Horror Campaigns Expansion

For Fate's Edge Tabletop RPG

Cosmic and Psychological Terror Framework

Designed for Campaigns of Any Length

Complete with Clock Generator System

Featuring Multi-Clock Tension Systems
Boon-Based Sanity Management
Breaking Point Mechanics
Modular Horror Subgenre Templates

Contents

1 Horror Campaigns Expansion Overview

1.1 Core Concept

Horror in Fate's Edge should create vulnerability and mounting dread while maintaining player agency and meaningful action. The unknown is more terrifying than the known.

1.2 Key Innovations

- Boon-based sanity management system
- Multi-layered campaign clocks for escalating tension
- Breaking point mechanics for critical psychological moments
- Atmospheric investigation tools engaging all five senses
- Modular subgenre templates for quick campaign setup

1.3 Target Themes

- Isolation and vulnerability
- Unknown threats beyond comprehension
- Psychological decay and mental deterioration
- Escalating tension throughout campaigns
- Moral ambiguity and difficult choices
- Cosmic insignificance and existential dread

1.4 Mechanical Focus

- Resource management through Boon economy
- Investigative procedures with sanity costs
- Environmental hazards and reality distortions
- Collective psychological effects
- Multi-clock tension building systems

2 Safety and Consent

Horror is as much about trust as fear. Use tools that suit your table; this book assumes some combination of lines-and-veils, X-card, open door, and debrief.

2.1 Session Zero Safety Pass

Before characters exist, the table should:

- List **lines** (no-go content), **veils** (fade-to-black), and **preferences** (desired or avoided motifs).
- Choose a quick signal for **pause** and **rewind** (e.g., *"cut," "hold,"* or a hand sign).

- Decide how to **check in** mid-session (traffic light, stars and wishes, or one-word mood check).

- Name **anchors** for each PC (a person, a place, and an object that stabilize them).

2.2   On-Table Procedures

During play:

- The GM **front-loads content warnings** before potentially graphic scenes.

- Anyone may call for a **tone shift** or **content veil** without explanation.

- After heavy scenes, run a **breather**: water, deep breaths, small talk—then confirm consent to continue.

- Close with a short **debrief**: what worked, what to avoid next time, what to emphasize.

2.3   Hard Stops

If someone says stop, you stop. Take a break, close the session, or pivot scenes. Content is never worth breaking trust.

3   Core Mechanical Framework

3.1   Dread Clock - Sanity as Resource Management

The signature system replaces traditional sanity points with a Boon-based approach where players must spend resources to prevent psychological deterioration.

> Purpose and Integration
>
> This system connects to the existing Boon economy while adding horror-specific tension through the multi-clock system. Players choose when to spend Boons to prevent Dread advancement, creating meaningful decisions about risk versus stability.

Sample Uses:

1. Witnessing a Mist Wraith causes +1 segment advancement - player spends 1 Boon to prevent it

2. Learning cosmic truth about reality triggers +3 segments - player must spend 3 Boons or face severe psychological effects

3. Entity observation advances Dread by 2 segments - party must collectively decide how to manage limited Boon resources

3.2   Resource Management - Boons as Sanity Currency

Acquisition Methods:

- Failing rolls (standard Boon economy)

- Bond-driven actions with intricate descriptions

- GM discretion for thematic play

- Session participation and milestone achievements

Spending Options:

- Preventing Dread Clock advancement
- Rerolling dice for critical actions
- Activating protective assets and items
- Converting to XP (max 2 per session)

Narrative Weight: Players must choose between immediate tactical advantages and long-term psychological stability.

3.3 Risk/Reward Balance

Safe Choices:

- Surface-level investigation with minimal horror exposure
- Conservative approach with reduced Boon economy (-1 die penalties)
- Avoiding direct confrontation with unknown threats

Controlled Choices:

- Deep investigation with significant horror exposure
- Direct engagement with incomprehensible entities
- Pursuing forbidden knowledge at personal cost
- +1-3 Dread segments, potential breaking points

Failure States:

- Dread Clock fills completely
- Character becomes Broken - out of control, hostile to allies
- Permanent psychological damage requiring intervention
- Transformation into agent of horror

4 Campaign Clock Framework

4.1 Primary Clock: Dread Clock (10 segments)

Psychological deterioration and mounting horror affecting individual characters.

Dread Clock	Psychological deterioration and mounting horror
Segments	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● 0/10

Advancement Triggers:

- Witnessing death or violence: +1 segment (prevent with 1 Boon)
- Encountering the unknown: +1 segment (prevent with 1 Boon)
- Personal failure leading to harm: +1 segment (prevent with 1 Boon)

- Direct threat to sanity/morality: +2 segments (prevent with 2 Boons)

- Major revelation about the horror: +2 segments (prevent with 2 Boons)

- Companion/friend harmed or lost: +3 segments (prevent with 3 Boons)

Consequences when filled: Character becomes Broken - out of control, may become hostile to allies, permanent psychological damage, requires major intervention to recover.

4.2 Secondary Clocks

4.2.1 Reality Fracture Clock (12 segments)

How much fundamental laws of reality have been altered by cosmic influence.

Reality Fracture Clock	Fundamental laws of reality becoming unreliable
Segments	• • • • • • • • • • • •0/12

Advancement Triggers:

- Impossible phenomena observed: +1 segment per day

- Dimensional mathematics researched: +2 segments

- PCs directly perceive alien geometry: +3 segments

- Local reality becomes unstable: +2 segments per incident

- Ancient experiments disturbed: +3 segments

Consequences when filled: Barriers between dimensions collapse completely; entity manifests fully in normal space.

4.2.2 Collective Sanity Clock (8 segments)

How much the party and observers are affected by cosmic horror.

Collective Sanity Clock	Group psychological effects and shared hallucinations
Segments	• • • • • • • •0/8

Advancement Triggers:

- Reality Fracture Clock advances: +1 segment

- Direct observation of alien entities: +2 segments each

- Comprehension of higher-dimensional concepts: +2 segments

- Witnessing impossible geometric shapes: +1 segment each

- Temporal anomalies experienced: +1 segment per hour

Consequences when filled: Shared hallucinations become reality; party exists partially outside normal space.

4.2.3 Existential Threat Clock (15 segments)

How close cosmic entity is to full manifestation in our reality.

Existential Threat Clock	Cosmic entity approaching full manifestation
Segments	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • 0/15

Advancement Triggers:

- Reality Fracture reaches 6 segments: +2 segments
- Collective Sanity reaches 6 segments: +3 segments
- PCs attempt to communicate with alien intelligence: +3 segments
- Dimensional barriers weakened further: +2 segments
- Ancient safeguards fail: +4 segments

Consequences when filled: Entity begins reshaping local reality according to alien logic.

4.3   Clock Interaction

Reality Fracture drives other clocks; as it advances, Collective Sanity and Existential Threat accelerate. High Collective Sanity makes Reality Fracture advance faster as perception warps reality.

5   Character Integration System

5.1   Thematic Character Options

5.1.1   Investigator Archetypes

Scholar/Researcher:

- Recognizes ancient symbols, understands cosmic principles (+1 Lore)
- Risks comprehension breaking points from forbidden knowledge
- Vulnerable to reality distortion when theories proven wrong

Veteran/Survivor:

- Resistant to fear (-1 Dread advancement from combat exposure)
- Vulnerable to reality distortions that break tactical understanding
- Experienced with supernatural threats but may be overconfident

Psychic/Sensitive:

- Can perceive hidden truths (+1 Perception for supernatural detection)
- Suffers +1 Dread from all supernatural exposure
- May become overwhelmed by too much psychic input

Skeptic/Rationalist:

- Immune to some psychological effects through rational disbelief
- Suffers severe penalties (-2 dice) when forced to accept impossibility
- May become dangerously obsessed with proving rational explanations

5.2 Background Integration

Traumatized Past:

- Start with 1 segment on Dread Clock
- Gain +1 die to resist similar future exposures
- May have flashbacks triggered by related stimuli

Occult Knowledge:

- Access to forbidden lore (Wits + Lore, DV 3)
- Each use advances Dread by 1 and generates 1 SB
- May attract unwanted supernatural attention

Military Training:

- +1 die to combat supernatural threats
- -1 die to social interactions due to paranoia
- May resort to violence when other options fail

Religious Faith:

- Immunity to fear effects from traditional horror
- Vulnerable to anti-holy entities and corrupted faith
- May struggle with moral compromises required for survival

5.3 Mechanical Hooks

5.3.1 Breaking Points

Specific triggers that force immediate Dread advancement unless resisted:

- **Witnessing Corruption:** Seeing friend/ally become corrupted (+2 Dread)
- **Personal Loss:** Losing something precious (+3 Dread)
- **Moral Compromise:** Acting against core beliefs (+2 Dread)
- **Incomprehensible Truth:** Understanding reality-breaking fact (+3 Dread)

Resistance Options:

- Spend 2 Boons to prevent advancement
- Spirit + Resolve roll (DV 5) with narrative justification
- Relevant Talents or Backgrounds provide resistance

5.3.2 Corruption Track

Physical/mental changes that occur at high Dread levels:

- 7+ Dread: Speaking in equations, seeing geometric patterns
- 8+ Dread: Attraction to dark spaces, partial dimensional existence

- 9+ Dread: Unreliable narrator, shared hallucinations become real
- 10+ Dread: Broken - permanent transformation, hostile to allies

5.3.3 Collective Insanity

Party average Dread affects everyone's perception of reality:

- Average 5+: Shared hallucinations, impossible events become real
- Average 7+: Geometric spaces shift based on group consensus
- Average 9+: Group paranoia and infighting, -2 dice to cooperation

6 Quick Setup Protocol

6.1 30-Minute Campaign Launch

Character Preparation:

- Use pre-generated Tier II characters or build using 30 XP with horror-themed backgrounds
- Ensure party has mix of investigative, combat, and social capabilities
- Assign relevant Talents for horror engagement (Lorekeeper, Backlash Soothing)

Core Conflict Establishment:

1. PCs encounter impossible phenomena that challenge reality/f sanity
2. Threat appears to be beyond normal comprehension
3. Stakes involve personal survival and broader existential implications

Opening Scene Hook:

- Familiar environment becomes alien
- Impossible constellations in night sky
- Architecture defying geometric principles
- Whispers in familiar voices of missing people

Primary Campaign Clock:

- Dread Clock (10 segments) as personal threat
- 2-3 supporting clocks based on horror subgenre
- Start all clocks at 1-2 segments for immediate tension

Key Mechanical Tutorial:

- Introduce Dread Clock management through first horror encounter
- Demonstrate breaking point resistance with meaningful choice
- Show resource management between investigation and self-preservation

6.2 Scaling Options

6.2.1 Short Form (1-2 sessions)

- Single clock (Dread 8 segments) for focused threat
- Simplified breaking points with clear resistance options
- Limited corruption effects, mostly psychological
- Resolution focused on immediate survival/containment

6.2.2 Standard Form (3-5 sessions)

- Full 4-clock system with complex interactions
- Multiple breaking point types and resistance methods
- Progressive corruption with permanent character changes
- Multiple resolution paths with different consequences

6.2.3 Extended Form (6+ sessions)

- Campaign-level consequences affecting world/region
- Permanent reality alterations from filled clocks
- Character retirement/retcon options for broken PCs
- Sequel hooks and ongoing cosmic threat elements

7 Environmental and Narrative Mechanics

7.1 Setting-Driven Mechanics

7.1.1 Reality Distortion Zones

Areas where physics/geometric principles become unreliable:

- Modifiers: -1 Investigation, +1 SB generation
- Spatial navigation requires Wits + Survival (DV 3-4)
- May generate 2 SB for time loops or dimensional folds

Player Interaction:

- Can attempt stabilization with Arcana rolls but at cost of advancing clocks
- Accepting impossibility grants DV 1 on next navigation roll
- Mathematical instruments may provide +1 die to related rolls

7.1.2 Temporal Anomalies

Time flows differently or loops in specific areas:

- +1 Investigation for pattern recognition
- Generates 2 SB for time loops and paradoxes

- May cause characters to become "unstuck" in time

Effects:

- Unreliable narrators who remember multiple timeline branches
- Repeating conversations with slight variations
- Causality breaking down - effects preceding causes

7.2   Atmosphere Tools

7.2.1   Sensory Engagement

Sound:

- Whispers that shouldn't be there
- Silence that presses against eardrums
- Geometric harmonies that hurt to hear
- Temporal echoes of future conversations

Sight:

- Impossible shadows with their own movement
- Colors that shouldn't exist in natural spectrum
- Peripheral movement that vanishes when directly observed
- Geometric shapes existing in more than three dimensions

Touch:

- Surfaces that breathe and pulse rhythmically
- Temperatures that shift without environmental cause
- Textures that change under fingers when not observed
- Gravity flowing in impossible directions

Smell:

- Scents of places that never existed
- Odors of concepts made physical (fear, time, mathematics)
- Aromas that trigger false memories of impossible events
- Fragrances that seem to move independently of air currents

Taste:

- Metallic fear on tongue during supernatural encounters
- The flavor of wrongness when reality distorts
- Aftertastes of cosmic truths that linger for hours
- Tastes that seem to exist in multiple dimensions simultaneously

7.3   Narrative Structure

7.3.1   Scene Types

Investigation:

- Gathering clues while managing sanity/resource costs
- Wits + Investigation or Lore rolls with potential Dread advancement
- May generate SB for reality distortions or entity attention

Confrontation:

- Direct engagement with horror elements
- Combat modified by psychological state (-1 die at 5+ Dread)
- Breaking point triggers for moral/psychological challenges

Breaking Point:

- Critical moments testing psychological limits
- Immediate Dread advancement unless resisted
- May result in permanent character changes or retirement

Revelation:

- Discovery of cosmic truths with severe consequences
- Comprehension breaking points risking +3 Dread advancement
- May unlock new investigative paths or resolution options

7.3.2   Pacing Markers

Sessions 1-2:

- Local anomalies and minor reality distortions
- Introduction to threat without full comprehension
- Personal stakes established through connections to location/missing persons

Sessions 3-4:

- Pattern recognition revealing deeper conspiracy
- First direct contact with entities or incomprehensible concepts
- Comprehension breaking points as forbidden knowledge accessed

Sessions 5+:

- Full revelation of cosmic threat and implications
- Existential stakes becoming clear to all characters
- Resolution with universal consequences and permanent changes

7.3.3   Resolution Formats

Success States:

- **The Sacrifice:** Permanently contain entity through personal cost (15-18 XP)
- **The Investigation:** Fully understand and banish threat (18-20 XP)
- **The Containment:** Seal threat temporarily (12-15 XP)

Failure States:

- **The Corruption:** Become agent of horror (8-10 XP, character transformation)
- **The Breaking:** Succumb to madness (0-5 XP, character retirement)
- **The Ignorance:** Flee without understanding (10-12 XP, ongoing campaign thread)

Partial Success:

- **The Bargain:** Negotiate with entity for limited influence (12-15 XP, ongoing responsibilities)
- **The Transformation:** Partial corruption with retained agency (15-17 XP, character change)

Pyrrhic Victory:

- **The Price:** Victory achieved but at devastating cost to world/self (18-20 XP, major consequences)

8   GM Toolkit

8.1   Session Preparation Checklist

- Prepare key horror draws for session (impossible phenomena, entity manifestations, breaking point triggers)
- Clock tracking sheets with trigger conditions clearly marked
- Key NPC motivations, secrets, and potential corruption states
- Environmental complication cards for reality distortions
- Breaking point scenarios and resistance options for each PC
- Index cards with sensory descriptions for atmosphere building
- SB spending options tied to current horror elements

8.2   Complication Generator

8.2.1   Mild (1 SB)

- Path shows reflection of alternate self
- Familiar voice whispers from darkness
- Waymark points wrong direction
- Unsettling geometric patterns in peripheral vision

- Temperature drop without environmental cause

8.2.2 Moderate (2 SB)

- Reality thins - see dreams of others
- Temporal loop shows funeral preparations
- Memory absorption begins during investigation
- Shadows move independently of light sources
- Mathematical equations appear spontaneously in environment

8.2.3 Serious (3 SB)

- Dimensional mathematics become comprehensible (advance Dread by 2)
- Entity's patterns appear in environment
- Trusted companion shows signs of possession
- Gravity flows in impossible directions
- Time begins moving backward in specific area

8.2.4 Major (4+ SB)

- Entity manifests partially through resonance
- Reality becomes unstable in area
- Previous choice comes back to haunt PCs
- Multiple timeline branches become visible simultaneously
- Fundamental law of physics ceases to be reliable

8.3 Player Agency Reminders

Handling Unexpected Approaches:

- Embrace creativity but ensure horror elements still manifest
- Adapt entity responses to match player innovations
- Allow success but with horror-themed consequences
- Provide multiple valid paths to objectives

When to Push Back:

- Only when player choices would break core horror themes
- When actions would eliminate all tension or challenge
- When safety/pacing requires narrative redirection
- When mechanical balance needs preservation

Maintaining Tension:

- Use clock advancement and breaking points rather than adversarial GMing
- Provide meaningful choices with real consequences
- Balance hope and despair throughout campaign
- Let player decisions drive horror escalation

9 Experience and Resolution Systems

9.1 Experience Awards

Participation:

- +2 XP per session attendance
- +1 XP for meaningful horror engagement
- +1 XP for contributing to atmospheric tension

Thematic Play:

- +1-2 XP for meaningful horror engagement
- +1 XP for playing character's psychological flaws
- +2 XP for embracing breaking point consequences

Risk Taking:

- +1-3 XP for choosing dangerous investigative paths
- +2 XP for resisting breaking points at cost
- +1 XP for pursuing forbidden knowledge

Breaking Point Resistance:

- +2 XP for successfully resisting major psychological trauma
- +1 XP for partial resistance with consequences
- +3 XP for transforming breaking point into character growth

Narrative Contribution:

- +1-2 XP for creating memorable horror moments
- +1 XP for contributing to group survival
- +2 XP for defining campaign's central horror theme

10 Modular Design Elements

10.1 Plug-and-Play Components

Dread Clock System:

- Works independently in any horror scenario
- Scalable segment counts for different campaign lengths

- Compatible with existing Boon economy

Breaking Point Mechanics:

- Can enhance investigation or combat encounters
- Adaptable to different horror subgenres
- Integrates with character backgrounds and talents

Reality Distortion Zones:

- Can be added to any location
- Modular effects based on campaign tone
- Compatible with existing environmental hazards

Collective Sanity Effects:

- Work in any group-based horror campaign
- Scale with party size and composition
- Create shared consequences for individual actions

10.2   Cross-Expansion Compatibility

Noir Expansion:

- Psychological breaking points enhance moral ambiguity
- Collective sanity effects mirror group paranoia
- Reality distortion zones complement urban atmosphere

Cyberpunk Expansion:

- Technological horror through reality distortion
- Corporate conspiracy elements in cosmic threats
- Character corruption parallels cybernetic augmentation

Fantasy Expansion:

- Cosmic entities as ancient gods/demons
- Magical research risks mirror forbidden knowledge
- Reality fracture effects enhance spell backlash

10.3   Power Scaling

Lower Tiers (Rookie/Seasoned):

- Reduced SB generation from horror encounters
- Simpler reality distortions with clear navigation
- Fewer breaking point triggers and easier resistance
- More recovery options for Dread advancement

Higher Tiers (Veteran/Paragon):

- Increased cosmic comprehension risks (+3 Dread for understanding)
- More severe reality alterations affecting core mechanics
- Complex entity interactions requiring specialized knowledge
- Harsher consequences for filled clocks and broken characters

New Players:

- Streamlined clock system with fewer secondary clocks
- More recovery options and safety mechanisms
- Clearer breaking point resistance paths
- Reduced penalties for high Dread states

Experienced Players:

- Additional complications and harsher consequences
- Fewer safety mechanisms and more permanent effects
- Complex moral choices with no clear right answers
- Integration with existing campaign threads and consequences

11 Quick Reference Appendix

11.1 Mechanics Summary

Dread Clock Psychological Effects:

- **0-2 Segments - Unease:** -1 die to social rolls involving trust, minor sleep disturbances
- **3-4 Segments - Fear:** -1 die to all rolls when alone, startle easily, avoid dark spaces
- **5-6 Segments - Terror:** -2 dice to rolls involving courage or rational thought, may flee
- **7-8 Segments - Madness:** -2 dice to most rolls, may act against interests, hallucinations
- **9-10 Segments - Broken:** Out of control, may become hostile, permanent damage

Reality Fracture Triggers:

- Impossible phenomena: +1 segment per day
- Dimensional mathematics researched: +2 segments
- PCs perceive alien geometry: +3 segments

Clock Management:

- Death/violence: +1 Dread (1 Boon prevent)
- Unknown encounters: +1 Dread (1 Boon prevent)
- Personal failure: +1 Dread (1 Boon prevent)
- Sanity threat: +2 Dread (2 Boons prevent)

- Major revelation: +2 Dread (2 Boons prevent)
- Companion lost: +3 Dread (3 Boons prevent)

11.2 Resource Spending

Boon Expenditure:

- **1 Boon:** Re-roll die, activate minor Asset, prevent 1 Dread segment
- **2 Boons:** Convert to 1 XP (max 2/session), prevent 2 Dread segments
- **3 Boons:** Prevent 3 Dread segments, activate major Asset
- **Special:** 2 Boons prevent breaking point advancement

Breaking Point Resistance:

- **2 Boons:** Prevent advancement entirely
- **Spirit + Resolve (DV 5):** With narrative justification
- **Talents/Backgrounds:** Provide resistance bonuses
- **Group Support:** Allies may assist resistance rolls

11.3 Index Card Prep

Reality Distortion Effects:

- Geometric impossibilities with mechanical modifiers
- Temporal anomalies and their narrative effects
- Sensory descriptions for atmosphere building
- Navigation challenges and skill requirements

Breaking Point Triggers:

- Personal loss scenarios with Dread advancement
- Moral compromise situations and resistance options
- Comprehension challenges with cosmic implications
- Corruption progression and character transformation

Clock Tracking:

- Visual segment markers for each clock type
- Trigger condition reminders for quick reference
- Consequence summaries for filled clocks
- Integration notes with other campaign elements

12 Horror Deck Generators

12.1 Cosmic Horror Generator

> **Theme**: Reality-breaking threats that challenge understanding of existence itself
>
> **Special Mechanics**:
>
> - Any Ace adds a fundamental law of reality that becomes unreliable
> - Face cards (J/Q/K) represent cosmic entities or phenomena beyond normal comprehension
> - Black suits ($\spadesuit, \clubsuit$) : $Physical reality distortions, existential threats$
> - Red suits ($\heartsuit, \diamondsuit$) : $Psychological/cosmic influence, forbidden knowledge$

12.1.1 Spades — Places (impossible locations, reality-warped sites)

- 2. Observatory with a telescope that shows stars that shouldn't exist
- 3. Library where books rewrite themselves when read
- 4. Laboratory where the walls breathe and mathematical equations drip like liquid
- 5. Ancient vault with doors that open to different dimensions
- 6. Tower that exists in multiple time periods simultaneously
- 7. Cave system where gravity flows in impossible directions
- 8. Room where the corners don't meet and shadows have shadows
- 9. Mirror maze that reflects possible futures instead of present reality
- 10. Garden where plants grow in geometric patterns that hurt to perceive
- J. Research station experiencing temporal anomalies and dimensional bleeds
- Q. Ancient temple built according to alien geometry that shouldn't be physically possible
- K. Black monolith that exists partially outside normal space-time
- A. Location where a fundamental law of physics (time, gravity, causality) no longer applies

12.1.2 Hearts — Entities & Factions (cosmic beings, affected people)

- 2. Researcher who speaks only in mathematical equations
- 3. Astronomer who can see the approach of something from beyond
- 4. Mathematician whose calculations predict reality fractures
- 5. Entity that exists as pure geometric impossibility
- 6. Being from outside normal space-time seeking understanding
- 7. Collective consciousness of a species that transcended physical form
- 8. Fragment of a dead god that remembers when reality was different
- 9. Scientist whose mind has been rewritten by cosmic influence
- 10. Cultist who worships mathematical perfection and cosmic order
- J. Ancient Aeler philosopher who opened doors that should have remained closed
- Q. Cosmic entity that communicates through stellar movements and impossible geometry

- K. Being that exists simultaneously in all possible dimensions
- A. Intelligence that predates the current configuration of reality itself

12.1.3 Clubs — Threats & Complications (reality distortions, existential dread)

- 2. Stars moving in patterns that violate known astronomical laws
- 3. Mathematical proof that shows reality is fundamentally inconsistent
- 4. Temporal loop where the same conversation repeats with slight variations
- 5. Geometric shapes that exist in more than three dimensions becoming visible
- 6. Fundamental constant of physics beginning to shift and change
- 7. Memory of events that never happened becoming more real than actual history
- 8. Observer effect causing reality to change based on perception
- 9. Causality breaking down—effects preceding their causes
- 10. Consciousness beginning to exist in multiple states simultaneously
- J. Local reality becoming unstable and fragmenting into possibility storms
- Q. Dimensions beginning to bleed into each other, mixing incompatible laws
- K. The universe approaching a mathematical proof of its own non-existence
- A. A fundamental aspect of existence (time, space, identity) ceasing to be reliable

12.1.4 Diamonds — Revelations & Resources (forbidden knowledge, cosmic tools)

- 2. Star charts showing constellations from impossible angles
- 3. Mathematical formula that describes the shape of space-time itself
- 4. Instrument that can detect fluctuations in the fundamental constants
- 5. Tome written in a language that predates human civilization by eons
- 6. Crystal that stores memories from alternate versions of reality
- 7. Equation that can temporarily stabilize dimensional barriers
- 8. Observatory equipment calibrated to detect entities from outside normal space
- 9. Protective ward that maintains local reality coherence for a limited time
- 10. Research notes detailing experiments into forbidden dimensions
- J. Key to an ancient vault containing Aeler research into reality structure
- Q. Device that can briefly open controlled portals to adjacent dimensions
- K. Formula for creating paradoxes that can trap cosmic entities
- A. Knowledge of how to permanently seal breaches in dimensional barriers

Quick Use Notes

- Draw until you have all four suits: Spade = place, Heart = actor, Club = pressure, Diamond = leverage

- Highest rank sets the main Clock (2–5 → 4, 6–10 → 6, J/Q/K → 8, A → 10)

- Diamonds are codified outcomes (knowledge/tools) that change position rather than call for a roll

- If any Ace appears, add a fundamental law of reality that becomes unreliable (time flows backward, gravity weakens, etc.)

- Face cards represent cosmic entities or phenomena beyond normal comprehension

Using the Cosmic Horror Generator

Standalone Campaign Use: When using the Cosmic Horror generator on its own, focus on reality-breaking threats that challenge the fundamental nature of existence. The generator provides a complete framework for campaigns where the PCs face threats beyond normal comprehension.

Key Considerations:

- **Scale**: Cosmic horror operates on a universal or existential scale rather than personal threats

- **Comprehension**: Understanding the threat may be as dangerous as ignoring it

- **Permanence**: Changes to reality may be irreversible

- **Isolation**: The PCs may be among the few who perceive the true threat

Standalone Setup:

1. Draw the full seed (Spade, Heart, Club, Diamond) to establish the cosmic threat

2. Note any Aces for fundamental reality changes

3. Use Face cards to identify cosmic entities involved

4. Set primary clock based on highest rank

5. Establish 2-3 supporting clocks (Reality Fracture, Collective Sanity, Existential Threat)

Mixed Generator Use: The Cosmic Horror generator excels at adding existential weight to other campaign types. Mix it with regional generators to create campaigns where local threats have cosmic implications.

Common Mixing Strategies:

With Mistlands:

- Use Mistlands Spades/Clubs for atmospheric horror

- Use Cosmic Hearts/Diamonds for the underlying threat

- Result: Ancient entities sleeping beneath the mist, awakened by reality fractures

With Acasia:

- Use Acasia Spades/Clubs for cursed locations and social pressure
- Use Cosmic Hearts/Diamonds for the true threat behind local disturbances
- Result: Merchant houses unknowingly trafficking in reality-distorting artifacts

With Aeler:

- Use Aeler Spades/Clubs for underground locations and ancient dangers
- Use Cosmic Hearts/Diamonds for the vault-dwelling entities
- Result: Dwarven experiments that opened doors to impossible dimensions

With Valewood:

- Use Valewood Spades/Clubs for phasing ruins and imperial residue
- Use Cosmic Hearts/Diamonds for the entities behind the empire's fall
- Result: The empire fell not to war, but to reality-altering influence

Mixing Procedure:

1. Draw 2-3 cards from base generator (location, local actor, local pressure)
2. Draw 1-2 cards from Cosmic Horror generator (cosmic entity, reality threat)
3. Blend elements to create a threat that feels both local and universal
4. Use base generator's clock size, modified by cosmic elements
5. Add 1-2 cosmic-themed supporting clocks to base campaign clocks

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Campaign Integration Tips:

Gradual Revelation: Start with local/normal threats, gradually revealing cosmic implications. Players are more invested when they discover their small problem is part of a universal threat.

Personal Stakes: Even cosmic threats need personal connections. Tie the existential danger to characters' backgrounds, goals, or loved ones.

Escalation Patterns:

- Sessions 1-2: Local anomalies, minor reality distortions
- Sessions 3-4: Pattern recognition, first contact with cosmic entities
- Sessions 5-6: Full revelation, existential stakes become clear
- Final Session: Resolution with universal consequences

Reality as Character: Treat the laws of physics and fundamental reality as active elements that can shift, change, and react to player actions. When players solve problems, let reality itself respond.

Knowledge Management: Forbidden knowledge should be both valuable and dangerous. Create systems where learning the truth advances both understanding and threat levels.

Mixed Deck Campaign: "The Whispering Depths" (Mistlands + Cosmic Horror)

Campaign Setup: Mixing the Mistlands generator with Cosmic Horror creates a campaign where ancient entities sleeping beneath the fog have begun to awaken as reality barriers weaken.

Drawn Elements:

- Mistlands Spade (7 - Pall Watch-tower on piles above the mire)

- Cosmic Horror Heart (Q - Cosmic entity that communicates through stellar movements)

- Mistlands Club (9 - Bell-line failure on the levee; a wraith steps across like it owns the road)

- Cosmic Horror Diamond (8 - Instrument that can detect fluctuations in the fundamental constants)

Clock Size: 9 (Queen) = 8-segment primary clock

Campaign Hook: The Pall Watch-tower, a key defensive position in the Mistlands, has begun experiencing temporal anomalies. Guards report that the bell-line failures don't follow normal patterns—instead, the bells ring in mathematical sequences that correspond to stellar movements visible only through the tower's ancient spyglass. Something from beyond normal space is using the weakened barriers between dimensions to influence the physical world, and the bell-code system that once kept the Mistlands safe is now serving as a communication channel for entities that predate human civilization.

Key NPCs:

- Bell-Warden Thorne: Paranoid keeper who first noticed the anomalous bell patterns

- Astronomer-Liaison Mara: Assigned to interpret the stellar correlations, slowly losing sanity

- The Deep Listener: Cosmic entity that exists partially in our dimension, communicating through bell harmonics

Campaign Clocks:

- Bell-Line Corruption (8): How much the communication system has been compromised

- Reality Fracture (10): Local weakening of dimensional barriers

- Collective Sanity (8): Mental stability of the watch-tower garrison

Resolution Paths:

- Seal the dimensional breach using the stellar-aligned bell-code in reverse

- Negotiate with the entity to establish a controlled communication channel

- Destroy the watch-tower to sever the connection, sacrificing the region's defense

- Allow the entity full access to our reality in exchange for protection from other cosmic threats

Horror Elements:

- The bells ring in patterns that hurt to hear directly

- Guards begin aging rapidly during their watches

- Shadows cast by the tower show events from impossible futures

- The entity's influence causes time to loop in 8-hour cycles

13 Design Philosophy Requirements

13.1 Must Include Elements

Meaningful Player Choice:

- Every major decision (investigation depth, risk level, resolution approach) has clear, lasting consequences affecting all campaign clocks
- Multiple valid approaches to horror threats (investigation, combat, social, flight)
- Character-specific breaking points that reflect individual backgrounds and flaws
- Resolution paths that reward different play styles and thematic choices

Mechanical-Theme Integration:

- Dread Clock and reality distortion mechanics directly serve horror themes of psychological deterioration and reality instability
- Breaking point system reinforces moral ambiguity and personal consequences
- Resource management creates tension between investigation and self-preservation
- Collective sanity effects mirror isolation and group psychology themes

Gradual Complexity:

- Introduce clock system and breaking points gradually across sessions
- Start with basic Dread management before adding secondary clocks
- Reveal complex reality distortion effects as campaign progresses
- Scale breaking point severity with character development

Multiple Valid Approaches:

- Investigation, combat, and social solutions all viable with different risk/reward profiles
- Different character archetypes can contribute meaningfully to horror resolution
- Multiple resolution paths that reward different campaign approaches
- Adaptive threat responses that engage various character capabilities

Character Spotlights:

- Each session provides opportunities for different character types
- Scholar characters excel with lore and forbidden knowledge
- Combat characters shine during entity confrontations
- Social characters navigate breaking point resistance and group dynamics

Clear Continuation Hooks:

- Win or lose, cosmic threat remains or creates sequel opportunities
- Partial clock fills create ongoing regional consequences
- Character corruption provides campaign-long character arcs

- Reality alterations persist beyond single campaign resolution

13.2   Should Avoid Elements

Railroading:

- Player choices genuinely matter to outcomes
- Multiple resolution paths with different consequences
- Varied investigation approaches leading to different revelations
- Adaptive threat responses to player innovations

Information Dumps:

- Horror lore emerges through play rather than exposition
- Entity manifestations reveal threat nature gradually
- Breaking point revelations provide contextual understanding
- Reality distortions demonstrate cosmic principles experientially

Mechanical Bloat:

- New systems enhance rather than complicate core mechanics
- Dread as Boon management integrates with existing economy
- Breaking points use standard resolution procedures with thematic modifiers
- Clock interactions follow logical cause-and-effect relationships

Unwinnable States:

- Even failure leads to interesting continuation
- Partial corruption provides ongoing character development
- Escaped threat creates sequel campaign hooks
- Transformed reality offers new adventure possibilities

Generic Elements:

- Every location, NPC, and encounter serves horror theme
- Reality distortion reinforces existential threat concepts
- Psychological breaking points reflect core horror themes
- Entity manifestations embody incomprehensible cosmic forces

13.3   Excellence Indicators

Innovative but Accessible:

- New mechanics (Dread as psychological resource management) feel natural to horror genre
- Integration with existing Boon economy maintains system familiarity
- Scalable complexity allows for gradual learning curve

- Clear mechanical procedures support narrative horror themes

Thematic Consistency:

- Every element reinforces core themes (isolation, unknown, psychological horror, cosmic insignificance)
- Clock names and effects directly relate to horror concepts
- Breaking point triggers reflect psychological and moral horror themes
- Resolution paths embody different horror story archetypes

Scalable Design:

- Works for different group sizes and experience levels
- Streamlined clocks for new players maintain core tension
- Extended campaign options for experienced groups
- Modular components work independently or together

Prep-Efficient:

- GM can run with minimal preparation after first read
- Checklist provided for session preparation
- Index cards suggested for quick reference during play
- Generator systems reduce prep time for new scenarios

Session-Sized Beats:

- Clear goals and climaxes for each session
- Investigation/navigation provides session foundation
- Deeper horror/truth revealed creates mid-campaign tension
- Final choice/consequences drive campaign resolution

Player Agency Documentation:

- Clear guidance on handling unexpected choices
- Embrace creativity while maintaining horror elements
- Provide multiple valid approaches to horror threats
- Maintain tension through consequences rather than adversarial GMing

14   Horror Campaign Clocks Generator

14.1   Core Concept

The Horror Campaign Clocks Generator creates thematically appropriate multi-clock systems for any horror scenario, providing escalating tension and meaningful consequences that drive narrative forward while maintaining mechanical coherence.

14.2   Generator Structure

Primary Clock - Dread Clock (10 segments)

- Always represents psychological deterioration and mounting horror
- Universal across all horror subgenres
- Personal consequences for each character

Secondary Clocks (2-3 clocks, 8-15 segments)

- Thematic clocks that reflect specific horror elements
- Drive broader consequences beyond individual characters
- Create multi-layered tension

14.3   Horror Subgenre Clock Templates

14.3.1   Cosmic Horror Clocks

1. **Dread Clock** (10 segments) - Personal psychological deterioration
2. **Reality Fracture Clock** (12 segments) - Fundamental laws of reality becoming unreliable
3. **Collective Sanity Clock** (8 segments) - Group psychological effects and shared hallucinations
4. **Existential Threat Clock** (15 segments) - Cosmic entity approaching full manifestation

14.3.2   Haunted Location Clocks

1. **Dread Clock** (10 segments) - Personal psychological deterioration
2. **Location Corruption Clock** (10 segments) - Physical space becoming more hostile/supernatural
3. **Resident Sanity Clock** (8 segments) - Other inhabitants becoming affected
4. **Supernatural Escalation Clock** (12 segments) - Ghostly activity intensifying

14.3.3   Isolated Institution Clocks

1. **Dread Clock** (10 segments) - Personal psychological deterioration
2. **Sanity Decay Clock** (8 segments) - Overall mental health of group deteriorating
3. **Institution Collapse Clock** (10 segments) - Social/order breakdown of location
4. **Horror Manifestation Clock** (12 segments) - Threat becoming more active/visible

14.3.4   Body Horror Clocks

1. **Dread Clock** (10 segments) - Personal psychological deterioration
2. **Physical Corruption Clock** (8 segments) - Character's body becoming affected
3. **Social Isolation Clock** (6 segments) - Relationships breaking down due to transformation
4. **Transformation Completion Clock** (10 segments) - Full metamorphosis approaching

14.4 Clock Advancement Trigger Generator

14.4.1 Dread Clock Triggers (Personal Psychological Effects)

- **Mild (1 segment):** Unsettling sounds/sights, minor paranoia, sleep disturbances
- **Moderate (2 segments):** Witnessing supernatural events, personal failure, disturbing revelations
- **Severe (3 segments):** Companion harmed/lost, direct entity contact, moral compromise

14.4.2 Reality Fracture Triggers (Cosmic Horror)

- **Mild (+1):** Impossible stellar movements, minor geometric anomalies, temporal glitches
- **Moderate (+2):** Dimensional mathematics researched, witness alien geometry, reality instability incidents
- **Severe (+3):** Ancient experiments disturbed, fundamental laws becoming unreliable, entity partially manifesting

14.4.3 Location Corruption Triggers (Haunted/Supernatural)

- **Mild (+1):** Temperature drops, unexplained sounds, objects moving
- **Moderate (+2):** Physical manifestations, apparitions becoming more aggressive, structural damage
- **Severe (+3):** Laws of physics breaking down, location becoming sentient, permanent alterations

14.4.4 Institution Collapse Triggers (Isolated Settings)

- **Mild (+1):** Communication failures, supply shortages, minor conflicts
- **Moderate (+2):** Authority figures becoming erratic, services failing, infighting
- **Severe (+3):** Complete breakdown of order, mass hysteria, leadership collapse

14.5 Clock Consequence Generator

14.5.1 When Dread Clock Fills (10 segments):

- Character becomes Broken: Out of control, may become hostile, permanent psychological damage
- Party suffers -2 dice to all social rolls due to collective tension
- Reality begins to reflect character's mental state (shared hallucinations)

14.5.2 When Reality Fracture Clock Fills (12 segments):

- Barriers between dimensions collapse completely
- Entity manifests fully in normal space
- Local reality becomes permanently unreliable (ongoing 2 SB per scene)

14.5.3   When Collective Sanity Clock Fills (8 segments):

- Shared hallucinations become indistinguishable from reality

- Party begins to exist partially outside normal space

- Group paranoia leads to infighting (start all social rolls Desperate)

14.5.4   When Existential Threat Clock Fills (15 segments):

- Entity begins reshaping local reality according to alien logic

- PCs must make Spirit + Resolve (DV 6) or gain permanent corruption

- Campaign enters final phase - immediate resolution required

14.6   Mixed Horror Generator System

14.6.1   Procedure:

1. **Select Base Horror Subgenre:** Choose primary horror theme

2. **Draw Base Clocks:** Use template for that subgenre

3. **Add Secondary Elements:** Draw 1-2 cards from different horror subgenres

4. **Blend Consequences:** Merge thematic elements for unique threat

5. **Adjust Clock Sizes:** Modify based on campaign scope and tier

14.6.2   Example Mix - "The Whispering Depths" (Mistlands + Cosmic Horror):

- **Base:** Mistlands haunted location template

- **Add:** Cosmic Horror reality fracture elements

- **Result:** Ancient entities beneath the mist awakening as dimensional barriers weaken

- **Clocks:**

    1. Dread Clock (10) - Personal psychological effects

    2. Bell-Line Corruption (8) - Communication system compromised by cosmic influence

    3. Reality Fracture (12) - Local dimensional barriers weakening

    4. Collective Sanity (8) - Mental stability of watch-tower garrison

14.6.3   Mixing Benefits:

- Creates unique, layered threats that feel both local and universal

- Allows for gradual revelation of deeper cosmic implications

- Provides multiple resolution paths (local containment vs. cosmic sealing)

- Maintains personal stakes while expanding to existential consequences

14.7 Quick Setup Cards

14.7.1 Cosmic Horror Quick Setup:

- **Hook:** Stars moving in impossible patterns, reality becoming unreliable
- **Clocks:** Dread (10), Reality Fracture (12), Collective Sanity (8), Existential Threat (15)
- **Key Elements:** Alien geometry, temporal distortions, incomprehensible entities
- **Resolution:** Seal dimensional rift, embrace cosmic knowledge, or become heralds of new order

14.7.2 Haunted Location Quick Setup:

- **Hook:** Familiar place becoming hostile, supernatural activity escalating
- **Clocks:** Dread (10), Location Corruption (10), Resident Sanity (8), Supernatural Escalation (12)
- **Key Elements:** Ghostly manifestations, location sentience, shared haunting effects
- **Resolution:** Banish spirits, seal location, or join the haunting

14.7.3 Isolated Institution Quick Setup:

- **Hook:** Remote location cut off, internal threat emerging
- **Clocks:** Dread (10), Sanity Decay (8), Institution Collapse (10), Horror Manifestation (12)
- **Key Elements:** Social breakdown, confined space tension, group psychology
- **Resolution:** Escape, contain threat, or become part of institution

15 Conclusion

This Horror Campaigns expansion and clock generator system provides GMs with flexible, thematically coherent tools for running horror campaigns of any scope while maintaining the mechanical elegance and player agency that defines Fate's Edge. Whether running a single-session haunted house scenario or an extended cosmic horror campaign, these tools ensure that horror remains personal, consequential, and mechanically integrated with the core Fate's Edge experience.

Remember that the best horror emerges from player investment in their characters and the world around them. Use these mechanical tools to support narrative tension and emotional investment, not replace them. The fear of what might be lurking in the shadows is often more effective than showing every monster in detail, and the psychological consequences of player choices should feel meaningful and lasting.

In the spaces between certainty and chaos, in the whispers of the unknown, and in the breaking points of human endurance, the truth waits patiently. Will you listen? Will you pay the price? Will you survive to tell the tale?