, can help," Harada said as he took his seat.

The commissioner wore a smile for the first time all day. "I certainly hope so. I like what we discussed regarding placing shadow agents in the Jianghu. I assume you have a few agents in mind."

"That I do, commissioner. That I do."

Being the Gamemaster

What Does A GM Do?

The GM has many responsibilities, such as presenting the conflict to the players, controlling NPCs and helping everyone apply the rules to the situation in the game.

Let's talk about the GM's jobs.

Build Campaigns

A campaign is a series of games you play with the same characters, where the story builds on what happened in earlier sessions. All the players should collaborate with the GM to plan how the campaign will work. Usually this is a conversation among all of you to decide what sort of heroes you want to play and what sorts of bad guys you'll have. Talk about how serious you want the game to be and how long you want it to last.

Campaigns are run through a series of scenarios.

- Smugglers of ancient jade artifacts trying desperately to evade the city watch and turn a profit.
- Jade-equipped citizens standing up for themselves against the triads who exploit them and the government who oppresses them.
- Merchants and miners making a go at big business, and dealing with all the underhandedness and corruption that comes with it.

Build Scenarios and Run Game Sessions

A scenario is one short story arc, the sort of thing you might see wrapped up on one or two episodes of a television show, even if it's a smaller part of a bigger story. Usually you can wrap up a scenario in one to three game sessions, assuming you play for three or four hours at a time. But what is a scenario, and how do you build one?

Scenarios

A scenario needs two things: A goal that the PCs can't ignore, and a threat that prevents the PCs from reaching that goal.

Goals

What is it the PCs want? You also need to consider how you will make it inevitable that they will work towards achieving their goal. You have to give them a reason to care, a reason to act.

Your scenario's goal is written as an aspect, invocable and compellable as any other. This can be the title of the scenario, but it doesn't have to be. It represents what the PCs are trying to accomplish during this story.

- Earn the Trust of the Triad Leader
- Learn Why the Four Winds Trading Company is Making Stops in the Xibu Bati mountains
- Hide the Escaped Prisoner from the City Watch
- Defeat Fa Meng in a Public Duel
- Kill the Corrupt Official

Threat

To keep tension throughout the scenario, you need a bad guy with a goal or some other kind of impending disaster. This should represent the danger or death that's constantly hanging over the players (if there's no danger, there is no tension, which equates to a boring game). The threat keeps the PCs on point by leading them on if they ignore the goal, or by constantly harassing them until they achieve the goal. It's a tool to both control pacing and increase the tension of a scene.

The goal to Kill the Corrupt Official might have Protected by the City Guard as a threat aspect, representing the dangers of the job and the obstacle in the PC's path. Similarly, a scenario with the goal to Protect the District from the Triads could have Wanton Violence as a threat, describing the various elements that can be compelled against the players, like the triads attacking or even an increased presence of the city watch in the district, with the promise of martial law in the near future, to get the players moving.

Compelling your threat aspect is the easiest way to keep the fate points flowing across your table. If the compel would affect only one PC, give that player a fate point. If it would affect the entire group, everyone gets a fate point.

Do The PCs *Have* To Obtain Their Goal?

Once you know the goal, decide whether or not they'll achieve it—"maybe" is a sufficient answer here, relying on the PCs to determine success or failure on their own. If you know you want the next scenario to hinge on what happens on this one, you may have a solid answer to this question already. If you don't, or if it doesn't matter, let the players decide through their actions and the luck of the dice.

111

Goals and Threats: The Major Obstacle

The PCs want the goal, the GM's job is to prolong their obtaining of it in a way that is tension-filled and fun by having a good, meaningful threat. This shouldn't be an afterthought. What gets in the players' way should be as important as what they are hoping to achieve. After all, a great villain a good movie makes.

Your threat aspect has to be something overhanging and dangerous, something that the PCs don't ever want to happen, something they care about. That's the design intention: get *this* (goal), or *this* (threat) will happen. Another way to use the threat is to make it a major obstacle.

What if the goal is to Save the Kaiyumi Princess from the Evil Councilor? Usually, the threat would be something like The Princess Will Die, but isn't that already inherent in the goal? You have to save the princess, so of course something bad is going to happen to her. For that goal, a threat that represents danger overhanging isn't increasing tension, it's reiterating it. What if, instead, the threat represented the biggest thing that got in the PCs way? It could be the Evil Councilor is a Master of the Harmonious Jade Style, or his biggest henchmen, Bok Pai, Zealous Servant of the Nine that shows up at every turn to thwart the PCs.

If the threat of imminent death doesn't add anything to the story, doesn't ramp up tension, then use the biggest obstacle instead.

Running Game Sessions

During a game session, the GM needs to perform the following tasks:

✚ **Run scenes**: Decide where each scene begins, who's there and what's going on. Decide when all the interesting things have played out and the scene's over.

✚ **Adjudicate the rules**: When some question comes up about how to apply the rules, you get the final say.

✚ **Challenge the players**: When a player wants to perform a task that has interesting results if they fail, you provide the opposition.

✚ **Play the NPCs**: Each player controls their own character, but you control all the rest, including the bad guys.

✚ **Keep things moving**: If the players don't know what to do next, it's your job to give them a nudge. Never let things get too bogged down in indecision or because they don't have enough information—do something to shake things up.

✚ **Make sure everyone has a chance to be awesome**: Your goal isn't to defeat the players, but to challenge them. Make sure every PC gets a chance to be the star once in a while, from the big bad gunslinger to the little sneaky ninja.

Setting Difficulty Levels

When another character is opposing a PC, their rolls provide the opposition in a conflict, contest, or challenge. But if there's no active opposition, you have to decide how hard the task is.

Low difficulties are best when you want to give the PCs a chance to show off and be awesome. **Difficulties near their profession ratings** are best when you want to provide tension but not overwhelm them. **High difficulties** are best when you want to emphasize how dire or unusual the circumstances are and make them pull out all the stops.

Rules of Thumb:

✚ If the task isn't tough at all, give it a Mediocre (+0)—or just tell the player they succeed without a roll.

✚ If you can think of at least one reason why the task is tough, pick Fair (+2).

✚ If the task is extremely difficult, pick Great (+4).

✚ If the task is impossibly difficult, go as high as you think makes sense. The PC will need to drop some fate points and get lots of help to succeed, but that's fine.

Running Scenes

A scene is a unit of game time lasting anywhere from a few minutes to a half hour or more, during which time the players try to achieve a goal or otherwise accomplish something significant. Taken together, the collection of scenes you play through make up a whole session of play, and by extension, also make up your scenarios and campaigns.

Optional Rule: Profession-Related Difficulties

Engineer is the profession responsible for manipulating the inner workings of an airship, but sometimes Exploration could be justified to do the same by making adjustments to instrumentation used to fly the ship. The GM may wish to adjust the difficulty up or down by 1 or 2 depending on whether you're using the most appropriate profession for a particular task. This makes things a bit more complex, but for some groups the versatility (and niche protection) is worth it.

Scenes are the foundational unit of game time. As the GM, one of your most important jobs is to manage the starting and ending of scenes. Open a scene with something interesting, preferably some action. Like any good movie, don't show every single element of a journey, just say how they transitioned from the end of one scene to the beginning of the next. The players will usually tell you how they get there anyway.

A scene is finished when the scene's purpose has wrapped up, when the interesting action concludes. Once that has happened, move on immediately. If you let the end of a scene drag on, so will your game, and the players will get bored.

Creating Scenes on the Fly: Scene Fractals

While it's always best to have the primary source of opposition prewritten and ready to go for your game sessions, sometimes your players will surprise you and go off on a tangent, follow some small lead, or even turn a scene you thought would be inconsequential into a big deal. It's easy to get intimidated when this happens. Relax, and remember the bronze rule of *Fate*: **in *Fate*, you can treat anything in the game world like it's a character.** Scenes are no different.

If you need a quick and dirty fight, an active marketplace, or an airship chase, create it like so:

➕ Give the scene a difficulty (if the resistance is passive) or a competence rating (if the resistance is active, see Creating the Opposition, next). Add an application or two of the Harmful feature if there is anything dangerous in the scene (see *Chapter 3: Assets* for more about the Harmful feature).

➕ Create one or two aspects to describe the location, and one or two to describe the obstacles present in the scene.

➕ Finally, give the scene a stress track (a number of boxes equal to the number of players present in the scene is a good rule of thumb). Add an application or two of the Protective feature if there is anything in the scene that is particularly resilient to physical attacks, such as city guardsmen wearing armor.

Any attack actions the players make against the opposition in the scene is resisted by the scene's difficulty or the competence rating (depending on whether the resistance is passive or active), and stress dealt is applied to the scene's stress track. Once the scene is taken out (has no more stress to absorb incoming damage), give the PCs free rein to describe the outcome, just as though they'd defeated a major villain.

Creating the Opposition

One of your most important jobs as a GM is creating NPCs and environmental hazards to oppose the PCs and try to keep them from their goals throughout the scenario. The real story comes from what the PCs do when worthy adversaries and impossible obstacles stand between them and their objective—how far they're willing to go, what price they're willing to pay, and how they will change as a result of the experience.

As a GM, try to shoot for a balancing act with the opposing NPCs—you want to create tension and uncertainty, but you don't want the player's defeat to feel like a foregone conclusion. You want them to work for it, but you don't want them to lose hope.

Take Only What You Need to Survive

First of all, keep in mind that you're never obligated to give any NPC a full sheet like the ones the PCs have. Most of the time, you're not going to need to know that much information, because the NPCs aren't going to be the center of attention like the PCs are. It's better to focus on writing down exactly what you need for that NPC's encounter with the PCs, and then fill in the blanks on the fly if that NPC ends up becoming more important in the campaign.

Types of NPCs

There are two types of NPCs: **faces**, characters that the PCs interact with and that populate the various districts of Kausao City, and **villains**, the major opposition against the PCs efforts.

Face

These NPCs are important to the story somehow. They may be shop owners the PCs will purchase goods from in the market, city watch officials they need to bargain with for their friend's freedom, resistance leaders whom the PCs work with, or a contact the they can hit up for information. Whenever the PCs enter a new city district, or whenever an NPC becomes important enough to give them a name, ask the players to help create three aspects for them:

- **Portrayal**: how the NPC is depicted in the narrative.
- **Need**: what does the NPC need. This can be anything they're desperate for, and a golden opportunity for the PCs to get on the face's good side.
- **Secret**: everyone's got one. What's theirs? This can be just as useful as the need aspect when PCs need to get their way.

If a face will be rolling against the PCs in some fashion, give them a competence rating (or the appropriate professions), or build them as a villain

Needs, Secrets, and Player Knowledge

The option of hiding a face's need and secret from the PCs is always on the table, and they can perform actions to discover those aspects, but stating it upfront (or allowing the players to create it for you) opens up immediate possibilities for the PCs to act, which has the advantage of moving the game forward. Anytime you can avoid confusion at the table, you should.

Common Faces

These faces have their portrayal aspect, as well an example of an appropriate need or secret. When your players run into an NPC that is suddenly important enough to speak to, ask them to give him a name and what the situation suggests those aspects should be. What does this person need? What secrets are they keeping?

If you already have an idea what you want one of those aspects to be, fill them in yourself. You can even leave them blank and have the players create them through play as they interact with the individual.

Beggar

While the majority of Kausao City's citizenry are working-class individuals, the poor and homeless are easily the largest minority group in the city. They can be encountered on most streets and found sleeping in virtually every alley, especially in less affluent districts.

Portrayal: Homeless Beggar
Example Need: Shelter for the Evening
Example Secret: Spending Charity on Grog

Working Class Citizen

The working-class citizen represents a vast majority of people that populate Kausao City, from miners to farmers, and merchants to sailors. This is the average sort of person a Jianghu hero would save from a mugging or ill-tempered city guardsman.

Portrayal: Common Day Laborer
Example Need: Stay Out of Trouble
Example Secret: A Hundred Lifetimes of Debt

Middle Class Citizen

These citizens make up an ever-shrinking class of middlemen. They manage the working-class on farms, ships, deep in the mines, or in the storefronts at the market. Hated by working-class for their superiority, and looked down upon by the upper-class for their inferiority, the middle-class don't fit in anywhere.

Portrayal: Competent Supervisor
Example Need: Gotta Get That Promotion
Example Secret: Just Wants to Be Liked

Upper Class Citizen

The upper-class are CEOs of vast corporations, members of wealthy families, foreign dignitaries and the like; members of the aristocracy. They live in lavish condominiums high above the dirty city streets or on hilltop manors. Some districts in the city cater solely to the rich, and many citizens dream of one day moving there.

Portrayal: Wealthy Aristocrat
Example Need: An Edge Over the Competition
Example Secret: Network of Spies and Assassins

City Official

Serving as middlemen in the government, officials rule over one or more city districts, command divisions of city guard or watchmen, and otherwise run the day-to-day affairs of the city.

Portrayal: Official Magistrate
Example Need: Information on Jianghu Activity
Example Secret: Triad in My Pocket

Engineer

Working with Jadetech is a skilled endeavor, placing most engineers squarely in the middle-class by default, though there are those who are exploited by corporations and forced to work for much less, just as there are those who have done quite a bit better for themselves, owning engineering facilities all their own.

Portrayal: Jadetechnician
Example Need: Raw Materials
Example Secret: The Good Stuff's In The Back

Healer

Friends of the lower classes, healers work in apothecaries throughout the city, treating the sick and sheltering the poor. While some healers are more or less owned by big business, like the Dayuu Corporation, the vast majority want nothing more than to help those in need.

Portrayal: Medicine Man
Example Need: Expensive Jade Concoctions
Example Secret: Supporter of the Jianghu

117

Villains

When you make a villain, you can stat them out exactly like the PCs, with professions, aspects, assets, stress, and consequences. You should do this for important and recurring villains who are intended to give the PCs some real difficulties, but you shouldn't need more than one or two of these in a scenario.

Harada

Few know of Mr. Harada's connections to the governor, or of the Shadow Watch, a small subdivision of the city watch that acted as the eyes and ears of the governor throughout the city. Even the city watch doesn't know that the Shadow Watch existed. After the Shadow Watch was infiltrated by the Jianghu, the governor grew paranoid and disbanded the organization. Mr. Harada was tasked with executing all of the Shadow Watch's former members, after which he was released from service. But for him, the war with the Jianghu wasn't over. He established the Jingdei Wei investigation service to find a way to finally put the rebels down.

Mr. Harada

Portrayal: Mysterious Leader of the Jingdei Wei
Background: Commander of the Shadow Watch
Inciting Incident: Disbanded the Shadow Watch, Personally
Belief: Sacrifice is Necessary for Victory
Trouble: Few Friends, Many Enemies

Professions
Aristocrat: Fair (+2)
Engineer: Mediocre (+0)
Explorer: Average (+1)
Fighter: Average (+1)
Scholar: Fair (+2)
Scoundrel: Good (+3)

Assets
Ear of the Governor *Type:* Technique; *Features:* Exceptional (When you create an aspect related to a favor you've been given, you can invoke it for a +3 bonus instead of +2); *Flaws:* Limited (Once per session)
Vast Information Network *Type:* Technique; *Features:* Focus (Scholar +1); *Flaws:* Situational (Only when creating advantages related to knowledge of Jianghu operations)

Stress ☐1 ☐2 ☐3
Consequences
Mild (2):
Moderate (4):
Severe (6):

Captain Li

Mai Li has been an oddity all her life. Of Túyangan decent, she was always out of place in Aerum, where she grew up after her parents moved there to teach at a university on Kinardbal. When she came of age, Mai joined the Aerish flotilla against her father's wishes. She moved through the ranks quickly, saw the world, but never felt truly at home until she visited Kausao City for the first time. The city at the "center of the world" entranced her. She immediately put in for a transfer, and within a year she was a captain of the city guard.

Captain Li

Portrayal: Captain of the Guard
Background: Grew Up On Kinardbal
Inciting Incident: I've Fought All Over the World
Belief: Loyalty Is a Fleeting Thing
Trouble: Selfish Ambition

Professions

Aristocrat: Fair (+2)
Engineer: Average (+1)
Explorer: Fair (+2)
Fighter: Good (+3)
Scholar: Average (+1)
Scoundrel: Mediocre (+0)

Assets

Captain's Armor *Type*: Device; *Function Aspect*: Upgraded Guardsmen's Armor; *Features*: Protective 1, Sturdy 2; *Flaws*: Troubling (Recognizable as a Member of the Guard)

Jiarai Counter-Striking *Type*: Technique; *Features*: Exceptional (On a successful defense, deal shifts of damage equal to your margin of success); *Flaws*: Limited (Once per scene), Situational (Only when wielding a bladed weapon)

Captain's Jian and Clockwork Pistol *Type*: Device; *Function Aspect*: Upgraded Guardsmen's Weapons; *Features*: Harmful 3, Numerous (one sword, one pistol—same mechanical stats); *Flaws*: Demanding (Requires a round to switch from ranged to melee weapons)

Stress ☐1 ☐2 ☐3

Asset Stress (Armor) ☐1 ☐2

Consequences

Mild (2):

Moderate (4):

Severe (6):

Mooks: Other villains are mooks–unnamed thugs or goons that are there to make the PCs' day a little more difficult, but they're designed to be more or less easily swept aside, especially by powerful PCs.

Here's how you create their stats:

➕ Give the mook a competence rating: Average (+1) for rank-and-file order-takers, or Fair (+2) for trained professionals. They roll their competence rating whenever they perform an action.

➕ Give the mook an aspect or two to reinforce what they're good and bad at, or if they have a particular strength or vulnerability. You can also give them a need and secret, just like a face.

➕ Mooks have zero, one, or two boxes in their stress track, depending on how tough you imagine them to be.

➕ Mooks can't take consequences. If they run out of stress boxes (or don't have any), the next hit takes them down.

➕ Give them any device or technique assets they might possess. Mooks don't have ally assets. If you want to give them allies, make more mooks.

Groups of Mooks: If you have a lot of low-level villains facing the PCs, you can make your job easier by treating them as a group–or maybe a few groups. Instead of tracking a dozen bad guys, you track three groups of four bad guys each. Each of these groups acts like a single character and has a set of stats just like a single mook would:

➕ Give them a competence rating.
➕ Give them an aspect or two.
➕ Give them an extra stress box for every two individuals in the group.

As long as a group of mooks have one or more unchecked bonus stress boxes (meaning they still have multiple individuals that haven't been taken out), give them a +1 teamwork bonus to their competence rating.

Common Mooks

These are the most common mooks that a Jianghu hero would encounter. If you need to represent a group of them, simply give them an additional stress box for every two individuals in the group and note the +1 teamwork bonus they get while they still have bonus stress boxes.

Portrayal: Vigilant City Guardsmen
Need: To Uphold the Law
Example Secret: If the Governor Finds Out About That Bribe…
Competence Bonus: Average (+1); +1 Teamwork when 2 or more stress boxes are unchecked
Assets: Armor *Type:* Device; *Function Aspect:* Guardsmen's Armor; *Features:* Protective 1; *Flaws:* Troubling (Recognizable as a City Guardsmen)
Jian and Clockwork Pistol *Type:* Device; *Function Aspect:* Guardsmen's Weapons; *Features:* Harmful 1, Numerous (one sword, one pistol—same stats); *Flaws:* Demanding (Requires a round to switch from ranged to melee weapons)
Stress:
[1] [2] (for teams of two) or
[1] [2] [3] (for teams of five)

City Guard

The enforcement arm of the law. Guardsmen swear fealty to the governor and his magistrates when they are commissioned, and receive physical jade enhancements to make them stronger and faster. They usually patrol in teams of two, or squads of five or more.

City Watch

Investigators working for the Ministers of Justice, watchmen swear fealty to the governor in the same manner as guardsmen do. Watchmen are chosen for their intuitive abilities and are given a white jade tattoo over one of their eyes, enhancing their powers of perception.

Portrayal: Observant City Watchman
Need: To Discover the Truth
Example Secret: I Know the Secret Entrance to Mythus Isle
Competence Bonus: Fair (+2)
Assets: Jade Gauntlets; *Type:* Device; *Function Aspect:* Black Jade Shock-Knucklers; *Features:* Focus (Gain a +1 bonus to create advantages); *Flaws:* Situational (only when creating Shock or Stunned-type advantages)
Stress: [1] [2]

Thug

Run-of-the-mill street gangers. Thugs are the typical muggers, second-story men, smugglers, and other ne'er do wells. They extort the population in hopes of impressing their leaders and getting a better position within the gang.

Portrayal: Street Thug
Example Need: Make An Impression
Example Secret: Skimming the Take
Competence Bonus: Average (+1)

Crime Lord

Smalltime CEOs in their own right, crime lords run the streets of Kausao City, exploiting the poor and robbing from the destitute. They usually have a complicated hierarchy of thugs in their organization.

Portrayal: Untouchable Crime Lord
Example Need: Good Help is Hard to Find
Example Secret: Paying Off a Specific Magistrate
Competence Bonus: Fair (+2)
Assets: Clockwork Firearm; *Type:* Device; *Function Aspect:* Red Jade Six-Shooter; *Features:* Harmful 2; *Flaws:* Demanding (One action to reload after a lot of shooting).
Stress: [1]

Environmental Hazards

Not every participant in a conflict is another PC or NPC. Plenty of things without self-awareness can potentially threaten PCs or keep them from their goals, whether it's a natural disaster or a mechanical trap.

So, what do you do when the PCs go up against something that isn't a character? Simple: treat it as a character.

➕ Is the hazard something that can harm a PC? Give it a competence rating and let it make attacks just like a mook.

➕ Is it more of a distraction or harassment than a direct threat? Let it create aspects.

And in return, let the PCs use their professions against the hazard just like they would an opponent. A complicated locking mechanism might be vulnerable to sabotage "attacks" from a PC's Engineer profession, or they might escape a trap by winning an Exploration contest. If it makes sense for the hazard in question to take a good deal of effort to surpass, give it as stress track and let it take a mild consequence or two. In other words, stick with whatever makes narrative sense—if a fire is too big for a PC to put out, the scene should focus on avoidance or escape, and work like a challenge or contest.

District Creation

You may have noticed that the map of Kausao City isn't incredibly detailed as to the position of most things. This is on purpose. Things will change from table to table and game to game. A city district could be destroyed, rebuilt and renamed. In short: your scenario is more important than a predetermined, ultra-detailed map of the setting.

Another thing to consider is time spent bookkeeping. Your street level scenarios (or maybe your entire campaign) will likely fall within the same district, or you might have a city-spanning scenario that takes your players through a different district from scene to scene. Either way, when your players drive the story into a new district, even momentarily, you want to give it flavor, make it interesting, and not bog down your play time looking up details in a book.

District Aspects

When the players enter a district, ask them for a description of the location. What's important about it? If they describe something about the layout, environment, tone, inherent danger, organizations, etc., then write that down as a **description aspect**. These are aspects that can be invoked or compelled while in that district. If they described one or more organizations, after writing down the descriptive aspect to represent it, ask them who represents that organization in the district and write them up as faces (see *Creating the Opposition*, previous). Do this for any individual NPCs (not attached to organizations) that they mention as well.

Using the Map

When your players enter a new district (including the district you begin play in) ask them to choose where on the map this district is—if you have the *Jadepunk* play mat, just mark an X or a small circle in the location. If you have a predetermined location for the district, just tell the players where that is and mark it off.

Districts vary in size, and Kausao City is a big place. If you use big shapes to denote the size and location of any district, you'll quickly run out of space and eventually have to overlap one district on another, or reuse the same ones over and over. If you want to have a definitive district map for your version of Kausao City, then that's the way to go. The default, however, is to keep it loose. Mark where this district is, maybe make a notation in a log somewhere about it in case you want to return there, and then carry on. When they leave, erase the mark. This helps keep Kausao City feel mysteriously large, and keeps open an infinite number of possible districts for you to use.

Environmental Aspects

Fighting a cabal of ninja on a flat, open surface sounds fun, but fighting those same ninja in Fog So Thick You Can't See the Trees is interesting, and doing so in a Pitch Dark Room is absolutely terrifying.

It's an old trick to ramp up tension in a scene by adding some dangerous element. And hey, why not? When you introduce a scene, any scene, pick something in the environment and make it important, not just interesting. Make it matter to the action. If the PCs are negotiating over a purchase, have a bodyguard of the merchant stand nearby, ready to throw anyone out of the room for raising their voices. If they are running from the city guard on rooftops, note the Precarious Surface.

Ramp up the tension by pointing out what's interesting *around* the PCs, not just the dangers they face.

JADEPUNK
tales from Kausao City

Name: Taia Kwan

Story:

When Taia was a young girl she witnessed a martial arts duel. Inspired by what she saw, she has dedicated her life to the mastery of the martial arts, illegal or not. The governor be damned.

Aspects

Portrayal:

Youthful Martial Arts Master

Background:

I Grew Up on the Streets of Kausao City

Inciting Incident:

Witnessed a Martial Arts Duel

Belief:

I Have Sacrificed Too Much to Stop Now

Trouble:

Never Able to Cut Loose

Professions

1(+3) 2(+2) 2(+1) 1(+0)

Aristocrat: 0

Engineer: +1

Explorer: +2

Fighter: +3

Scholar: +1

Scoundrel: +2

Refresh: 3

Fate Points:

Stress:

Bonus stress from Assets:

O O

Consequences

Mild (2)

Moderate (4)

Severe (6)

Asset Consequence

Name: Jade Tattoo (Device)
Aspect: Green Jade Tattoo of Protection

Refresh Cost: 2

Features:

Flaws:

Protective 1, Sturdy 2

Troubling (Easily Identifiable)

Name: Jian Longsword (Device)
Aspect: My Mentor's Sword

Refresh Cost: 1

Features:

Flaws:

Harmful 2

Troubling (It?s Illegal to Own a Guardsman's Blade)

Name: Jiarai Mastery (Technique)
Aspect: Youthful Martial Arts Master

Refresh Cost: 1

Features:

Flaws:

Focus (Fighter +2)

Situational (Only when wielding a jian longsword)

Name:
Aspect:
Features:

Refresh Cost:

Flaws:

Stress:

Name:
Aspect:
Features:

Refresh Cost:

Flaws:

Stress:

JADEPUNK™
tales from Kausao City

Name: Gerard Cutting

Story:

A fresh-off-the-boat Aerish gunslinger, Gerard apprenticed as a Jadetech engineer back in his homeland. He joined the Jianghu when he witnessed a Watchman kill a man in cold blood.

Aspects

Portrayal:

Jadetech Gunslinger

Background:

Apprenticed on Kinardbal

Inciting Incident:

Watchmen Kill in Cold Blood

Belief:

Respect is a Two-Way Street

Trouble:

Fresh Off the Boat

Professions

1(+3) 2(+2) 2(+1) 1(+0)

Aristocrat: +1

Engineer: +3

Explorer: +2

Fighter: +1

Scholar: +2

Scoundrel: 0

Refresh: 3

Fate Points:

Stress:

Bonus stress from Assets:

Consequences

Mild (2)

Moderate (4)

Severe (6)

Asset Consequence

Name: Clockwork Firearm (Device)
Aspect: Red Jade Revolver   **Refresh Cost:** 2

Features: **Flaws:**

Harmful 3, Numerous (2 revolvers)   Demanding (requires an action to reload after a lot of shooting)

Name: Crackshot (Technique)
Aspect: Jadetech Gunslinger   **Refresh Cost:** 1

Features: **Flaws:**

Focus (Fighter +2)   Situational (only with a clockwork firearm)

Name: Jadetech Inventor (Technique)
Aspect: Apprenticed on Kinardbal   **Refresh Cost:** 1

Features: **Flaws:**

Focus (Engineer +2)   Situational (Only when creating temporary Device assets)

Name:
Aspect: **Refresh Cost:**
Features: **Flaws:**

Stress:

Name:
Aspect: **Refresh Cost:**
Features: **Flaws:**

Stress:

JADEPUNK™
tales from Kausao City

Name: Jaron Reis

Story:
Jaron murdered a man to get his position on the Council, giving him a bad reputation and a lot of guilt. He has since joined the Jianghu, and uses his resources and power to assist them.

Aspects

Portrayal:
Councilor of the Jianghu

Background:
Naramel Representative on the Council of Nine

Inciting Incident:
Committed Murder in the Name of the Council

Belief:
No One Should Have Absolute Power

Trouble:
Secretly in Debt

Professions

1(+3) 2(+2) 2(+1) 1(+0)

Aristocrat: +3

Engineer: +1

Explorer: +1

Fighter: 0

Scholar: +2

Scoundrel: +2

Refresh: 4

Fate Points:

Stress:

Bonus stress from Assets:

Consequences

Mild (2)

Moderate (4)

Severe (6)

Asset Consequence

Name: Airship (Device)

Aspect: White Jade Airship

Refresh Cost: 1

Features:
Aspect (Jianghu Crew), Exceptional (instantly leave or appear in a scene, as long as there's a way in or out)

Flaws:
Consuming, Demanding (requires a Fair [+2] Explorer roll to get the ship underway)

Name: Councilor's Perks (Technique)

Aspect: Naramel Representative on the Council of Nine

Refresh Cost: 1

Features:
Flexible (roll Aristocrat instead of Engineer)

Flaws:
Situational (only when creating temporary Device assets)

Name: Ear to the Ground (Technique)

Aspect: Councilor of the Jianghu

Refresh Cost: 1

Features:
Focus (Aristocrat +2)

Flaws:
Situational (only when using your network to find information)

Name:

Aspect:

Refresh Cost:

Features:

Flaws:

Stress:

Name:

Aspect:

Refresh Cost:

Features:

Flaws:

Stress:

JADEPUNK
tales from Kausao City

Name:

Story:

Aspects

Portrayal:

Background:

Inciting Incident:

Belief:

Trouble:

Professions

1(+3) 2(+2) 2(+1) 1(+0)

Aristocrat:

Engineer:

Explorer:

Fighter:

Scholar:

Scoundrel:

Refresh:

Fate Points:

Stress:

Bonus stress from Assets:

Consequences

Mild (2)

Moderate (4)

Severe (6)

Asset Consequence

Name:
Aspect: Refresh Cost:

Features: Flaws:

Stress:

Name:
Aspect: Refresh Cost:

Features: Flaws:

Stress:

Name:
Aspect: Refresh Cost:

Features: Flaws:

Stress:

Name:
Aspect: Refresh Cost:
Features: Flaws:

Stress:

Name:
Aspect: Refresh Cost:
Features: Flaws:

Stress:

Index

Special Thanks

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Kickstarter Backers

Backers at the Engineer tier and above got to select any title they wanted to be listed under, so these are not indicative of how high anyone listed backed the Jadepunk Kickstarter for (and we're grateful for everyone who backed). The full list of backers are listed at *jadepunk.com*.

Initiates

Matthew "Tsuma" Orwig

Tinkerers

Alex Hunter, Robin Lees, Dominic Lund, Yargo Platz, Jeremy Puckett

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Aristocrats

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Ruled by the Council of Nine, Kausao City sits on the world's largest deposit of mystic jade. Its people oppressively slave away in the mines surrounding the city, barely scraping together the most meager of lives. You are the Jianghu—a loose society of likeminded, yet quarrelsome, individuals and organizations. Using powerful Jadetech devices and martial arts techniques, you stand against oppression and injustice. Though you are few, the Council fears you, for you have the most powerful weapon in the city—the hearts and minds of the people. Unite them, and they will fight with you.

Jadepunk is a Fate Core roleplaying game about rebellious wuxia heroes in a fictional steampunk setting.

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