Fate's Edge GM Guide

Game Master's Companion

Contents

Introduction: The GM's Role in Fate's Edge

In **Fate's Edge**, the Game Master (GM) is not a referee or adversary, but a **collaborative storyteller** and **weaver of consequences**. You are the guardian of the world's texture, the keeper of tension, and the guide who ensures that every action—no matter how small—ripples outward in meaningful ways.

You are not just running a game. You are stewarding a world where **the past is never truly gone**, where **choices echo**, and where **power always demands a price**. From the fog-shrouded bell-lines of the Mistlands to the sun-scorched marches of Acasia, the world of Fate's Edge is alive with history, ambition, and the quiet weight of forgotten oaths.

Narrative Primacy

At the heart of Fate's Edge lies a single truth: **mechanics serve the story**. Dice do not merely determine success or failure—they shape the unfolding narrative by introducing new problems, twists, or opportunities. Every roll should change the story, not just resolve an action.

As the GM, your role is to keep the fiction alive. When a player rolls dice, the outcome should never be mechanical alone—it should always feed back into the world, altering the path ahead. Whether it's a moment of triumph or a twist of fate, the story is the ledger. Let the dice guide you, not constrain you.

In the courts of Vhasia, a noble's smile may conceal betrayal. In the under-vaults of Aeler, a misplaced seal can mean the difference between breath and doom. In the Valewood, even the trees remember your name. Your job is to make sure that every roll—every choice—carries that same weight.

Risk as Drama

Fate's Edge is built on the idea that **risk drives drama**. Every roll carries the potential for both triumph and complication. This is not a game where players accumulate power in a vacuum—every gain comes with a cost, and every victory shifts the balance of the world.

Complication Points (CP) are your primary tool for introducing tension. They are not penalties—they are narrative fuel. Use them to escalate stakes, introduce new threats, or deepen the emotional weight of a scene. The dice are not your enemy; they are your collaborator in crafting a living, breathing story.

A player may win a duel, but if they rolled a 1, perhaps the crowd begins to murmur that their blade was guided by luck—or something darker. Maybe the duel was witnessed by a rival faction. Maybe the blade itself now hums with a whisper it shouldn't carry. These are the threads you pull.

Meaningful Growth

Characters in Fate's Edge do not level up in the traditional sense. Instead, they grow through **Experience Points (XP)**—a currency that represents meaningful choices and narrative

investment. Players spend XP to enhance themselves, acquire assets, or unlock cultural talents. As the GM, you are the witness to this growth. You reward choices that shape the world, and you challenge players to live with the consequences of their decisions.

One PC may become a master duelist of Viterra, known for her silver tongue and her blade. Another might build a spy network across the Astroegro Straits, commanding influence from the shadows. A third may become a spirit-shielded dwarf, bearing the weight of ancestral voices. All are valid. All come at a cost. All change the world.

Your Tools as GM

To guide the story, you have a set of tools designed to keep the narrative alive and evolving:

- **Deck of Consequences**: A 52-card deck that provides thematic complications when players roll 1s. It externalizes risk and ensures that setbacks feel consistent and fair. Draw from it when the dice say the world pushes back.

- **Campaign Clocks**: Mandate and Crisis clocks that track the rise and fall of player influence, culminating in a finale shaped by their choices. These clocks are the heartbeat of long-term play.

- **Complication Points**: Earned from dice rolls, spent to add tension, introduce threats, or reshape the narrative. These are your levers of drama.

- **Crown Spread**: A Session 0 ritual that seeds the campaign's themes, rivals, and finale conditions. It is here that the fate of nations—or the silence of forgotten gods—may be written.

1 Running the Game: Core Procedures

In **Fate's Edge**, the game flows through a series of **actions, consequences, and escalating stakes**. As the GM, your role is to guide this flow—not by dictating outcomes, but by **framing scenes, interpreting rolls, and spending Complication Points** to keep tension alive. This chapter walks you through the core procedures that define play, from the moment a player declares an action to the fallout that follows.

Scene Framing: Start with Stakes

Every scene begins with a question: **What's at risk?** Not just for the characters, but for the world, the mission, or the fragile alliances they've built. As the GM, you frame the scene by establishing:

- **Position**: Is the action *Controlled*, *Risky*, or *Desperate*?
- **Effect**: What happens on a success? What changes?
- **Stakes**: What is gained—or lost—if things go wrong?

A scene in the **Mistlands** might begin with the PCs crossing a flooded causeway at dusk. The bell-line hums with tension. The GM sets the position as Risky—slippery stones, rising mist, and the distant echo of a wraith-call. A failure here could mean separation, exposure, or worse.

Position Descriptions

- **Controlled**: You act on your terms. Complications are minor, setbacks are rare.
- **Risky**: You act under pressure. Success is possible, but failure brings a cost.
- **Desperate**: The odds are stacked against you. Success is hard-won, and failure is dramatic.

Use position to guide the fiction. A controlled entry into a noble salon in **Vhasia** might allow the PCs to charm or intimidate without resistance. A desperate one—perhaps after triggering an alarm—means blades are drawn before words.

Adjudicating Rolls: The Outcome Matrix

When a player rolls, they are not simply trying to "beat" a number. They are engaging with the world. The **Outcome Matrix** is your guide to interpreting the result in context.

Step-by-Step Roll Resolution

1. **Player declares action and approach** (Attribute + Skill).
2. **GM sets Difficulty Value (DV)** based on stakes and fiction.
3. **Player rolls pool of d10s.**

4. **Count successes (6+)** and **Complication Points (1s)**.

5. **Compare successes to DV** and apply Outcome Matrix.

6. **GM spends CP** or draws from the Deck of Consequences.

Outcome Matrix

Successes vs DV	Outcome
S DV, C = 0	Clean Success: Intent achieved crisply.
S DV, C > 0	Success & Cost: Intent achieved, but GM spends CP for complications.
0 < S < DV	Partial: Progress with a fork—accept cost OR concede ground.
S = 0	Miss: No progress. GM spends CP now OR offers Devil's Bargain.

Setting Difficulty Values (DV)

- **DV 1 − Routine**: Clear intent, modest stakes, controlled environment.

- **DV 2 − Pressured**: Time pressure, mild resistance, partial info.

- **DV 3 − Hard**: Hostile conditions, active opposition, precise timing.

- **DV 4+ − Extreme**: Multiple constraints, high precision, dramatic failure.

A DV should reflect not just mechanical difficulty, but narrative weight. Climbing a wall? That's routine. Climbing it while pursued by Aeler vault-wardens? That's pressured—or worse.

Complication Points: The Engine of Drama

Every time a player rolls a **1**, a Complication Point is generated. These are not mere penalties—they are narrative levers. Spend them to:

- Escalate a threat (Hunt +1, Hazard +1).

- Introduce a new danger (reinforcements, betrayal, exposure).

- Add texture to the scene (noise, collateral damage, fatigue).

Complication Points should **push the story forward**, not grind it to a halt. Use them to add pressure, not to punish.

When to Draw from the Deck of Consequences

The Deck of Consequences is a powerful tool for **thematic consistency**. When a player generates CP, you may choose to:

- **Spend CP directly** for immediate, tailored consequences.

- **Draw from the Deck** for a random but thematically fitting twist.

Never do both for the same roll. If the drawn card contradicts established fiction, reinterpret or redraw to fit the suit and tone.

Position + Effect in Action

A player declares a **Risky** action to **pick a lock** while guards patrol above. They roll **Wits + Skullduggery**, get 3 successes and 1 Complication Point.

The GM consults the Outcome Matrix: **Success & Cost**. The lock clicks—but a guard's bootstep halts above. The GM spends 1 CP to add tension: the patrol changes direction, heading toward the PCs' position.

Scene Starters and Hooks

To keep the game moving, always open a scene with a strong hook:

- "The alarm bells ring as you step into the courtyard."

- "A courier collapses at your feet, clutching a sealed scroll."

- "The tide is turning—the ghost-ferry won't wait."

Let the players react. Let the world respond. And always—**follow the consequences.**

2 Managing Resources

In **Fate's Edge**, resources are not just numbers on a sheet—they are **living elements of the fiction**. From the last sip of water in the desert sands of Akilan to the loyalty of a Ykrul war-band, every resource has a story, and every story has a cost. As the GM, you are the keeper of these threads. This chapter outlines how to manage and narrate the systems that fuel both the characters and the campaign.

Supply Clock: The Pulse of Survival

The **Supply Clock** is a shared condition for the entire party. It tracks access to food, water, basic gear, and logistical support. It is not a strict inventory system—it is a **narrative lever** that adds tension when the party is isolated, pressed, or cut off.

Supply Clock States

- **Full Supply (0/4)**: The party is well-equipped. No penalties.
- **Low Supply (2/4)**: Minor narrative complications—bland food, damaged arrows, thinning waterskins.
- **Dangerously Low (3/4)**: Each character gains **Fatigue 1**.
- **Out of Supply (4/4)**: Severe penalties—starvation, dehydration, failing gear. Actions become Risky or Desperate.

Filling the Clock

The Supply Clock fills when:

- Extended travel without provisioning.
- GM spends 2+ CP on logistics failures.
- The party chooses to travel light for advantage.

Emptying the Clock

- Reaching civilization resets to Full.
- Group Survival check clears 1 segment.
- Downtime in safety removes 1 segment.

    Example: A week-long sea passage across the Dolmis with uncertain winds. A failed Navigation roll causes the GM to spend 2 CP—filling two segments. The party is now at Low Supply. A second failed roll fills another segment—Dangerously Low. Fatigue sets in. The sea, once a path, now gnaws at their endurance.

Fatigue: The Weight of the World

Fatigue represents **exhaustion, hunger, and strain**. It is cumulative and persistent. Each level of Fatigue forces the character to **re-roll one success** on their next action.

Fatigue Effects

- **1 Fatigue**: Re-roll one success.

- **2 Fatigue**: Re-roll one success (cumulative).

- **3 Fatigue**: Re-roll two successes.

- **4 Fatigue**: Collapse, KO, or spiritual break. Out of the scene until treated.

Clearing Fatigue

- A night's rest with adequate Supply removes 1 Fatigue.

- Fatigue cannot be removed while the party is Dangerously Low or Out of Supply.

  Narrative Note: Fatigue is not just physical—it can reflect mental strain, grief, or spiritual exhaustion. A failed ritual might leave a caster **Fatigue 2** from the backlash alone.

Followers and Assets: Power Beyond the Self

In Fate's Edge, players can invest XP into **Followers** and **Assets**—tools that extend their reach beyond personal skill. These are not mere stat blocks—they are **story agents** with their own motivations, risks, and narrative arcs.

Followers: On-Scene Allies

Followers are **on-screen allies** who can assist in their specialty. They are bought with XP and tracked by a **Cap** (their maximum assist bonus).

- **Cap 1** (3 XP): Porter, Squire.

- **Cap 2** (5 XP): Scout, Bodyguard.

- **Cap 3** (8 XP): Veteran operative.

- **Cap 4** (12 XP): Elite aide.

- **Cap 5** (17 XP): Exceptional lieutenant.

  Assist Dice: When relevant, a follower adds up to their Cap in dice to a roll (max +3 total assist).

  Follower Risks: Any roll involving a follower exposes them to Complications. The GM may spend CP to harm, separate, or compromise them.

Assets: Off-Scene Influence

Assets are **off-screen resources**—titles, safehouses, spy rings, charters. They solve problems between scenes but **cannot intervene mid-adventure**.

- **Minor** (4 XP): Safehouse, Petty Title.

- **Standard** (8 XP): Guild Section, Spy Ring.

- **Major** (12 XP): City Charter, Mercantile Fleet.

Activation Cost: 1 Boon or 2 XP. Each activation accomplishes one clear, plausible outcome.

Condition Tracks: All Assets and Followers have a **Condition Track**:

- **Maintained** → **Neglected** → **Compromised**

Neglected Assets impose a -1 die penalty. Compromised Assets are unavailable until repaired or recovered.

Boons: The Currency of Resilience

Boons are **narrative tokens** earned by embracing risk and moving the story forward. They reward **failure with texture**, not failure with nothing.

Earning Boons

- On a failed roll with meaningful Complications.

- Through clever or risky roleplay.

- Via backstory ties with other players.

Using Boons

- **Re-roll one die** after seeing the roll.

- **Activate an Off-Screen Asset** (preferred cost).

- **Convert 2 Boons → 1 XP** during downtime (max 1 XP/session).

Boon Cap: A character may hold a maximum of 5 Boons. Overflow converts to XP (2→1).

Design Note: Boons are not a "get out of jail free" card. They are earned by **leaning into the fiction**, not by fishing for failure. Reward players who take risks, not those who roll badly on purpose.

XP Awards: Growth Through Choice

XP in Fate's Edge is **meaningful currency**. It is not handed out for showing up—it is earned through **engagement, risk, and narrative impact**.

Session Awards

- **Attendance**: +2 XP

- **Major Objective Reached**: +2–4 XP

- **Discovery or Lore Unlocked**: +1–2 XP

- **Hard Choice Embraced**: +1–2 XP

- **Complication Spotlight**: +1–3 XP

- **Bond/Flag Driven Play**: +1–2 XP

- **GM Curveball Award**: +0–3 XP

Milestone Awards

At the end of a major arc:

- **+8–12 XP** to all players.

- **+2 XP bonus** for a signature moment.

  Complication Dividend: If a player accepts a high Complication card without mitigation:

- **Face Card**: +1 XP

- **Ace**: +2 XP

Narrative First: The Fiction Is the Ledger

In Fate's Edge, arrows, rations, and waterskins are tracked only in the fiction. Mechanics engage only when those resources become scarce. The focus is always on **narrative tension**, not bookkeeping.

Let the world breathe. Let the fiction lead. And when the dice say the world pushes back—**listen.**

3 Magic and Backlash

In **Fate's Edge**, magic is not a clean or safe art. It is a **dangerous negotiation with forces beyond mortal comprehension**. Every spell is a gamble—power on one side of the scale, consequence on the other. As the GM, your role is to make magic **feel weighty**, **thematic**, and **alive with risk**.

Philosophy of Magic

Magic in Fate's Edge is not about optimization or damage output. It is about **shaping the world through will, risk, and resonance**. The dice never merely ask, "Does it work?"—they whisper, "**What is the cost?**"

- **Volatility**: Magic is not fully understood. Every casting pushes against boundaries that resist being bent.

- **Risk**: Every spell generates **Complication Points**. These do not vanish—they manifest as **Backlash**.

- **Narrative Weight**: Casting is always a story moment. Even a "successful" spell alters the scene in ways the caster did not intend.

- **Thematic Consequence**: Backlash aligns with the opposing or uncontrolled element of the Art invoked.

The Casting Loop

All spellcasting in Fate's Edge follows a structured sequence called the **Casting Loop**. It unfolds across two phases of play: gathering strength, then weaving it into form.

1. Channel

The caster focuses, rolling **Wits + Arcana** to gather **Potential**. Each success becomes fuel for shaping the spell. Each **1 rolled adds Complication Points immediately**.

    Example: Kestra the Arcanist rolls to **Channel** a firebolt. She gets 4 successes and 2 CP. The GM spends 1 CP: a spark leaps from her fingers, scorching her sleeve.

2. Weave

On the following turn, the caster rolls **Wits + (Art)** to shape Potential into a defined effect. The **Description Ladder** applies:

- **Basic**: Roll as-is.

- **Detailed**: Re-roll one 1.

- **Intricate**: Re-roll all 1s and add one small narrative flourish if successful.

Example: Kestra Weaves the firebolt with an Intricate description—she calls the flame in the shape of a hawk. The GM allows the reroll and grants a small flourish: the fire-hawk circles once before striking, distracting an enemy.

3. Backlash

Complication Points spent by the GM manifest as **uncontrolled consequences**. These are **thematic** to the Art and scale with the number of points spent.

Backlash Severity Table

CP Spent	Typical Consequence
1–2	Minor nuisance or tell; short-lived cost, noise, or reveal.
3–4	Noticeable setback: a real hazard, condition, or new pressure clock.
5+	Major turn: scene shifts, a new foe/clock enters, or severe condition.

Example: Kestra Weaves her firebolt but rolls two 1s. The GM spends 3 CP for Backlash: the flames flare too wide, catching a tapestry and starting a small Hazard clock.

Thematic Backlash by Art

- **Pyromancy**: Flames leap to unattended surfaces; smoke blinds allies; heat weakens structures.

- **Umbramancy**: Illusions persist too long; unseen things whisper truths best left hidden; morale crumbles.

- **Geomancy**: Stone shifts unexpectedly; tremors crack foundations; runes pulse with old warnings.

- **Hydromancy**: Tides turn too fast; water becomes too mirror-still; currents pull in the unwary.

- **Vitalism**: Life is drawn from surroundings; plants wither; healing leaves scars.

Ritual Casting (Optional Rule)

Some workings are too great for a single will. A **ritual** allows multiple characters to join forces, pooling their dice and narrative effort—but the risk of Backlash rises with every participant.

Ritual Helper Cap

You may draw on **ceil(Arcana/2)** helpers (max 3). Each helper contributes as per the ritual rules and adds their own Complication risk.

Ritual Procedure

1. **Declare the Ritual**: The primary caster names the effect and how others can help.

2. **Channel Together**:

   - Primary caster rolls **Wits + Arcana**.
   - Each assistant rolls **Spirit + Relevant Skill**.
   - Each success adds +1 Potential.

- Each 1 contributes a Complication Point (CP) to the shared pool.

3. **Weave**: The primary caster rolls **Wits + (Art)**. Assistants may add dice if their contributions are narrated in play.

4. **Backlash**: Total all CPs. Apply normal Complication spending rules. Increase severity by +1 tier per assistant beyond the first.

Why Use Rituals?

- **Higher Ceiling**: Achieve effects impossible through normal spellcasting.

- **Shared Spotlight**: Every participant has narrative agency in the casting.

- **Bigger Risk**: More dice mean more 1s. Consequences can spread across the entire party.

Design Intent

Magic should **feel dangerous**, **thematic**, and **alive**. It should never be a shortcut. Every magical act alters not just the world, but the flow of the narrative itself. The dice are not your enemy—they are your collaborator in crafting a world where **power always demands a price**.

GM Tip: When a player channels magic, describe the air shifting, the runes flaring, the tension in the weave. Make the world **react** to their casting. Let magic feel **alive**.

4 Campaign Design and Long-Term Play

In **Fate's Edge**, campaigns are not just a string of adventures—they are **living narratives** shaped by player choices, faction dynamics, and the slow accumulation of influence. As the GM, you are the architect of long-term tension, guiding the story from its first spark to its final reckoning. This chapter introduces the tools that help you build and sustain that tension: the **Campaign Clocks**, the **Crown Spread**, and how to scale play for mixed-tier parties.

Campaign Clocks: Tracking Influence and Pressure

The **Campaign Clocks** are two dials that track the ebb and flow of player power and opposition over the course of a campaign. They are not mechanical scoreboards—they are **narrative thermometers**, showing how the world reacts to the PCs' actions.

Mandate (0–6)

Mandate represents the table's **public legitimacy and buy-in**. It tracks how much the world accepts the PCs' authority, influence, or mission.

- High Mandate: The PCs are recognized, respected, or feared. Doors open. Allies rally.

- Low Mandate: The PCs are ignored, questioned, or hunted. Every step is harder.

Crisis (0–6)

Crisis tracks the **opposition engine**—rivals, pressure rails, attrition. It shows how much the world pushes back.

- High Crisis: Enemies rise. Clocks tick. The world tightens around the PCs.

- Low Crisis: The PCs have breathing room. Opportunities bloom.

Advancing the Clocks

At the end of each major scene, you may advance one or both clocks based on:

- **Clean loss**: Rival codifies or escapes with leverage.

- **Public cost paid**: Feast, free day, penance.

- **Asset neglect**: Flagged Major degrades.

- **Evidence shifts**: Immaculate → Scorched.

Calling or Forcing the Crown

The campaign reaches its crescendo when one of two thresholds is met:

- **Player-Called Finale**: When **Mandate 6** and **Crisis 3**, the table may schedule the Finale at the next opportune site.

- **Forced Finale**: When **Crisis 6** (regardless of Mandate), the Rival forces a decision next arc.

A **Balanced Finale** occurs when both dials sit in the mid-band (4–5). Start both rails at +1; CP budget as normal.

The Crown Spread: Seeding the Campaign

At **Session 0**, draw the **Crown Spread**—a five-card ritual that seeds the campaign's themes, rivals, and finale conditions.

Drawing the Spread

Draw one card each of:

- **Spade**: Crown Site (where the monument is decided).

- **Heart**: Crown Rival (who can still stop it).

- **Club**: Crown Pressure (the rail that will bite if the table turtles).

- **Diamond**: Crown Leverage (the payoff that can be codified).

- **Wild**: Reveal last—Face = hidden patron steps out; Ace = the site becomes a 10-clock.

Interpreting the Spread

- **Spade (Site)**: A fortress? A shrine? A battlefield? The setting of the finale.

- **Heart (Rival)**: A noble? A cult? A spirit? Generate full motives for them (, , ,).

- **Club (Pressure)**: Crowd, Hazard, Escape Net—pick one and name it now.

- **Diamond (Leverage)**: Seasonal endorsement, city license, doctrinal clause—never rolls, only changes position.

- **Wild (Hidden Force)**: A wildcard element—ally, enemy, or omen.

Example: Spade = High-Mist Pass (Aeler); Heart = Margrave of Acasia (Face); Club = Curfew; Diamond = Seasonal Endorsement; Wild = Hidden Patron (Face).

The Finale Procedure

When the Crown is called, run the three-beat finale:

1. **Reckoning**: Defend or sanctify the record. Draw the Rival's motives. Place the Pressure rail.

2. **Crossing**: Stage the kinetic rail (Escape/Hunt/Hazard) that threatens to end the scene.

3. **Coronation**: Use the Diamond Leverage to sign, seal, or oath the monument.

Twist Collision (Finale Clause)

Exactly once, when the Rival's Twist contradicts their Belief, the table chooses:

- GM +1 CP, or

- Players reduce two ticks total across the rails.

Legacy Conversion: Epilogue

After the Finale, each PC draws 2 cards and answers epilogue prompts by suit. Then convert:

- **Major Asset → Institution** (12 XP): Permanent setting change.

- **Seasonal Endorsement → Doctrine Rider** (4 XP): Fold into the base Accord.

- **Follower (Cap 3+) → Stationed NPC** (0 XP): Promote to Custodian/Deputy Chair.

- **Rival → Fixture**: If they survive, they auto-tick the relevant rail whenever your style shows.

Scaling for Mixed-Tier Parties

As characters grow, their investments may diverge. One may be a blade-master, another a network architect. Keep scenes tense with these tools:

- **Structural Advantages**: Active buff, venue pennant, Follower Initiative unused, etc.

- **Over-Stack Rule**: If the crew enters with 2+ advantages, start rails at +1 OR GM banks +1 CP.

- **CP Floor**: Set minimum CP based on Tier = Obstacle Highest PC Tier.

GM Tip: Let lanes matter. Enforce one assistant max, +3 dice cap. Target consequences fairly—endangering a follower should escalate stakes, not punish creativity.

Narrative First: Let the World React

Campaign design in Fate's Edge is not about railroading—it's about **responding to player choices** with escalating consequences. Let the world shift. Let factions rise. Let the dice sing.
    And when the Crown is crowned—let the echo be heard across the Amaranthine.

5 Advanced GM Techniques

As the campaign deepens and the stakes rise, the GM must evolve from storyteller to **architect of tension**. This chapter explores advanced techniques for managing complex scenes, faction interplay, and custom content creation. These tools will help you keep the world dynamic, the choices meaningful, and the consequences **echoing**.

Using the Deck of Consequences

The **Deck of Consequences** is more than a randomizer—it is a **thematic engine** that externalizes risk and ensures that setbacks feel consistent and fair.

When to Draw

After a roll generates Complication Points, the GM may choose to:

- **Spend CP directly** for tailored consequences.

- **Draw from the Deck** for a thematically fitting twist.

Never do both for the same roll. If a drawn card contradicts established fiction, reinterpret or redraw to fit the suit and tone.

Suit Meanings

- **Hearts ()**: Emotional, social, or relational fallout.

- **Diamonds ()**: Resource strain, economic or material cost.

- **Clubs ()**: Physical harm, environmental danger, or escalation.

- **Spades ()**: Mystical, narrative, or positional twists.

Rank Severity

- **2–5**: Minor inconvenience or flavor complication.

- **6–9**: Moderate setback with some narrative teeth.

- **10–King**: Severe twist; alters stakes of the scene.

- **Ace**: Catastrophic turn; reshapes narrative or mission goal.

Example: A failed lockpick generates 2 CP. The GM draws: **Clubs 7** — "A guard rounds the corner just as the lock clicks." The PCs are not caught—but they are seen. The alarm clock begins to tick.

Travel and Exploration

Travel in Fate's Edge is not a downtime skip—it is a **narrative layer** filled with tension, discovery, and risk. Use the card-based travel system to seed each leg with place, people, pressure, and leverage.

Drawing Route Legs

For each travel leg, draw:

- **Spade**: Sets the scene (place).

- **Heart**: Introduces the local actor or faction.

- **Club**: Brings pressure (from Wilds or destination deck).

- **Diamond**: Codified outcome (papers, escorts, rights).

Set a travel clock by the highest rank:

- **2–5** → 4 segments

- **6–10** → 6 segments

- **J/Q/K** → 8 segments

- **Ace** → 10 segments

Example: Traveling the **Aelerian Passes**, the PCs draw: Spade (Avalanche gallery), Heart (Geometer), Club (Engineer requisition), Diamond (Underway Pass). Clock: 8. On failure, the GM spends CP to trigger a rockslide—Hazard +2.

Faction Dynamics

Factions are **living entities** with goals, rivals, and shifting loyalties. They are not static backdrops—they are **players in the story**.

Creating Factions

Each faction should have:

- **Core Motive**: What do they want?

- **Key Figures**: Who leads or represents them?

- **Resources**: What can they bring to bear?

- **Weaknesses**: What makes them vulnerable?

Faction Clocks

Track factional pressure with clocks:

- **Rising Influence** (6): Gaining power, allies, or territory.

- **Internal Strife** (6): Leadership challenged, morale low.

- **Public Scandal** (4): Reputation damaged, support wanes.

Example: The **Viterra Dawn Knights** gain Rising Influence as they rally to the new Queen—but suffer Internal Strife as old commanders resist her reforms.

Creating Custom Content

Fate's Edge thrives on **player agency** and **world customization**. When designing new Talents, Assets, or Prestige Abilities, follow these principles:

- **Narrative First**: Does it reinforce a theme or culture?

- **Mechanical Balance**: Does it fit within the XP economy?

- **Fictional Integration**: Can it be explained in-world?

Designing Talents

- **Early (3–5 XP)**: Once/scene ability, +1 die, or minor narrative edge.

- **Mid (6–10 XP)**: Once/session ability, significant edge, or codified outcome.

- **Prestige (12+ XP)**: Once/arc ability, scene-reshaping, or faction-level impact.

Example: **Backlash Soothing** (Wood Elf, 6 XP) — Once per session, reduce a magical Backlash by 2 points in natural terrain.

Designing Assets

- **Minor (4 XP)**: Safehouse, Petty Title.

- **Standard (8 XP)**: Spy Ring, Charter.

- **Major (12 XP)**: Fortress Lease, Mercantile Network.

Each Asset should have:

- **Activation Cost**: 1 Boon or 2 XP.

- **Scope**: What can it plausibly do?

- **Fictional Hook**: Why does it exist in the world?

Running Complex Scenarios

Heists and Infiltration

- **Positioning**: Controlled entries, distractions, asset use.

- **Social Rails**: Curfew, Crowd, Sanctity.

- **Physical Rails**: Hazard, Hunt, Escape.

GM Tip: Let the PCs plan—but make the world react. A guard changes shift. A noble arrives early. The lock is newer than expected.

Battles and Skirmishes

- **Group Actions**: Use the Lead system to coordinate.

- **Follower Risk**: Helpers can be endangered on 2+ CP spends.

- **Clocks**: Hazard (terrain), Hunt (enemy approach), Escape (retreat).

Political Intrigue

- **Leverage**: Diamonds and social rails determine influence.

- **Allies and Rivals**: Represented by Assets and Followers.

- **Public Image**: Tied to Mandate and Crisis clocks.

Narrative First: The World Reacts

In Fate's Edge, the world is not a puzzle to be solved—it is a **living system** that responds to player choices. Let factions shift. Let consequences ripple. And above all—let the story unfold.

Because in the end, it is not the GM who writes the legend.

It is the players.

You simply hold the quill.

5.1   Using CP at High Tier

- **Grades of Spend:** *1–2 CP* = shove (local bite) • *3–4 CP* = wrench (route/power rewire) • *5+ CP* = rewrite (scene/arc shifts, new Fronts).

- **Banking Rule (optional):** At end of a leg, convert unspent CP to world motion at **3 CP → tick 1 Front**. At end of a session, you may cash **5 CP → spawn** a fresh 4–6 segment Front tied to what the table cared about.

- **Diamond/Exposure Interlock:** *2 CP* can flip any **Diamond** already spent (collect its Debt now), *1 CP* can mark 1 *Exposure* on a named Asset/Patron. *4 CP* can suspend a visible Diamond until another is played.

- **Visibility:** Announce high-tier CP spends like weather. Players should understand the scale and inevitability even if they can still bargain.

5.2   Personal/Character Sinks

5.2.1   Reputation Backlash Cascade

CP Menu
3 CP: Start a *Reputation Debt* clock (6/8 segments) for a named region/faction.
+2 CP: Add cross-region contagion (adjacent port or court begins a 4-seg *Echo*).
5+ CP: Fill remaining segments now; enact a policy shift, import ban, or bounty grade change (permanent until campaigned down).

Mitigation: Not by rolls. Requires *public contrition*, *reparations*, or *structural change* scenes over downtime arcs. A **Diamond** can placate a gate for one beat, not erase the clock.

5.2.2 Legacy Complications

> **CP Menu**
>
> **3 CP:** Degrade *two* Assets or Holdings by 1 step each (Condition/Exposure).
> **4 CP:** Create a 4–6 segment *Maintenance Spiral* clock tying *three* Assets together; each scene without attention ticks it.
> **5+ CP:** Seize one Asset temporarily (trust breach, strike, garrison mutiny) until a concession or overhaul.

Mitigation: Hands-on visits, concessions, or replacing corrupt stewards; one concession can clear 2 segments.

5.2.3 Ancestral/Cultural Debt

> **CP Menu**
>
> **2 CP:** Ancestral emissary appears; impose a taboo or task this scene.
> **3–4 CP:** Start a 6–8 segment *Ancestral Debt* Front; spirits or councils withdraw small courtesies (Position –).
> **5+ CP:** Excommunication/shunning from key rites (no Host-right, no Craft-right) until a costly rite or concession.

Mitigation: Ritual, restitution, or binding *Geasa*. **Diamond**s can buy audience, not absolution.

5.3 World-State Sinks

5.3.1 Faction Stability Clocks

> **CP Menu**
>
> **3 CP:** Begin an *Instability* clock for a polity (6/8).
> **+1–2 CP/scene:** Protests, embargoes, or musters as ambient hazards.
> **5+ CP:** Trigger outcome: coup, regency, civil war, or intervention (creates a new long Front).

Mitigation: Summit scenes; shared **Diamond** spends from multiple decks (truce, warrants) reduce by 2.

5.3.2 Magical Resonance Buildup

> **CP Menu**
>
> **2 CP:** Residual hum—add DV +1 to *arcane* actions in the zone this scene.
> **3–4 CP:** Start a 6-seg *Resonance* clock; on each tick, convert one **Club** to *arcane misfire*.
> **5+ CP:** Wild surge event—rewrite a route (Aeler under, Mistlands echo, Valewood omission) until sealed.

Mitigation: Seal a ley seam (ritual + sacrifice), or spend three thematically apt **Diamond**s (e.g., *Ward-salt*, *Way-cord*, *Underway Pass*).

5.3.3 Economic Disruption

> **CP Menu**
>
> **2 CP:** Tariffs spike; pay +1 coin/favor per cargo move this leg.
> **3–4 CP:** Start *Market Chaos* (6). Each tick increases cost of **Diamond** plays by +1 favor or narrows their scope.
> **5+ CP:** Collapse a lane; must establish a new route or secure a charter to restore baseline costs.

Mitigation: Re-route via worked itineraries; win a charter (Thepyrgos/Harbourmaster/Kahfagia).

5.4 Narrative Momentum Sinks

5.4.1 Inevitable Consequences

> **Rule**
>
> Label a complication *Inevitable*. Its CP **must** be spent this act; you cannot bank it. If not spent by scene end, convert **3 CP → tick 1 Front** twice.

5.4.2 Prophecy Fulfillment

> **CP Menu**
>
> **Ace Echo:** Any *A* shown advances a *Fate* clock by +1.
> **3 CP:** Manifest a portent (omen, witness, self-fulfilling guard).
> **5+ CP:** Fulfil a verse—gain boon/doom; rewrite a bond or oath.

Mitigation: Change the terms (new oath, broken geas, sacrifice); costs a *permanent* concession.

5.4.3 Debt to Powers

> **CP Menu**
>
> **2 CP:** Demand: token sacrifice (memory, name, season of service).
> **4 CP:** Escalation: impose a new taboo; violating it gives the GM +2 CP each time.
> **6+ CP:** Collection: the Power chooses—companion, relic, or domain is forfeit until an epic quest.

Mitigation: Epic quests only; **Diamond** can delay collection one scene.

5.5 Relationship Sinks

5.5.1 Betrayal Networks

> **CP Menu**
>
> **3 CP:** Start a *Conspiracy* clock; name 2–3 rival nodes.
> **4 CP:** Coordinated strike—multi-front assault; add a second **Club** to the leg.
> **5+ CP:** Reveal a hidden ally's turncoat; lose an Asset/Follower until exposed or redeemed.

Mitigation: Dismantle nodes one by one (hearts as roles/motives); penance scenes for the traitor.

5.5.2 Loyalty Erosion

CP Menu

2 CP: Doubt—Follower acts at -1 effect this scene.
3–4 CP: *Dissent* clock among your people (6). On fill: strike/flight.
5+ CP: Schism—split off a faction under your banner with inverted values.

Mitigation: Personal time, gifts, or shared risk; clear 2 segments with a dedicated scene.

5.6 Meta Sinks

5.6.1 Narrative Weight (Legacy)

Rule

Log lasting outcomes in your *Campaign Ledger*. High-tier CP spends that rewrite, not just shove, must be recorded as canon for future arcs.

5.6.2 Player Choice Limitation (Constraint)

CP Menu

3 CP: Remove a lawful option (e.g., a pass or permit) from future draws in this region until campaigned back.
5+ CP: Close a class of leverage (no *escort* Diamonds function here) until a structural fix.

5.7 Campaign-Finale Grade

5.7.1 The Price of Power (Toll)

Each use of a once/arc or once/campaign Talent adds 1 to a shared *Toll* clock.

CP Menu

3 CP: The world balances a small book: collateral harm, lost ally, or new taboo.
5+ CP: Premise shift: the road, law, or magic behaves differently now (new core Front begins at 2/8).

5.7.2 Crown of Thorns (Sacrifice)

Rule

When you win big, name what bleeds: gains in one domain mandate loss in another. Cannot be mitigated; only redirected.

5.8   Integration Notes

- **Prestige Hooks:** Cursed Child → feed *Reputation Debt/Prophecy*. Stone-Speaker → *Resonance/Toll*. Last Dauphin → *Instability/Constraint*. Mist-Seer → *Debt to Powers/Fate*. Foedus Keeper → *Betrayal/Instability*.

- **Diamonds:** Show them face-up. High-tier CP spends interact by *flipping debt*, *suspending effect*, or *inflating cost*. Players can plan but not dodge.

- **Worked Example (Zakov):** After playing *Harbourmaster's Indulgence*, spend **4 CP** to open an *Admiralty Audit* (4) and mark *Reputation Debt: Zakov* (2/6). The job pops; the debt lingers.

6 Enhanced GM Play: Resource Management

6.1 GM as Participant

The Crown system works best when the GM is not just a narrator, but an active participant managing resources just like players. This creates a more collaborative and engaging experience for everyone at the table.

6.1.1 GM Relationship Management

Just as players track relationship dice with NPCs, the GM should track relationship dice with major factions and key NPCs. This creates bidirectional engagement where both sides have stakes in interactions.

Starting GM Relationships

Begin each campaign with 1-2 relationship dice per major faction:

- Political factions (nobility, merchants, clergy)

- Criminal organizations (guilds, syndicates, pirates)

- Military/civic authorities (guard, military, bureaucracy)

- Supernatural entities (fae, undead, spirits)

Relationship Shifts

GM relationship dice change based on player actions:

- Successful player interaction with faction: GM may gain/lose relationship dice

- Player betrayal of faction: GM gains relationship dice with antagonistic factions

- Player aid to faction: GM may lose relationship dice with enemy factions

Bidirectional Rolls

When players interact with NPCs, both sides roll:

- Player rolls their relationship dice with the NPC

- GM rolls their relationship dice with that faction

- Results determine the **quality** of interaction, not just success/failure

6.1.2 Information Economy

Transform information from a GM gift into a negotiated resource using existing leverage mechanics.

Player Information Requests

Players can spend leverage to purchase information:

- 1 leverage = Basic facts or surface details

- 2 leverage = Strategic insights or tactical advantages

- 3+ leverage = Major revelations or plot-critical information

GM Information Control

GM can control information flow through counter-spending:

- Spend relationship dice to withhold information

- Provide partial/cryptic information for reduced leverage cost

- Offer false information by spending antagonist relationship dice

Information Trading Example

Player: "I want to know who's behind the grain sabotage" (offers 2 leverage)

GM: "That's worth 3 leverage, but I'll accept 2 for partial information—you'll learn it's magical, but not the source"

Player: Accepts the trade

GM: Spends 1 relationship die with mystery faction to provide cryptic clue

6.2   Clock Authority Sharing

Players and GM share control over narrative pacing through leverage spending.

6.2.1   Player Clock Manipulation

Players can spend leverage to influence clock progression:

- **Spend 1 leverage to slow:** Delay clock by 1 segment

- **Spend 1 leverage to hasten:** Advance clock by 1 segment

- **Limit:** Maximum 1 segment change per player per scene

6.2.2   GM Clock Response

GM can spend relationship dice to counter player clock manipulation:

- Spend 1 relationship die to negate player clock change

- Spend 2 relationship dice to override and reverse player change

- Creates negotiation over pacing rather than unilateral GM control

6.3   Cultural Familiarity System

Track your expertise with different generator decks to enhance scenario quality.

6.3.1 Familiarity Tracking

Track familiarity points per deck:

- Each session using a deck: Mark 1 familiarity point

- 3 familiarity points: Can reroll one element from that deck per session

- 5 familiarity points: Can modify one element to better fit current narrative

- Familiarity decays if deck unused for 3 sessions

6.3.2 Familiarity Benefits

Higher familiarity provides better scenario generation:

- **Low familiarity (0-2):** Standard draws, accept what comes

- **Medium familiarity (3-4):** Reroll options for better fit

- **High familiarity (5+):** Modify elements to enhance narrative coherence

6.4 Session Momentum

Track how session resolution affects future gameplay through clock completion patterns.

6.4.1 Momentum Categories

Quick Resolution (3 segments): GM gains 1 temporary relationship die with helpful faction

Standard Resolution (4-6 segments): Status quo maintained

Extended Resolution (7+ segments): Players gain 1 leverage, GM gains 1 relationship die with antagonist faction

Unresolved (clock expires): Both sides gain relationship dice with chaotic/neutral factions

6.4.2 Momentum Application

Use momentum to influence future sessions:

- Carryover relationship dice affect NPC reactions

- Leverage gains provide more player options

- Antagonist relationship gains create new complications

6.5 Complication Bargaining

Allow players to request specific challenge types, making them active participants in narrative creation.

6.5.1 Player Challenge Requests

Players can request specific complication types:

- Social complications (feuds, negotiations, diplomacy)

- Physical challenges (combat, exploration, survival)

- Mystery elements (investigation, puzzles, hidden information)

- Moral dilemmas (ethical conflicts, difficult choices)

6.5.2   Bargaining Process

1. Player declares desired complication type and spends leverage (1-2)

2. GM draws from appropriate deck but allows player modification

3. GM can spend relationship dice to enhance complications

4. Both sides benefit from engaging, invested complications

6.5.3   Bargaining Example

Player: "I want a social complication—let's have the Utaran Captain question my honor" (spends 1 leverage)

GM: Draws from Black Banners Clubs: "Utaran honor code conflicts with condotta pragmatism"

Player: Spends 1 additional leverage to make it more personal—"make it about my father's old feud"

GM: Spends 1 relationship die with Utaran faction to make it more severe

Result: Enhanced personal conflict that both sides invested in making memorable

6.6   Implementation Workflow

6.6.1   Pre-Session Setup (5 minutes)

1. Review active decks for session

2. Check familiarity points for each deck

3. Set GM relationship dice for major factions

4. Note any momentum carryover from previous sessions

6.6.2   Session Management

- Track relationship shifts through player actions

- Allow leverage spending for clock manipulation

- Facilitate information trading through leveraged negotiation

- Manage familiarity points for deck optimization

6.6.3   Post-Session Wrap-up (2 minutes)

1. Adjust momentum based on clock resolution

2. Update familiarity points for used decks

3. Note relationship changes for next session

4. Plan any carryover elements

6.7   Benefits of Enhanced Play

6.7.1   For GMs

- Feel like active player through resource management
- Reduced preparation stress through reliable mechanics
- Enhanced narrative engagement through bidirectional investment
- Better pacing control through shared clock authority

6.7.2   For Players

- More meaningful choices through information economy
- Greater agency through complication bargaining
- Enhanced immersion through GM investment in factions
- Better balance through negotiated pacing

6.7.3   For the Game

- More collaborative storytelling experience
- Sustainable engagement through resource cycling
- Natural difficulty scaling through bidirectional mechanics
- Richer narrative through mutual investment

This enhanced approach transforms the Crown system from a tool for scenario generation into a complete collaborative storytelling framework where everyone at the table has meaningful stakes and resources to manage.

7 Setting Lore and Worldbuilding

The world of **Fate's Edge** is vast, ancient, and **alive with stories**. From the mist-shrouded fens of the Mistlands to the sun-scorched marches of Acasia, every region carries the weight of history, ambition, and forgotten oaths. As the GM, your role is not just to present this world—but to **breathe life into it**, letting it respond to the players' choices with texture, consequence, and mystery.

The Amaranthine Sea Region: Heart of Civilization

At the center of the known world lies the **Amaranthine Sea**—a vast inland sea ringed by successor states, nomad confederacies, and forgotten ruins. Once the heart of the **Utar Empire**, it now pulses with the legacy of that fallen power, its roads still traveled, its laws still whispered, its ghosts still watching.

Major Regions

- **Ecktoria**: The marble heart of imperial memory. Gladiators, coin-houses, and the Everflame faith still hold sway.

- **Vhasia**: A fractured sun—petty crowns, noble houses, and the ghost of kings who never quite died.

- **Viterra**: The last kingdom—lawful, proud, and wary of ambition. Knights of the Dawn patrol the highways.

- **Acasia**: Broken marches and the cosmopolitan port of **Silkstrand**—where coin speaks louder than crowns.

- **Ubral**: Highland clans and dwarven allies. A land of oaths, axes, and the quiet strength of the hill-folk.

- **The Mistlands**: Fog-drenched fens under dwarven protectorate. Bells, salt, and breath keep the old things at bay.

- **Thepyrgos**: City of stairs and scholars. High-elves, synods, and the last lanterns of old knowledge.

- **Kahfagia**: Maritime oligarchy of storms and krakens. Pilots, privateers, and the Tempest rites that bless them.

Cultures and Peoples

In Fate's Edge, culture is not just background—it is **identity**. Each people carries its own **Affinity**, shaping how they interact with magic, society, and the world itself.

Humans

- **Versatility**: Humans adapt. They learn fast, spread wide, and leave marks.
- **Subcultures**: Ecktorians (imperial), Vhasians (noble), Viterrans (lawful), Acasians (mercantile), Ubral (clannish), Tulkani (nomadic).

Dwarves (Aeler)

- **Affinity**: Stone-Sense. They read stone like scripture.
- **Types**: Mountain Dwarves (deep kings), Hill Dwarves (surface allies), Spirit Shields (ancestral warriors).

Elves (Lethai)

- **Wood Elves (Lethai-al)**: Mist people. Druidic, fey-touched, cycle-bound.
- **High Elves (Lethai-thora)**: Memory-keepers. Sequestered, scholarly, haunted by exile.

Ykrul

- **Affinity**: Blood Memory. After battle, they recall the foe's tactics.
- **Types**: Steppe Riders, Mountain Clans, River Raiders.

Other Cultures

- **Tulkani**: Shadowbinders and wanderers. Whisper-cant and hidden networks.
- **Linn**: Skerry raiders. Storm-oaths, mist-pilots, and whale-road kings.
- **Aelinnel**: Stone and bough. Gnomes who count the world in numbers and names.
- **Aelaerem**: Hearth-folk. Halflings who remember the old ways.

Magic and the Arcane

Magic in Fate's Edge is not a science—it is a **pact**, a **rite**, a **risk**. Each school of magic is tied to a cultural or elemental philosophy.

Schools of Magic (Arts)

- **Pyromancy**: Fire, light, transformation.
- **Hydromancy**: Water, flow, restoration.
- **Geomancy**: Earth, structure, resonance.
- **Umbramancy**: Shadow, silence, misdirection.
- **Vitalism**: Life, healing, growth.
- **Thaumaturgy**: Holy force, sanctity, divine law.

Cultural Traditions

- **Dwarves**: Geomancy, ritual forging, ancestral communion.

- **Wood Elves**: Umbramancy, nature rites, Backlash Soothing.

- **High Elves**: Memory-weaving, arcane theory, Echo-Walking.

- **Ykrul Shamans**: Vitalism, blood-rites, spirit-talking.

- **Tulkani**: Shadowbinding, forbidden pacts, taboo magic.

Religion and Power Structures

Faith in Fate's Edge is not abstract—it is **active**, **political**, and often **dangerous**.

The Everflame

The dominant faith of Ecktoria and the western shores. Fire is holy—Adar, Odur, Akilesh as facets of one flame. Zealots, inquisitors, and gladiators all serve the same god.

The Light

A reformation of the Everflame, rooted in Viterra. Emphasizes mercy, literacy, and lawful order. Less fire, more parchment.

Dwarven Ancestor Worship

The Stone remembers. Dwarves commune with the dead through ritual, runes, and the deep silence of the mountain.

Ykrul Shamanism

Spirits walk among the living. Shamans read omens, call the hunt, and speak for the Sky-Spirit with voice and blade.

Local Cults and Heresies

- **Ikasha, She Who Sleeps**: Whispered matron of the Tulkani.

- **The Pale Shepherd**: A figure from Aelaerem folklore—comes when lambs are born, and when people go missing.

- **The Cursed Child of Silkstrand**: A rumor more than a person—whose laughter ends sieges.

Echoes of Empire

The **Utar Empire** is gone—but its shadow lingers. Roads still bear its mile-stones. Laws still echo in courts. And in the ruins, something waits.

- **Imperial Relics**: Functional, dangerous, often cursed.

- **Broken Laws**: Old edicts still enforced by zealots or spirits.

- **Lost Provinces**: Places where the map ends, and the world begins to breathe.

Building Your World

Fate's Edge is a **collaborative world**. You don't need to build everything—just enough to **spark wonder** and **invite choice**.

- **Start Local**: A village, a keep, a shrine. Let it breathe.

- **Tie to Culture**: Every place should reflect the people who built it.

- **Add a Secret**: Every place should hide something—lore, danger, or opportunity.

Example: The **Salt Gate** in Silkstrand is a customs quay—but beneath it lies a sealed vault where the old Utar mages once stored forbidden salts. A whisper, a tide, and the vault may breathe again.

Let the World Breathe

In Fate's Edge, the world is not a backdrop—it is a **character**. It watches. It remembers. And it **responds**.

Let the bells ring. Let the mist rise. And let the players write their names in the ledger of fate.

8 Running Specific Scenarios

In **Fate's Edge**, no two scenes play out the same way. The dice shift. The world reacts. And the players shape the story through bold choices and desperate gambits. This chapter offers guidance for running the most common—and most crucial—types of scenes in the game: **heists, battles, political intrigue, exploration**, and **mysteries**. Each is a lens into the world's tension, and each rewards the GM who leans into narrative and consequence.

Heists and Infiltration

A heist is not about perfect plans—it's about **controlled chaos**. The PCs are not ghosts—they are **agents of disruption**, and the world will respond.

Scene Setup

- **Entry Position**: Controlled, Risky, or Desperate?
- **Social Rails**: Curfew, Crowd, Sanctity.
- **Physical Rails**: Hazard, Hunt, Escape.
- **Assets and Followers**: Can they create distractions or bypass security?

Example Scene: Infiltrating the Vhasian Château

The PCs seek to steal a sealed charter from a noble's vault. The GM frames the scene:

- **Position**: Risky (guards patrol, windows shuttered).
- **Social Rail**: Curfew (the lord has ordered all gates barred by dusk).
- **Physical Rail**: Hunt (bloodhounds circle the grounds).

The PCs split up: one charms a servant for key access (Presence + Sway), another distracts the guards with a fake alarm (Wits + Skullduggery), and a third scales the wall (Body + Athletics). Each roll adds tension—successes advance the plan, but Complication Points trigger new dangers.

GM Tips

- **Let the world respond**: A guard changes shift. A noble returns early.
- **Use clocks to escalate**: Hunt +1 when an alarm sounds. Curfew tightens as bells ring.
- **Offer forks**: Partial success means progress—but at a cost. Let players choose.

Battles and Skirmishes

Combat in Fate's Edge is not about hit points—it's about **momentum**, **position**, and **risk**. Battles are **narrative spaces**, not stat-check marathons.

Scene Setup

- **Tactical Position**: Controlled (ambush), Risky (even fight), Desperate (outnumbered).

- **Group Actions**: Use the Lead system to coordinate.

- **Follower Risk**: Helpers can be endangered on 2+ CP spends.

- **Clocks**: Hazard (terrain), Hunt (enemy approach), Escape (retreat).

Example Scene: Clash in the Mistlands

A reaver band ambushes the PCs on a foggy causeway. The GM sets:

- **Position**: Desperate (fog limits vision, reavers surround).

- **Hazard Clock**: 6 segments (rising mist, unstable footing).

- **Hunt Clock**: 6 segments (more reavers incoming).

The PCs fight, rally, and retreat—but not without cost. A follower takes Harm 1. The mist hides them—for now.

GM Tips

- **Focus on stakes**: What happens if the PCs lose? What if they win ugly?

- # Political Intrigue

  Intrigue is a **dance of leverage, lies, and legacy**. It rewards patience, perception, and the courage to **burn bridges** for greater gains.

  Scene Setup

  – **Social Rails**: Crowd (public opinion), Curfew (timing), Sanctity (reputation).

  – **Example Scene: Council of the Three Greens**

  The PCs seek to sway the moot in their favor. The GM sets:

  * **Crowd Rail**: 6 segments (tempers flare, factions shout).
  * **Sanctity Rail**: 4 segments (accusations of heresy fly).
  * The PCs must navigate shifting loyalties, whispered betrayals, and the ever-present threat of exile.

  GM Tips

  ## Exploration and Mysteries

  Exploration is not just about maps—it's about **discovery**, **danger**, and the **unknown**. Mysteries reward curiosity, caution, and the willingness to **dig deeper**.

Scene Setup

· **Example Scene: The Root Gallery Beneath the Oak Hill**

The PCs descend into a fae-haunted ruin. The GM sets:

· **Hazard Clock**: 6 segments (roots shift, light fails).

· Each roll reveals a new danger—or a hidden truth. A failed roll might trigger a fae encounter. A success might uncover a lost relic.

GM Tips

· Let the Dice Guide You

In Fate's Edge, every scene is a chance to **push the story forward**. Let the dice sing. Let the world respond. And above all—let the players **own the consequences**.

Because in the end, it is not the GM who writes the legend.

It is the players.

You simply hold the quill.

9   Appendix: Tools and Tables

This appendix provides quick-reference tools, sample content, and interpretive guides to support your game. Whether you're running a quick session or a long campaign, these tables and tips will help you keep the world alive and the tension high.

Quick Reference Sheets

Outcome Matrix

Successes vs DV	Outcome
S DV, C = 0	Clean Success: Intent achieved crisply.
S DV, C > 0	Success & Cost: Intent achieved, but GM spends CP for complicatio
0 < S < DV	Partial: Progress with a fork—accept cost OR concede ground.
S = 0	Miss: No progress. GM spends CP now OR offers Devil's Bargain.

Complication Point (CP) Spend Menu

· **1 CP**: Noise, trace, +1 Supply segment; tool becomes Compromised.
· **2 CP**: Alarm, lose position, lesser foe; traveler gains Fatigue 1.
· **3 CP**: Reinforcements, key gear breaks, rail tick.
· **4+ CP**: Major turn—trap, authority arrival, scene shift.

Position Descriptions

· **Controlled**: You act on your terms.
· **Risky**: You act under pressure.
· **Desperate**: The odds are stacked against you.

Difficulty Value (DV) Guidelines

DV	Situation
1	Routine: Clear intent, modest stakes, controlled environment.
2	Pressured: Time pressure, mild resistance, partial info.
3	Hard: Hostile conditions, active opposition, precise timing.
4+	Extreme: Multiple constraints, high precision, dramatic failure.

Sample NPCs

Encounters

· **Bandit Skirmisher**: Body 2, Wits 2. Melee 2, Stealth 1. Light armor, opportunistic.
· **Ykrul Rider**: Body 4, Wits 3. Riding 3, Melee 3. Mobile, brutal.
· **Street Bravo**: Presence 3, Body 2. Dueling 3. Quick to anger.

Foils & Rivals

· **Ambitious Scribe**: Wits 3, Presence 3. Intrigue 3, Lore 2. Always knows a rumor.
· **Mercenary Captain**: Body 4, Spirit 3. Command 3, Melee 4. Pragmatic, dangerous ally.
· **Flame Preacher**: Presence 4, Spirit 3. Oratory 4, Faith 3. Incites mobs.

Prestige NPCs

· **High Elf Loremaster**: Wits 5, Spirit 4. Lore 5, Arcana 4. Knows secrets older than nations.
· **Dwarven Forge-Patriarch**: Body 5, Spirit 4. Craft 5, Command 4. Commands stone and steel.
· **Ykrul Warglord**: Body 5, Presence 4. Command 4, Melee 5. Unites clans with blood and will.

Deck of Consequences Interpretation Guide

Hearts (Emotional/Social)

· **2–5**: Minor offense, awkward moment.
· **6–9**: Relationship strain, public embarrassment.
· **10–K**: Betrayal, scandal, loss of trust.
· **Ace**: Heartbreak, exile, shattered alliance.

Diamonds (Resources/Wealth)

· **2–5**: Minor loss, delayed payment.
· **6–9**: Gear failure, debt incurred.
· **10–K**: Major asset lost, bankruptcy.
· **Ace**: Total ruin, legacy debt.

Clubs (Physical/Harm)

· **2–5**: Bruise, scrape, fatigue.
· **6–9**: Wound, gear damaged, position lost.
· **10–K**: Severe injury, ally down, structural collapse.
· **Ace**: Death, dismemberment, permanent loss.

Spades (Mystical/Narrative)

· **2–5**: Omen, whisper, strange coincidence.
· **6–9**: Curse triggered, spirit appears, past returns.
· **10–K**: Arcane backlash, forbidden knowledge revealed.
· **Ace**: Reality bends, godlike force intervenes.

Campaign Clock Examples

Mandate Advancement Triggers

· Public victory in battle or debate.
· Successful resolution of a major crisis.
· Recognition by a powerful faction or ruler.

Crisis Advancement Triggers

· Rival faction gains influence or territory.
· Asset neglect or betrayal.
· Scandal or public loss of trust.

Travel Clock Sizes

· **2–5**: 4 segments (short leg, low risk).
· **6–10**: 6 segments (standard journey).
· **J/Q/K**: 8 segments (long or dangerous route).
· **Ace**: 10 segments (epic or supernatural travel).

Follower and Asset Condition States

· **Maintained**: Full capability.
· **Neglected**: -1 die penalty; narrative wear.
· **Compromised**: Unavailable until repaired or recovered.

Boon Economy Quick Guide

· **Earn**: From embracing complications, partial successes, hard choices.
· **Spend**: Re-roll die | Activate Asset (1 Boon) | Convert 2→1 XP.
· **Limit**: Max 5 Boons, overflow converts to XP (2→1, max 2/session).

Let the World Sing

These tools are not meant to constrain your game—they are meant to **support your vision**. Use them to keep tension high, consequences real, and the story moving forward.
Because in the end, it is not the GM who writes the legend.
It is the players.
You simply hold the quill.

Perfect! Let's create a comprehensive **Index** for the GM Guide. This will help GMs quickly locate specific rules, concepts, and tools throughout the document.

—

File: 'chapter$_1$0$_i$ndex.tex'

"'latex

Index