

Fate's Edge Quickstart Guide

A World of Consequences

1 Welcome to Fate's Edge

Fate's Edge is a narrative-first tabletop RPG where every action carries weight, every choice has consequence, and every spell risks backlash. This quickstart guide will get you playing quickly with the core rules.

2 Core Resolution

2.1 The Dice Pool

To attempt anything significant:

1. Roll dice equal to **Attribute + Skill**
2. Each die that shows **6 or higher** = 1 Success
3. Each die that shows **1** = 1 Complication Point (CP)

2.2 Attributes (1-5)

- **Body:** Strength, endurance, physical action
- **Wits:** Perception, cleverness, reaction speed
- **Spirit:** Willpower, intuition, resilience
- **Presence:** Charm, command, social force

2.3 Skills (0-5)

- **Melee, Ranged, Athletics**
- **Sway, Deception, Insight**
- **Stealth, Survival, Command**
- **Arcana, Lore, Craft**

2.4 Position States

- **Controlled:** Advantageous position, minor consequences
- **Risky:** Even odds, moderate consequences
- **Desperate:** Disadvantaged, severe consequences

2.5 Difficulty Values

DV	Situation
1	Routine: Clear intent, modest stakes
2	Pressured: Time pressure, mild resistance
3	Hard: Hostile conditions, active opposition
4+	Extreme: Multiple constraints, high precision

2.6 Outcome Matrix

Result	What Happens
Successes DV, 0 CP	Clean Success: Intent achieved crisply
Successes DV, 1+ CP	Success & Cost: Intent + GM spends CP
0 ; Successes ; DV	Partial: Progress with fork
Successes = 0	Miss: No progress, GM spends CP

Complication Points (CP)

CP are narrative fuel the GM spends to add twists:

- **1 CP:** Noise, trace, +1 Supply segment
- **2 CP:** Alarm, lose position, lesser foe
- **3 CP:** Reinforcements, gear breaks, rail tick
- **4+ CP:** Trap springs, authority arrives, scene shifts

3 Description Ladder

How you describe your action affects the roll:

- **Basic:** Roll as-is
- **Detailed:** Re-roll one 1
- **Intricate:** Re-roll all 1s + add one small positive flourish on success

CP Note. Re-rolling 1s does *not* erase their CP; any new 1s on the re-roll add more CP.

4 Fail Forward: Every Roll Matters

When you **MISS** on a *significant action*, you gain **1 Boon**. Boons can be spent immediately for re-rolls, Asset activations, Rites, and other abilities. You can hold up to **5 Boons**.

4.1 Significant Action (Meaningful Failure)

A miss only awards a Boon if **all three** are true:

1. **Procedure followed:** intent and approach declared; DV set; roll resolved.
2. **Stakes stated:** what changes on success; what bites on failure.
3. **Consequence lands now:** the GM spends or banks CP, applies a condition, or advances a thread.

4.2 Boon Limits

- **Scene Limit:** Maximum 2 Boons from failures per character per scene
- **Carryover:** At end of scene, reduce held Boons to maximum 2
- **Holding Cap:** You can hold at most 5 Boons

4.3 Using Boons

- Re-roll one die after seeing the pool
- Activate an Off-Screen Asset (1 Boon)
- Convert 2 Boons → 1 XP (once per session, max 2 XP via conversion per session)

5 Integrated Combat System

5.1 Combat Resolution Procedure

1. **Declare Action:** Player states intent and approach (Attribute + Skill)
2. **Set Position:** GM sets Controlled, Risky, or Desperate based on tactical situation
3. **Roll Dice:** Roll pool = Attribute + Skill
4. **Count Results:** 6+ = Success, 1 = Complication Point (CP)
5. **Apply Outcome:** Use standard Outcome Matrix
6. **Manage Consequences:** GM spends CP or draws from Consequences Deck

5.2 Combat Consequence Types

- **Hearts:** Morale, fear, command/control breakdown
- **Spades:** Physical harm, positioning changes, weapon status
- **Clubs:** Resource depletion, gear damage, fatigue
- **Diamonds:** Environmental hazards, reinforcements, tactical setbacks

5.3 Harm Integration

Harm tracks directly tie to CP economy:

- **Minor (-)**: Generate 1 CP on next 2 rolls
- **Moderate (=)**: Generate 1 CP on next roll, -1 die to relevant actions
- **Severe ()**: Generate 2 CP on next roll, -2 dice to relevant actions
- **Critical (†)**: Generate 3 CP on next roll, out of action until treated

5.4 Tactical Clocks

Persistent combat conditions tracked through clocks:

- **Mob Overwhelm (6)**: Enemy numbers become advantage
- **Fatigue Spiral (4)**: Exhaustion affects performance
- **Morale Collapse (6)**: Fear undermines effectiveness
- **Environmental Collapse (8)**: Terrain/fire/building failure

5.5 Position Dynamics

Position can shift during combat based on CP spending:

- **1 CP**: Shift position one step (GM choice)
- **Player Spending**: 1 CP to improve position one step
- **Narrative Triggers**: Flanking, reinforcement arrival, environmental changes

6 Character Creation

6.1 Starting Points

- **30 XP** to spend
- Start with Attributes 1-3 and Skills 0-2

6.2 XP Costs

- **Attributes**: New rating \times 3 XP
- **Skills**: New level \times 2 XP
- **Followers**: Cap² XP
- **Assets**: Minor (4 XP), Standard (8 XP), Major (12 XP)

Sample Starting Character

Rin the Scout (30 XP)

- Body 2 (6 XP), Wits 3 (9 XP) = 15 XP
- Athletics 2 (2+4=6 XP), Stealth 2 (2+4=6 XP) = 12 XP
- Remaining: 3 XP (could add Survival 1 = 2 XP)

Pool: Body 2 + Athletics 2 = 4d10 for physical actions

7 Followers & Assets

7.1 Followers (On-Screen)

- Allies who assist in scenes
- Cost: Cap² XP
- Assist: Up to +Cap dice (max +3 total)
- Example: Cap 3 Scout adds up to +3 dice to Survival rolls

7.2 Assets (Off-Screen)

- Holdings that solve problems between sessions
- Minor (4 XP): Safehouse, small shop
- Standard (8 XP): Noble title, spy ring
- Major (12 XP): City license, fortress lease

7.3 Asset Activations

Players can activate their Assets through multiple methods:

- **Free Off-Screen Effects:** Use each Asset's listed Off-Screen effect once per session for free
- **XP Activation:** Spend 2 XP to activate an off-screen Asset effect outside your normal session allowance
- **Boon Activation:** Spend 1 Boon to dramatically reshape the current scene through Asset intervention
- **Plausibility Test:** The Asset must have scope and reach for the intended effect

8 Magic

Magic uses the **Casting Loop**:

1. **Channel**: Roll Wits + Arcana to gather Potential (successes) + CP immediately
2. **Weave**: Roll Wits + Art to shape spell with Description benefits
3. **Backlash**: GM spends CP from steps 1+2 for thematic consequences

8.1 Magic Combat Integration

Spellcasting in combat feeds the same consequence economy:

- Channel/Weave Backlash CP applies to tactical situation
- Spells can shift position, create tactical clocks, or generate combat consequences
- Magic consequences cascade through existing combat systems

9 Travel Framework

Draw cards until all suits appear:

- **Spade**: Place/scene
- **Heart**: Actor/faction
- **Club**: Pressure/complication
- **Diamond**: Reward/leverage (no roll needed)

Set travel clock by highest rank:

- 2-5: 4 segments
- 6-10: 6 segments
- J/Q/K: 8 segments
- A: 10 segments

10 Campaign Structure

10.1 Campaign Clocks

- **Mandate (0-6)**: Table's legitimacy/buy-in
- **Crisis (0-6)**: Opposition pressure

10.2 Finale Trigger

- Player-called: Mandate6, Crisis3
- Forced: Crisis6

11 Playing the Game

11.1 At the Table

1. Player describes action and approach
2. GM sets Difficulty Value (DV 1-4+) and Position (Controlled/Risky/Desperate for combat)
3. Player builds dice pool (Attribute + Skill)
4. Player chooses description level
5. Roll dice, count successes and 1s (CP)
6. GM resolves outcome and spends CP

Example Combat Action

Kael engages an enemy swordsman.

- GM sets position: Risky (evenly matched)
- Body 3 + Melee 3 = 6d10
- Intricate action: "I feint high then strike at their exposed flank"
- Rolls: 8, 7, 6, 4, 1, 1 = 3 successes, 2 CP
- Success & Cost: Hits opponent, but GM spends 1 CP for "you lose footing (-1 die next defense)"

11.2 Key Principles

- **Narrative Primacy:** Mechanics serve the story
- **Risk as Drama:** Every roll has potential cost
- **Meaningful Growth:** XP investment creates lasting change
- **Consequence Weight:** Choices ripple outward

12 GM Quick Reference

- Set DV and Position before the roll based on situation
- Count successes vs DV, count 1s as CP
- Resolve outcome from matrix
- Spend CP for complications (use the menu)
- Draw from Deck of Consequences for CP (optional)
- Award XP: 6-10 per session standard pace

- Trigger finale when Mandate/Crisis thresholds met

CP Spend Menu

1 CP: Noise, trace, +1 Supply **2 CP:** Alarm, lose position, lesser foe **3 CP:** Reinforcements, gear breaks, rail tick **4+ CP:** Trap, authority, scene shift

13 Getting Started

1. Each player creates a character with 30 XP
2. GM prepares a starting situation (use travel framework or Deck of Consequences)
3. Play through scenes, award XP
4. Characters grow through Enhance Self, Acquire Assets, Learn Talents
5. Let consequences drive the story forward

Remember: In Fate's Edge, nothing is free. Every victory has a price, and every choice shapes the world.

14 Demonstration

FATE'S EDGE SHOP DEMO "The Broken Bridge" - 45-Minute Quickstart

OVERVIEW

Duration: 45 minutes

Players: 1-6 (3 pre-gen characters)

Theme: Consequences, moral choices, world reactivity

15 SETUP (5 minutes)

Premise

The PCs are traveling merchants who've reached a broken bridge in Acasia. They need to cross to reach the market town of Silkstrand, but the bridge is damaged and a local "tax collector" demands payment.

Pre-Generated Characters

1. **Renn the Scout** - Body 3, Wits 2, Melee 2, Stealth 2
2. **Mira the Trader** - Presence 3, Wits 2, Sway 3, Deception 2
3. **Thane the Guard** - Body 3, Spirit 2, Melee 3, Command 2

GM Preparation

- Standard deck of playing cards
- Tokens for Supply/Fatigue tracking
- Simple map of bridge area
- Character sheets (handout)

16 SCENE 1: THE BROKEN BRIDGE (10 minutes)

Setup

Bridge partially collapsed, rough-looking bandits collect "tolls"

GM Framing

"The ancient stone bridge spans a deep gorge ahead, but the center span has collapsed. Makeshift planks provide a treacherous crossing. Three rough-looking figures in leather armor stand at the near end, crossbows ready."

Key NPCs

- **Garrick "Tax Collector"** - Thug leader (Body 2, Wits 2, Melee 2)
- **Two Bandit Guards** - Basic threats (Body 2, Melee 1)

Player Options

1. **Negotiate/Pay** - Mira tries diplomacy/deception
2. **Sneak Across** - Renn attempts stealth crossing
3. **Fight** - Thane leads direct assault
4. **Find Another Way** - Wits + Survival to locate alternate path

Sample Resolution

- **Sway:** Presence + Sway vs **DV 2** (Garrick wants easy coin)
- **Stealth:** Wits + Stealth vs **DV 3** (dangerous bridge + guards watching)
- **Fight:** Body + Melee vs **DV 2** (bandits are poorly trained)
- **Survival:** Wits + Survival vs **DV 2** (old roadbed still visible)

Complications to Introduce

- Bridge is unstable (**CP: Hazard risk**)
- More bandits hidden (**CP: reinforcements**)
- Local villagers watching (**CP: reputation consequences**)

17 SCENE 2: THE HIDDEN THREAT (10 minutes)

Reveal

The bandits are actually protecting refugees from a recent curse incident in Silkstrand. The "toll" money feeds displaced families.

GM Framing

"As you approach the bridge, you notice makeshift camps in the gorge below - dozens of frightened families. One desperate mother whispers that something terrible happened in Silkstrand - people disappearing, strange echoes..."

New Challenges

- **Moral Dilemma:** Take money from refugees or find another way?
- **Investigation:** Wits + Insight to learn about the curse
- **Social:** Presence + Sway with refugee leader

Quick Curse Element

- Anyone who crosses without acknowledging the refugees experiences "echoes" (minor haunting)
- Players can investigate or ignore

Sample Hooks

- "My son walked the same path yesterday... now he only speaks in riddles"
- "The bridge stones weep at night - we think they remember the old wars"

18 SCENE 3: THE CHOICE (10 minutes)

Climax Options

Players must choose between:

1. **Force Crossing** - Fight bandits, gain supplies but create enemies
2. **Pay Fair Toll** - Support refugees, gain local allies
3. **Investigate Curse** - Risk danger for greater reward/revelation
4. **Find Alternate Route** - Safe but time-consuming

Resolution Matrix

Choice	Outcome	Consequence	
Force	Quick success, Supply +1	Refugee Relations -2	
Pay	Moderate success, Supply -1	Refugee Relations +2	
Investigate	Risky (DV 3), +1 Boon	Curse knowledge	
Alternate	Slow success, Fatigue +1	Safe passage	

Combat Quick-Reference

- **Bandits:** Harm =, generate 1 CP per hit
- **Bridge hazard:** Falling = Harm $\dot{}$
- **Position matters:** Flanking = +1 die, high ground = start Controlled

19 WRAP-UP & PITCH (5 minutes)

Quick Resolution

Whatever choice, players face consequences. Curse element hints at larger world. Refugees remember kindness/betrayal.

Sample Endings

- **Force:** "The refugees curse your name as you leave their suffering behind"
- **Pay:** "The grateful mother presses a small charm into your hand - 'For your mercy'"
- **Investigate:** "You realize this curse is just one of many... someone needs to stop them all"
- **Alternate:** "You cross safely, but wonder about the families left behind"

The Pitch

"What you just experienced was Fate's Edge - a game where every choice matters. That curse? It's part of a region-wide mystery. Those refugees? They're connected to Silkstrand's dark history. And your character's choice? It just changed the fate of everyone in this broken land."

Key Selling Points

- **Fast Resolution:** Actions take seconds, not minutes
- **Meaningful Choices:** Every decision has consequences
- **Living World:** NPCs react to player actions
- **Risk/Reward:** Success always costs something
- **Growth:** Characters become legends through choices

Quick Character Sheet Handout

ATTRIBUTES (1-5)	SKILLS (0-5)
Body - Physical Wits - Mental Spirit - Will Presence - Social	Melee - Weapons Ranged - Missiles Athletics - Movement Survival - Wilderness Stealth - Hiding Sway - Talking Deception - Lying Insight - Perception Command - Leadership

XP Investment Preview

- Next session: Investigate Silkstrand curse deeper
- Future: Gain magical abilities, command armies, reshape nations
- Always: Your choices echo through the world

20 SHOP OWNER TIPS

Why This Works for Demos

1. **Self-Contained:** Complete story in 45 minutes
2. **Scalable:** Works with 1-6 players
3. **Flexible:** Can emphasize combat, social, or mystery elements
4. **Hooked:** Curse element teases larger setting
5. **Memorable:** Moral choice creates emotional investment

What to Highlight

- "Every roll changes the story - not just success/failure"
- "Power always demands a price in Fate's Edge"
- "You're not just playing a character - you're shaping a legend"

Common Questions Answered

- **Complexity?** "Simpler than DD, more meaningful than FATE"
- **Session Length?** "2-3 hours for full sessions, this is the quick version"
- **Setting?** "Medieval fantasy with consequences and mystery"
- **Magic?** "Dangerous, thematic, always risky"

This demo showcases Fate's Edge's core strengths while fitting any shop's time constraints!