Fate's Edge: Player's Guide

Nicholas A. Gasper

October 6, 2025

Fate's Edge: Player's Guide

Copyright
© Nicholas A. Gasper

Contents

Chapter 1

Welcome to Fate's Edge

A world where every choice carries weight, every spell risks backlash, and every legend is written in the shadow of consequence.

Welcome to **Fate's Edge**, a tabletop roleplaying game where narrative drives mechanics, and every decision shapes not only your character's path—but the world around them. This is not a game of perfect successes or clean victories. It is a game of risk, drama, and legacy.

What Is This Game?

Fate's Edge is a narrative-first RPG where:

- Every roll introduces potential for triumph *and* complication

- Magic is powerful—but dangerous

- Choices ripple outward, shaping character arcs and the setting

- Growth is meaningful, earned through experience spent on skills and assets

This guide helps you build a character, understand the setting, and step into a world where your actions matter.

Core Principles

The game is built on four key ideas:

Narrative First Mechanics serve the story. Rules reward descriptive play and creative problem-solving.

Risk Creates Drama Every roll carries tension. Even success may come at a cost.

Meaningful Growth Experience is a currency of choice. Invest in yourself or your influence on the world.

Consequences Matter No action is free. Every choice changes the fiction.

Style of Play

Expect cinematic, collaborative storytelling:

- Stories driven by character choices

- A world that reacts to your decisions

- Themes of legacy, sacrifice, and moral choices

Whether you're a lone duelist, a scheming mastermind, or a spirit-touched outlander, your path is yours to forge.

Guide Structure

This Player's Guide contains:

- **Core Mechanics** — Action resolution, experience spending, consequences

- **Character Creation** — Attributes, skills, paths, and archetypes

- **Magic and Talents** — Dangerous arts and unique abilities

- **World and Lore** — Lands, peoples, and cultures

- **Assets and Allies** — Building influence beyond yourself

- **Appendices** — Quick references and generators

How to Use This Book

Read cover to cover or jump to relevant sections. Each chapter stands alone while connecting to broader themes.

Use with the *System Reference Document* for full mechanical support.

Getting Started

This is a game of bold choices and lasting consequences. Your story is written in decisions—not dice rolls.

Welcome to the Edge. The world is watching.

What will you risk to reshape the world?

Flavor is Free

Players: Remember that **flavor is free**!
Add descriptive details, cultural elements, and atmospheric touches without spending resources or requiring rolls. Want to parry with a traditional technique? Go ahead! Want to describe seasonal festivals during a social roll? Perfect!
Flavor enriches the narrative without changing mechanical outcomes. Describe your character's background, customs, or scene details. The Game Master should encourage this and reciprocate. Mechanics determine success or failure, but flavor determines the story we tell.

Chapter 2

Core Mechanics

In this game, every action matters. The dice don't just tell you if you succeed—they shape the story by introducing tension, risk, and consequence. Fate's Edge is designed to keep the story moving forward, even when things go wrong. This chapter covers the core resolution system and how every roll changes the narrative.

2.1 Basic Dice Mechanics

When you attempt a significant action, you roll a pool of six-sided dice (d6s). The size of your pool is determined by two factors:

$$DicePool = Attribute + Skill$$

Attribute (1–5) Broad traits like strength, wit, or charm.

Skill (0–5) Training or expertise in a specific area.

Reading the Dice

Each die that rolls **4 or higher** counts as a **Success**. Each die that rolls a **1** generates a **Story Beat (SB)**.

Die Result	Effect
4–6	+1 Success
1	+1 Story Beat (SB)
2–3	No effect

Example: Lyra the rogue has Agility 3 and Stealth 2. Her dice pool is 5 dice. She rolls: 6, 4, 2, 1, 5. That gives her 3 Successes and 1 Story Beat. The GM sets the Difficulty Value at 2. Lyra succeeds at sneaking past the guards, but the GM now has 1 SB to spend—perhaps the guards hear something faintly and become suspicious.

2.2 Difficulty Value (DV)

Before rolling, the Game Master sets a **Difficulty Value (DV)**—the target number of Successes needed.

DV	Situation
1	Routine action, no pressure
2	Pressured, mild opposition
3	Difficult, active resistance
4+	Extreme, high stakes

Tip for Players: A DV of 2 is the most common challenge. Assume that if the GM asks you to roll, there is something at stake—whether it is your safety, your resources, or your reputation.

2.3 Outcome Matrix

Compare your Successes against the DV:

Outcome	Effect
Clean Success	Goal achieved cleanly
Success & Cost	Goal achieved with complication
Partial	Progress but with difficult choice
Miss	No progress; complication occurs

Player-Facing Example: A fighter swings her sword to disarm a bandit. She rolls 2 Successes against DV 2—a Clean Success. The bandit's blade clatters away. Later, the same fighter tries to kick down a reinforced door with 3 dice against DV 3. She rolls only 2 Successes. This is a Partial. She cracks the door frame, but the noise attracts attention. The story moves forward either way.

2.4 Advancement Points

When you **miss** on a significant action, you gain **1 Advancement Point**. These points are a reward for engaging with the system: you grow when you stumble.

Significant Action Requirements

A miss awards an Advancement Point only if:

1. Procedure was followed correctly

2. Stakes were clearly stated

3. Consequence actually occurs

Why This Matters: You are never punished for playing the game boldly. Even failure teaches your character something—mechanically through Advancement Points, narratively through scars, experience, or wisdom.

Carryover Limits

At the end of each scene, reduce held Advancement Points to a maximum of **2**. Excess points are lost. This encourages you to spend them rather than hoard.

Conversion to Experience

Once per session, during downtime, you may convert **2 Advancement Points** into **1 Experience Point**. Maximum 2 XP per session this way.

2.5 Story Beats (SB)

Story Beats are narrative tools the Game Master uses to introduce twists and tension. They keep the story alive with complications and surprises.

What SB Can Do

The GM may spend SB to:

- Introduce new threats or complications

- Drain resources (time, gear, position)

- Reveal hidden dangers

- Cause collateral damage

SB Spend Examples

- **1 SB** — Minor complication, noise, trace

- **2 SB** — Moderate setback, alarm raised

- **3 SB** — Serious trouble, reinforcements arrive

- **4+ SB** — Major turn, scene shifts dramatically

Player Advice: Don't fear Story Beats—they're not punishment. They are fuel for drama, ensuring the spotlight never dims.

2.6 The Harm Clock

Physical injury is tracked on a **Harm Clock** with 4 segments:

Harm Level	Effects
Harm 1	-1 die on physical actions
Harm 2	-2 dice, movement halved
Harm 3	-3 dice, incapacitated
Harm 4	Critical condition

Recovering Harm

- **Minor treatment** — Remove 1 Harm after rest

- **Proper medical care** — Remove 2 Harm after significant time

- **Extended recovery** — Remove all Harm after days/weeks

Example: Jorin the mercenary takes a sword cut (Harm 1). He suffers -1 die to physical actions until treated. After binding the wound and resting, the Harm fades.

2.7 Fatigue

Fatigue represents exhaustion, strain, or mental stress. It mirrors Harm in penalties but recovers faster with proper rest, food, or encouragement. Roleplay this—it's a chance to show your character's humanity.

2.8 Assistance

Characters can help each other. One helper per action may provide assistance dice, up to +3 dice total from all sources.

Example: Two thieves cooperate to pick a complex lock. The lead thief has Dexterity 3 + Tools 2 = 5 dice. The helper adds 1 die, making 6. Cooperation often turns failure into tense success.

2.9 Asset Use

Your character's resources, contacts, or gear—called **Assets**—can tilt the odds in your favor.

- **Free use** — Each Asset has a free effect per session

- **Experience activation** — Spend 2 XP for additional uses

- **Advancement Point activation** — Spend 1 Point for dramatic effect

Narrative Use: Assets are more than bonuses—they're hooks for roleplay. A friendly tavernkeeper, a noble's signet, or a trusty horse might tip the balance at the perfect moment.

2.10 Game Structure

Time Scales

Moment A heartbeat, a single action

Some Time A few minutes, a short activity

Significant Time Hours, extended effort

Days Large-scale endeavors

Game Units

Scene Basic narrative unit, covers specific conflict

Player Turn Individual action within a scene

Session One game session (3–6 hours)

Campaign Entire story arc

Player Perspective: Think in scenes, not minutes. Every scene is a chance to shine. Every session builds toward the long arc of your campaign.

2.11 Action Resolution Steps

1. Describe your intent and method

2. Build dice pool: Attribute + Skill

3. Roll d6s, count **Successes** and **Story Beats**

4. Compare Successes to **DV**

5. Apply outcome from **matrix**

6. Game Master spends **SB** if applicable

7. Earn **Advancement Points** for meaningful engagement

Quick Reference

Dice Pool: Attribute + Skill d6s
Success: 4–6 on each die
Setback: 1 on any die gives SB to GM
DV: 1 (easy) to 4+ (extreme)
Harm: 4-level clock with penalties
Advancement: Gain on significant misses

Chapter 3

Character Advancement

In this game, growth isn't just about numbers—it's about defining who your character becomes. Advancement through **Experience Points (XP)** lets you shape your capabilities, influence, and legacy in the world. Every choice you make with XP is a statement about your character's priorities and the mark they leave behind.

3.1 Earning Experience Points

XP represents learning through action. You earn it by engaging meaningfully with the world and its challenges, whether that's by triumph, failure, or bold experimentation.

Session Breakdown

At the end of each session, the Game Master awards XP based on:

- **Base Participation**: +2 XP for attending and contributing

- **Major Objectives**: +2–4 XP for completing significant story goals

- **Discoveries**: +1–2 XP for uncovering important lore, locations, or secrets

- **Difficult Choices**: +1–2 XP for making hard moral or strategic decisions

- **Story Engagement**: +1–3 XP for embracing complications and narrative twists

- **Personal Goals**: +1–2 XP for pursuing your character's individual storylines

Example: At the end of a session, the party rogue earns +2 XP for participation, +2 XP for helping the group retrieve an artifact, and +1 XP for pushing a personal rivalry subplot—5 XP total.

Game Pace Options

The GM can adjust advancement speed to match the campaign tone:

Mode	XP/Session	Tone
Gritty	4–6 XP	Hard choices, slow growth
Standard	6–10 XP	Balanced progression
Epic	10–14 XP	Heroic, rapid development

Player Tip: If you want a sweeping, mythic tale, suggest an Epic pace. For a long, hard road where each gain feels hard-earned, lean into Gritty.

Arc Completion Bonus

When you finish a major story arc (typically 3–6 sessions), everyone receives +8–12 XP. One player

may earn an additional +2 XP for a particularly memorable contribution. This celebrates the story's milestones, not just individual rolls.

3.2 Spending Experience Points

XP is your currency for growth. You can invest it in three broad areas, each representing a different approach to becoming more capable.

1. Personal Improvement

Invest in your core capabilities—what you can do yourself.

Attributes   Cost = New Rating × 3 XP

- Raising Body from 2 to 3 costs $3 \times 3 = 9$ XP

- Raising Spirit from 4 to 5 costs $5 \times 3 = 15$ XP

- Requires downtime equal to new rating in days

Skills   Cost = New Level × 2 XP

- Improving Lore from 1 to 2 costs $2 \times 2 = 4$ XP

- Advancing Melee from 3 to 4 costs $4 \times 2 = 8$ XP

- Requires downtime equal to new level in days

Example: Kara wants to improve her Swordsmanship from 2 to 3. She saves 6 XP and spends three in-game days training with her mentor. This creates roleplay hooks and a sense of lived growth.

2. Resources and Influence

Build your worldly presence—what you can command.

Minor Resource   (4 XP, 1 week)

- Small shop, minor contact network, basic workshop

- Provides small but reliable benefits

- Example: A trusted informant who gathers rumors

Standard Resource   (8 XP, 2 weeks)

- Decent-sized business, skilled followers, specialized equipment

- Significant benefits with some upkeep

- Example: A smuggling operation with two boats

Major Resource   (12 XP, 1 month)

- Large enterprise, elite team, rare capabilities

- Powerful advantages with substantial upkeep

- Example: A trading company with international contacts

Player Tip: Resources expand the story into new directions. A spy network creates intrigue; a workshop sparks invention; a guild hall cements influence.

3. Special Abilities

Develop unique capabilities that set you apart.

General Abilities   (Cost varies)

- Universal benefits like improved recovery, bonus dice in specific situations, or unique combat techniques

- Typically cost 4–8 XP

- Example: "Quick Recovery" - heal 1 additional Harm when resting

Cultural Abilities (Cost varies)

- Heritage-based skills tied to your character's background

- Often require specific fictional positioning

- Example: "Stone Sense" (dwarven) - intuitive understanding of stonework

Advanced Abilities (12+ XP)

- Powerful capstone features available at higher tiers

- Often have significant narrative weight and requirements

- Example: "Master Diplomat" - can reroll failed social checks once per session

Example: A veteran bard invests in "Silver Tongue" (6 XP), allowing them to sway hostile crowds once per session. This becomes their defining trick in tense negotiations.

3.3 Character Development Paths

Your spending choices define your character's growth direction. Consider these archetypal paths:

The Specialist

70–90% personal improvement, 0–10% resources, 0–20% abilities

- **Strengths**: Exceptional individual capability, reliable in spotlight moments

- **Weaknesses**: Limited influence, vulnerable to being isolated

- **Best for**: Solo operatives, elite warriors, master artisans

- **Example**: A duelist who invests heavily in combat skills and physical attributes

The Leader

50–65% personal, 15–25% resources, 15–25% abilities

- **Strengths**: Well-rounded, can handle diverse challenges, good support

- **Weaknesses**: Jack-of-all-trades, not exceptional in any area

- **Best for**: Party faces, field commanders, investigators

- **Example**: A merchant-prince with decent combat skills, good social abilities, and a network of contacts

The Mastermind

25–40% personal, 35–55% resources, 20–40% abilities

- **Strengths**: Extensive influence, can solve problems indirectly, strategic power

- **Weaknesses**: Personally vulnerable, complex upkeep, domino-effect risks

- **Best for**: Spymasters, crime lords, wealthy patrons

- **Example**: An information broker with modest personal skills but an extensive spy network

Player Note: These are not rigid templates. Mix and match to discover unique growth arcs.

3.4 Training and Development Time

Most improvements require downtime to reflect the effort of learning and integration.

Standard Time Requirements

- **Attribute increase**: New rating in days

- **Skill improvement**: New level in days

- **Resource acquisition**: 1 week to 1 month depending on scope

- **Ability learning**: Typically 3–10 days

Accelerated Development

You can attempt to learn things more quickly, but this carries risks:

- The GM creates a **Risk Clock** with 4 segments

- If the clock fills during rushed training, the new capability has flaws:

  - Attribute/Skill: -1 die penalty until you spend proper downtime
  - Resource: Loyalty problems or functional limitations
  - Ability: Unreliable or with unintended side effects

Example: The wizard crams advanced spellwork into a frantic three days. She gains the ability, but her Risk Clock fills—her spells now sputter unpredictably until she retrains.

3.5 Character Progression Tiers

As you accumulate XP and capabilities, you advance through tiers that represent your growing reputation and influence.

Tier I: Novice (0–40 XP)

- Learning the ropes, establishing yourself

- Local reputation, modest capabilities

- **Typical assets**: Basic equipment, a few contacts

Tier II: Experienced (41–90 XP)

- Proven capability, recognized skills

- Regional reputation, reliable in your specialty

- **Typical assets**: Skilled followers, specialized equipment

Tier III: Veteran (91–150 XP)

- Master of your craft, significant influence

- National reputation, can handle major challenges

- **Typical assets**: Multiple operations, elite teams

Tier IV: Elite (151–220 XP)

- Exceptional capability, major influence

- International reputation, shapes events

- **Typical assets**: Organizations, unique capabilities

Tier V: Master (221+ XP)

- Legendary status, world-changing influence

- Historical reputation, defines eras

- **Typical assets**: Nations, legendary artifacts

3.6 Managing Allies and Followers

Characters who work with you require maintenance and carry risks.

Acquisition Costs

- **Skilled helper**: Capability rating squared in XP

- **Example**: A capability 3 scout costs 9 XP

Upkeep Requirements

- Each downtime period, spend XP equal to their capability rating

- Alternative: Dedicate a scene to maintaining the relationship

Risk Management

- When the GM spends 2+ Story Beats, allies may face consequences instead of you

- Allies can solve problems off-screen once per downtime, but this generates complications

3.7 Strategic Advancement Considerations

Early Game (Tiers I–II)

Focus on survival and establishing your niche:

- Invest in core competencies first

- Build a small but reliable support network

Mid Game (Tier III)

Expand your influence and specialize:

- Develop your signature capabilities

- Build substantial resources

Late Game (Tiers IV–V)

Shape the world around you:

- Pursue advanced abilities

- Build organizations or movements

- Leave a legacy

3.8 Advancement Philosophy

Remember that advancement serves the story. The best choices:

- Reflect your character's experiences and growth

- Create interesting new capabilities and complications

- Enhance the group's collective abilities

Final Thought: Every XP spent changes not just your character sheet, but your character's story. Choose investments that make your hero more interesting to play and watch evolve.

XP Planning Guide

Early Tier Priorities:

- Core attribute to 3 (9 XP)

- Key skills to 2–3 (4–8 XP each)

- 1–2 minor resources (8 XP total)

Mid Tier Expansion:

- Attributes to 4 (12 XP)

- Specialization skills to 4 (8 XP)

- Standard resources (8 XP each)

- Cultural abilities (6–10 XP)

Late Tier Mastery:

- Capstone abilities (12+ XP)

- Major resources (12 XP)

- Legacy projects

Chapter 4

Magic and Special Abilities

Magic in this game is powerful but dangerous—a negotiation with reality itself that always carries risks. This chapter covers the core magical systems: standard **spellcasting**, **ritual magic**, and special **pact-based abilities**. Throughout, look for examples and player-facing tips to keep the fiction front and center.

4.1 The Nature of Magic

Magic is not a safe tool but a dangerous force:

- **Powerful**: Can reshape battles, stories, or even the world

- **Risky**: Every use generates **Story Beats (SB)** that manifest as backlash

- **Thematic**: Effects and consequences align with the type of magic used

- **Volatile**: Never fully predictable or controllable

- **Narrative**: Casting is always a significant story moment

Table Vignette: *"I can hold the avalanche,"* says Mira, fingers trembling. *"But something will answer."* The party nods—risk accepted, stakes clear.

4.2 Basic Spellcasting

All spellcasting follows the standard action resolution system but with additional considerations for magical effects.

The Casting Process

1. **Declare Intent**: What you want the magic to achieve

2. **Choose Approach**: Which magical skill and method you'll use

3. **Set Position**: **Controlled**, **Risky**, or **Desperate** based on circumstances

4. **Roll**: Attribute + Magical Skill

5. **Resolve**: Apply outcomes with magical consequences

Magical Skills

Common magical skills include:

- **Arcana**: General magical knowledge and theory

- **Elemental Magic**: Fire, water, earth, air manipulation

- **Spiritual Magic**: Communing with spirits, divine magic

- **Mental Magic**: Telepathy, illusion, mind affecting

- **Healing Magic**: Restoration, purification, life magic

Player Tip: State a clear **intent** and a vivid **method**. The more concrete the fiction, the easier it is to set fair **DV** and meaningful consequences.

4.3 The Casting Loop

For more significant magical effects, use the structured Casting Loop within a single scene.

Phase 1: Channel

Focus and gather magical energy:

- Roll **Wits + Arcana** (or appropriate magical skill)

- Each success becomes a point of **Potential**

- Each 1 rolled generates a **Story Beat** immediately

- This phase takes your **action** for the turn

Phase 2: Weave

Shape the gathered energy into your desired effect:

- On your next turn, roll **Wits + (Specific Magic Skill)**

- Use the gathered **Potential** to power the effect

- The effect's scale and power depend on **successes**

- Additional **Story Beats** may be generated

Phase 3: Backlash

Story Beats manifest as magical consequences:

- The Game Master spends **SB** thematically

- Backlash aligns with the type of magic used

- Severity scales with the number of points spent

Designer Note: The **Casting Loop** creates spotlight tension: build **Potential** now, risk **Backlash** later for a bigger moment.

4.4 Backlash Severity

SB Spent	Typical Consequence
1–2	Minor nuisance: noise, brief distraction, small fla
3–4	Noticeable setback: hazard, condition, new comp
5+	Major consequence: scene change, new threat, se

4.5 Magical Arts and Traditions

Different cultures and traditions approach magic differently.

Elemental Magic

Manipulation of natural forces:

- **Fire Magic**: Heat, light, transformation, destruction

- **Water Magic**: Flow, healing, divination, adaptation

- **Earth Magic**: Stability, protection, growth, strength

- **Air Magic**: Movement, communication, freedom, change

Spiritual Magic

Interaction with intangible forces:

- **Divine Magic**: Power from gods or higher powers

- **Spirit Magic**: Communing with nature spirits or ancestors

- **Necromancy**: Interaction with death and the departed

- **Protection Magic**: Wards, blessings, purification

Mental Magic

Affecting minds and perceptions:

- **Illusion**: Creating false perceptions and images

- **Telepathy**: Mind reading and communication

- **Enchantment**: Influencing thoughts and emotions

- **Divination**: Gaining knowledge through supernatural means

Vignette: *The candles lean toward the oracle's breath. "Ask," she whispers, "but truth is sharp."*

4.6 Ritual Magic

For powerful effects, multiple casters can work together in rituals.

Ritual Requirements

- **Time**: Typically hours rather than moments

- **Preparation**: Specific materials, locations, or conditions

- **Participants**: Multiple casters working in harmony

- **Focus**: Undisturbed concentration and coordination

Ritual Procedure

1. **Preparation**: Gather components, prepare space, focus intent

2. **Channeling**: All participants contribute **Potential**

3. **Weaving**: Primary caster shapes the energy into the desired effect

4. **Completion**: Effect manifests, **backlash** resolves

Ritual Benefits and Risks

- **Benefits**: More powerful effects, shared backlash, collective energy

- **Risks**: Greater backlash potential, longer exposure to danger, coordination challenges

4.7 Rites and Pact Magic

Rites are precise magical effects gained through **pacts** with powerful entities.

Becoming an Invoker

- Choose a **Patron** entity

- Start with 2 minor and 1 standard **Rites** total

- Track **Obligation** to each Patron separately

- Understand the terms and costs of your pacts

Using Rites

1. **Invocation**: Speak the name, draw the sign, or use the proper tool

2. **Roll**: If required, roll against difficulty set by the fiction

3. **Obligation**: Mark segments on your Patron's obligation track

4. **Effect**: The Rite's specific effect manifests

5. **Backlash**: Any failures or complications create additional obligations

Obligation Management

Your debt to Patrons must be managed:

- **Service**: Perform tasks fitting your Patron's nature

- **Offerings**: Provide sacrifices or tributes

- **Propagation**: Spread your Patron's influence or beliefs

- **Boons**: Spend advancement points to reduce obligation

Obligation Levels

Segments	Consequences
1–2	Minor attention, subtle signs
3–5	Noticeable influence, regular demands
6–8	Significant control, major tasks required
9+	Dominant influence, potentially dangerous

Vignette: *At the crossroads, Ash lays iron nails and salt. The wind shifts. Somewhere, something smiles.*

4.8 Special Magical Abilities

Some characters develop unique magical capabilities through experience or heritage.

Cultural Magical Traditions

- **Dwarven Stone-Sense**: Intuitive understanding of earth and stone

- **Elven Memory-Weaving**: Accessing and manipulating ancestral knowledge

- **Human Versatility**: Adaptable magical approaches from various traditions

- **Nomadic Spirit-Walking**: Journeying between physical and spiritual realms

Advanced Magical Techniques

- **Spell Shaping**: Modifying effects in real-time

- **Energy Redirection**: Turning hostile magic to your advantage

- **Quick Casting**: Reducing preparation time for spells

- **Multiple Effects**: Managing several magical effects simultaneously

4.9 Magical Backlash Examples

Elemental Backlash

- **Fire**: Uncontrolled flames, heat exhaustion, flammable materials igniting

- **Water**: Flooding, slippery surfaces, water creatures attracted

- **Earth**: Tremors, collapsing structures, earth elementals awakening

- **Air**: Strong winds, flying debris, atmospheric disturbances

Spiritual Backlash

- **Divine**: Divine attention, religious consequences, faith tests

- **Spirit**: Spirit manifestations, haunted locations, ancestral interference

- **Protection**: Ward failures, vulnerability increases, protection reversed

Mental Backlash

- **Illusion**: Reality confusion, persistent afterimages, perception flaws

- **Telepathy**: Thought leakage, mental fatigue, privacy invasion

- **Enchantment**: Emotional backlash, resistance development, dependency

- **Drawbacks**: Negative side effects or requirements

4.10 Magical Item Creation

Creating permanent magical items is a complex process.

Creation Requirements

- **Knowledge**: Understanding of the desired effect

- **Materials**: Appropriate components with magical properties

- **Time**: Significant investment of time and effort

- **Skill**: High level of magical and craft skills

- **Facilities**: Proper workspace with necessary tools

Creation Process

1. **Design**: Plan the item's properties and limitations

2. **Gathering**: Acquire necessary materials and components

3. **Crafting**: Physical creation of the item base

4. **Enchantment**: Magical infusion of the desired properties

5. **Finishing**: Final adjustments and testing

Item Limitations

- **Charges**: Limited uses before needing recharge

- **Attunement**: Required bonding with the user

- **Maintenance**: Regular upkeep to preserve functionality

4.11 Magic in Social Situations

Using magic in social contexts has special considerations.

Social Spellcasting

- **Discretion**: Avoiding detection while casting

- **Consent**: Ethical considerations of affecting others' minds

- **Reactions**: How different cultures view magical influence

- **Laws**: Legal restrictions on magical use in society

Social Backlash

Magical social failures can cause:

- **Distrust**: People becoming wary of the caster

- **Resistance**: Developing immunity or countermeasures

- **Reputation**: Becoming known as a manipulator

- **Legal**: Facing consequences from authorities

4.12 Learning and Improving Magic

Magical ability grows through study and practice.

Skill Advancement

- **Study**: Researching magical theory and techniques

- **Practice**: Regular casting to improve control

- **Experimentation**: Trying new approaches and combinations

- **Instruction**: Learning from more experienced casters

Advanced Magical Development

At higher levels, casters can:

- **Specialize**: Focus on specific magical traditions

- **Innovate**: Create new spells or techniques

- **Teach**: Instruct others in magical arts

- **Research**: Discover lost or forbidden knowledge

4.13 Magical Safety and Ethics

Responsible magical practice involves understanding risks and consequences.

Safety Considerations

- **Containment**: Preventing unintended spread of effects

- **Stability**: Ensuring magical effects remain controlled

- **Fail-safes**: Planning for when magic goes wrong

- **Recovery**: Procedures for dealing with backlash

Ethical Guidelines

- **Consent**: Respecting others' autonomy regarding magic

- **Transparency**: Being honest about magical capabilities

- **Restraint**: Using magic judiciously and appropriately

- **Responsibility**: Accepting consequences of magical actions

---

Magic Quick Reference

Casting Loop:

- **Channel**: Wits + Arcana for **Potential**

- **Weave**: Wits + Specific Skill for effect

- **Backlash**: SB spent thematically

Backlash Severity:

- 1–2 SB: Minor nuisance

- 3–4 SB: Noticeable setback

- 5+ SB: Major consequence

Rites System:

- Invocation → Obligation → Effect

- Manage debt through service/offerings

- High obligation brings Patron attention

Safety: Always consider backlash and ethical implications

4.14 Practical Magic Examples

Combat Spell Example

A fire master casts a combat spell:

- **Channel**: Wits 4 + Arcana 3 = 7d6, gets 4 successes (**Potential 4**)

- **Weave**: Wits 4 + Fire Magic 3 = 7d6, gets 3 successes

- **Effect**: Creates a fire wall that blocks enemies (DV met)

- **Backlash**: 2 SB spent—nearby foliage smolders, creating smoke

Healing Ritual Example

A healing circle performs a ritual:

- **Preparation**: Sacred space, healing herbs, focused intent

- **Channel**: Three participants contribute **Potential**

- **Weave**: Primary healer shapes the energy into healing

- **Effect**: Serious wounds knit rapidly

- **Backlash**: Shared among participants as fatigue

Rite Invocation Example

An invoker calls upon their Patron:

- **Invocation**: Draws the sacred symbol, speaks the ancient words

- **Obligation**: Marks +2 segments on Patron track

- **Effect**: Gains supernatural insight into a mystery

- **Service Required**: Must light candles at crossroads for three nights

Closing Thought: **Magic** is a powerful tool but never a safe one. Every casting carries risks, and great power always demands great responsibility. Make bold choices—then let the consequences write the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Attributes and Skills

Your character's capabilities are built on four core **Attributes** and specialized **Skills**. This chapter explains how they work together to define what your character can do and how they interact with the world, with clear examples and player-facing tips.

5.1 Core Attributes

Attributes represent your character's fundamental capabilities. Each is rated from 1 to 5, with higher numbers indicating greater proficiency.

Body

Physical strength, endurance, coordination, and health.

- **Used for**: Melee combat, athletics, endurance tests, physical labor

- **Typical applications**: Lifting, running, climbing, fighting, resisting physical harm

- **Associated skills**: Athletics, Brawl, Melee, Endurance

- **Rating examples**:

  - 1: Average person, some physical activity
  - 2: Fit individual, regular training
  - 3: Athlete or soldier, excellent condition

  - 4: Exceptional athlete, near-peak human
  - 5: Peak human capability, legendary strength

Wits

Mental acuity, perception, quick thinking, and problem-solving.

- **Used for**: Investigation, perception, tactics, quick decisions

- **Typical applications**: Spotting details, solving puzzles, planning, reacting quickly

- **Associated skills**: Perception, Investigation, Tactics, Lore

- **Rating examples**:

  - 1: Average awareness, sometimes misses things
  - 2: Observant, notices important details
  - 3: Sharp-minded, quick to spot patterns
  - 4: Exceptionally perceptive, rarely surprised
  - 5: Near-prescient awareness, sees connections others miss

Spirit

Willpower, intuition, mental resilience, and connection to intangible forces.

- **Used for**: Resisting mental effects, intuition, magical aptitude, determination

- **Typical applications**: Resisting fear, sensing danger, magical ability, enduring hardship

- **Associated skills**: Resolve, Intuition, Magic, Faith

- **Rating examples**:

  - 1: Average willpower, somewhat suggestible

  - 2: Strong-minded, resists ordinary pressure

  - 3: Very determined, hard to intimidate

  - 4: Exceptional will, inspires others

  - 5: Iron will, nearly unshakeable resolve

Presence

Charisma, social influence, appearance, and force of personality.

- **Used for**: Social interactions, leadership, persuasion, intimidation

- **Typical applications**: Negotiating, leading, charming, commanding attention

- **Associated skills**: Sway, Command, Performance, Deception

- **Rating examples**:

  - 1: Average presence, doesn't stand out

  - 2: Noticeable, makes an impression

  - 3: Charismatic, naturally influential

  - 4: Commanding presence, people listen

  - 5: Magnetic personality, can sway crowds

5.2 Skill System

Skills represent specialized training and expertise. They combine with **Attributes** to form your dice pool for actions.

Skill Ratings

Rating	Description
0	Untrained — No formal training
1	Novice — Basic understanding
2	Competent — Reliable skill level
3	Professional — Expert capability
4	Master — Renowned expertise
5	Grand Master — Legendary skill

Skill Categories

Combat Skills

- **Melee**: Swords, axes, close-quarters weapons

- **Ranged**: Bows, crossbows, thrown weapons

- **Brawl**: Unarmed combat, grappling

- **Tactics**: Battlefield strategy, unit coordination

Physical Skills

- **Athletics**: Running, climbing, jumping

- **Stealth**: Moving unseen, hiding

- **Endurance**: Resisting fatigue, harsh conditions

- **Craft**: Building, repairing, creating

Social Skills

- **Sway**: Persuasion, negotiation, charm

- **Command**: Leadership, intimidation, authority

- **Deception**: Lying, bluffing, misdirection

- **Performance**: Entertainment, oration, acting

Knowledge Skills

- **Lore**: History, culture, general knowledge

- **Investigation**: Research, deduction, analysis

- **Medicine**: Healing, anatomy, treatment

- **Nature**: Wilderness, animals, plants

Specialized Skills

- **Arcana**: Magic, rituals, mystical knowledge

- **Mechanics**: Devices, engineering, construction

- **Diplomacy**: Formal negotiation, protocol

- **Streetwise**: Urban survival, criminal knowledge

5.3 Building Dice Pools

Your dice pool for any action is: **Attribute + Skill**.

Choosing the Right Combination

The same action can often be approached with different Attribute/Skill combinations:

- **Climbing a wall**:

  - Body + Athletics (physical strength)
  - Wits + Athletics (finding the best route)
  - Spirit + Athletics (sheer determination)

- **Persuading a guard**:

  - Presence + Sway (charm and personality)
  - Wits + Sway (logical arguments)
  - Spirit + Sway (force of conviction)

- **Investigating a crime scene**:

  - Wits + Investigation (careful observation)
  - Spirit + Investigation (intuitive leaps)
  - Presence + Investigation (getting people to talk)

Creative Combinations

With GM approval, you can justify unusual combinations:

- Body + Lore for recalling physical techniques

- Presence + Medicine for comforting patients

- Spirit + Craft for inspired artistic creation

Example: A ranger scales an ice wall using *Wits + Athletics* to route-find, then switches to *Body + Athletics* to muscle over the lip. The fiction guides the mechanics.

5.4 Skill Advancement

Improving skills requires experience points and training time.

XP Costs

Improvement	XP Cost
$0 \rightarrow 1$	2 XP
$1 \rightarrow 2$	4 XP
$2 \rightarrow 3$	6 XP
$3 \rightarrow 4$	8 XP
$4 \rightarrow 5$	10 XP

Training Time

- $0 \rightarrow 1$: 1 day of practice

- $1 \rightarrow 2$: 3 days of training

- $2 \rightarrow 3$: 1 week of intensive study

- 3 → 4: 2 weeks of master training

- 4 → 5: 1 month of dedicated practice

Attribute Limits

You cannot have a skill rating higher than its primary **Attribute**. To increase a skill beyond your Attribute, you must first improve the Attribute.

5.5   Skill Specializations

At higher levels, you can develop specializations within skills.

Specialization Benefits

- +1 die when using the skill in your specialized area

- Ability to attempt advanced techniques

- Recognition as an expert in that niche

Common Specializations

- **Melee**: Swordplay, polearms, dual wielding

- **Ranged**: Archery, crossbows, thrown weapons

- **Lore**: Local history, magical theory, heraldry

- **Craft**: Smithing, woodworking, alchemy

- **Sway**: Negotiation, seduction, inspiration

Gaining a Specialization: Typically available at skill level 3+, with GM approval and suitable fiction (mentor, study, practice).

5.6   Synergy Between Skills

Some skills work particularly well together, providing bonuses when used in combination. Synergies are situational and require fictional justification.

Combat Synergies

- **Tactics + Command**: +1 die when leading groups in combat

- **Melee + Athletics**: +1 die on movement-based attacks

- **Ranged + Perception**: +1 die on aimed shots

Social Synergies

- **Sway + Lore**: +1 die when using knowledge in persuasion

- **Deception + Performance**: +1 die on sustained deceptions

- **Command + Presence**: +1 die on leadership actions

Exploration Synergies

- **Investigation + Perception**: +1 die on detailed searches

- **Nature + Survival**: +1 die on wilderness navigation

- **Mechanics + Craft**: +1 die on complex repairs

5.7   Using Skills in Play

When to Roll

Skills are used when:

- The outcome is uncertain

- There are meaningful consequences for failure

- The action is significant to the story

Difficulty Values by Skill Level

Skill Level	Routine Task	Challenging Task
0	DV 2	DV 4
1	DV 1	DV 3
2	Automatic	DV 2
3	Automatic	DV 1
4+	Automatic	Automatic

Reading the Table: A *Professional* (3) auto-succeeds on routine tasks; challenge them with interesting stakes or higher DVs.

Group Skill Use

When multiple characters use the same skill:

- **Assistance**: One character leads, others provide +1 die each (max +3)

- **Cooperation**: Multiple characters attempt the same task separately

- **Complementary**: Different skills used together for a complex task

5.8 Skill Challenges

Complex tasks may require multiple skill uses or extended effort.

Extended Tests

For tasks taking significant time:

- Set a clock with 4–8 segments

- Each successful skill use fills segments

- Complications may add segments or create setbacks

Complex Challenges

Tasks requiring multiple skills:

- Different characters use different skills

- Successes contribute to overall progress

- Failure in one area may complicate others

Example (Complex Heist): *Stealth* to enter, *Mechanics* to bypass locks, *Investigation* to locate the vault, *Deception* to mislead guards. Each success advances the *Heist Clock*; SB creates new heat.

5.9 Skill-Based Character Archetypes

The Warrior

- **Primary**: Body + Melee/Ranged

- **Secondary**: Spirit + Endurance, Wits + Tactics

- **Key skills**: Athletics, Brawl, Command

- **Playstyle**: Direct confrontation, physical solutions

The Expert

- **Primary**: Wits + Lore/Investigation

- **Secondary**: Presence + Sway, Spirit + Resolve

- **Key skills**: Mechanics, Medicine, Perception

- **Playstyle**: Problem-solving, information gathering

The Face

- **Primary**: Presence + Sway/Deception

- **Secondary**: Wits + Investigation, Spirit + Performance

- **Key skills**: Command, Diplomacy, Streetwise

- **Playstyle**: Social manipulation, negotiation

The Specialist

- **Primary**: Varies by specialty

- **Secondary**: Supporting skills for the specialty

- **Key skills**: Craft, Arcana, Nature, etc.

- **Playstyle**: Technical expertise, unique capabilities

5.10 Improving Your Capabilities

Balanced Development

- Improve both **Attributes** and **Skills** together

- Develop complementary skill sets

- Consider how skills work in combination

- Plan for both immediate needs and long-term growth

Specialized Focus

- Maximize one **Attribute** and related skills

- Develop deep expertise in one area

- Become the go-to character for specific challenges

- Risk being less effective outside your specialty

Versatile Approach

- Moderate investment in multiple areas

- Ability to handle diverse situations

- Less peak capability but more adaptability

- Good for supporting other characters

Attributes and Skills Quick Reference

Attributes (1–5):

- **Body**: Physical capability

- **Wits**: Mental acuity

- **Spirit**: Willpower

- **Presence**: Social influence

Skill Levels:

- 0: Untrained | 1: Novice | 2: Competent

- 3: Professional | 4: Master | 5: Grand Master

Dice Pool: Attribute + Skill d6s
Improvement: New level × 2 XP (skills)
Specialization: +1 die in specific area at level 3+
Synergy: Complementary skills give +1 die

5.11 Practical Examples

Combat Example

A warrior (Body 4, Melee 3) attacks:

- Dice pool: $4 + 3 = 7d6$

- Needs 4+ on each die for successes

- DV set by opponent's defense (typically 2–3)

Social Example

A diplomat (Presence 3, Sway 2) negotiates:

- Dice pool: $3 + 2 = 5d6$

- Position: Risky (opponent is skeptical)

- Stakes: Success gets cooperation, failure creates suspicion

Exploration Example

A scout (Wits 3, Perception 2) searches for tracks:

- Dice pool: $3 + 2 = 5d6$

- DV 2 for fresh tracks, DV 3 for old tracks

- Success finds trail, partial finds clues, miss misses important signs

Final Note: Your **Attributes** and **Skills** define not just what you can do, but how you approach challenges. Choose combinations that reflect your character's personality and style, and let the fiction lead your mechanical choices.

Chapter 6

Experience Paths and Character Building

How you spend your **Experience Points (XP)** defines not only your character's capabilities—but also their role in the world. This chapter explores different advancement philosophies and provides practical, legal starting builds that fit the campaign's creation rules.

6.1 Three Advancement Paths

There are three broad approaches to character development, each representing a different philosophy of growth:

Personal Path Invest in personal mastery and self-improvement

Balanced Path Mix personal growth with resources and influence

Influencer Path Focus on networks, assets, and strategic power

6.2 Path 1: Personal Development

The **Personal Path** focuses on individual capability through attributes and skills.

Typical Investment

- 70–90% Personal improvement

- 0–10% Resources and assets

- 0–20% Special abilities

Strengths

- Reliable in direct challenges and combat

- Minimal upkeep or management required

- Resilient to loss of external resources

- Consistent performance in spotlight moments

Weaknesses

- Limited influence in social or strategic scenes

- May struggle with problems requiring networks

- Less capable in logistics or large-scale operations

- Dependent on personal presence for all solutions

Build Example: The Duelist (Legal Start)

Total XP: 30 (**34** with +4 from Bonds/Complications; see §6.5)

- **Attributes**: Body 3, Wits 2, Spirit 1, Presence 1

– Costs (Attributes cost *new rating* ×3 each step): Body 1→2 (6), 2→3 (9) = **15**; Wits 1→2 (6) = **6**; Spirit/Presence remain 1 = **0**. *Subtotal: 21 XP*

- **Skills**: Melee 2, Athletics 1

  – Costs (Skills cost *new level* ×2 each step): Melee 0→1 (2), 1→2 (4) = **6**; Athletics 0→1 = **2**. *Subtotal: 8 XP*

- **Totals**: 21 + 8 = **29 XP**. Bank **1 XP**.

- **With +4 XP (Bonds/Complications)**: add *Perception 0→1* (2) and *Quick Draw* (a 4 XP general ability) by also dropping banked 1 XP into *Stealth 0→1* next downtime, or instead take *Perception 0→1* (2) and *Sway 0→1* (2) for broader utility. *Cap: 34 XP.*

6.3 Path 2: Balanced Approach

The **Balanced Path** mixes personal capability with strategic resources.

Typical Investment

- 50–65% Personal improvement

- 15–25% Resources and assets

- 15–25% Special abilities

Strengths

- Adaptable to diverse situations

- Can handle both direct and indirect challenges

- Good supporting role for the group

- Moderate risk profile

Weaknesses

- Not exceptional in any single area

- Requires management of resources

- Moderate upkeep demands

- Can be outshone by specialists

Build Example: The Scout (Legal Start)

Total XP: 30 (**34** with +4 from Bonds/Complications)

- **Attributes**: Wits 2, Body 2, Spirit 1, Presence 1

  – Costs: Wits 1→2 (6), Body 1→2 (6) = **12 XP**

- **Skills**: Survival 2, Perception 1, Stealth 1

  – Costs: Survival 0→1 (2), 1→2 (4) = **6**; Perception 0→1 **2**; Stealth 0→1 **2**. *Subtotal: 10 XP*

- **Resources**: *Minor equipment cache* (camp gear, maps, signal kit) = **4 XP**

- **Special Abilities**: *Wilderness Lore* (broad travel benefits) = **4 XP**

- **Totals**: 12 + 10 + 4 + 4 = **30 XP**.

- **With +4 XP**: add *Perception 1→2* (+4) *or* take a *trained hawk companion* (Minor Resource, 4 XP).

6.4 Path 3: Influencer Focus

The **Influencer Path** prioritizes networks, assets, and strategic power.

Typical Investment

- 25–40% Personal improvement

- 35–55% Resources and assets

- 20–40% Special abilities

Strengths

- Strong strategic and social influence

- Can solve problems indirectly

- Excellent at planning and preparation

- Creates opportunities for the whole group

Weaknesses

- Personally vulnerable in direct confrontations

- High maintenance requirements

- Complications can cascade through networks

- Dependent on external factors

Build Example: The Merchant (Legal Start)

Total XP: 30 (**34** with +4 from Bonds/Complications)

- **Attributes**: Presence 2, Wits 2, Spirit 1, Body 1

  - Costs: Presence 1→2 (6), Wits 1→2 (6) = **12 XP**

- **Skills**: Sway 2, Deception 1, Lore 1

  - Costs: Sway 0→1 (2), 1→2 (4) = **6**; Deception 0→1 **2**; Lore 0→1 **2**. *Subtotal: 10 XP*

- **Resources**: *Standard trading office* (staffed storefront, ledgers, storage) = **8 XP**

- **Totals**: 12 + 10 + 8 = **30 XP**.

- **With +4 XP**: add *Negotiation Mastery* (4 XP general ability) *or* expand to a second *Minor merchant route* (4 XP).

6.5 Starting Character Guidelines

Base XP Allocation

- **Standard Starting XP**: **30** points

- **Bonds and Complications**: You may take up to **two** total from any mix of meaningful *Bonds* and significant *Complications*, each granting **+2 XP** *(maximum +4 XP)*.

- **Maximum Starting XP**: **34** points

Recommended Starting Ranges

Category	Recommended XP
Primary Attribute	9–12 XP (rating 3–4)
Secondary Attributes	0–9 XP each (rating 1–3)
Key Skills	4–6 XP each (rating 2–3)
Supporting Skills	2–4 XP each (rating 1–2)
Resources	0–8 XP total
Special Abilities	0–8 XP total

Cost Reminders:

- **Attributes**: Each step costs *new rating* ×3 XP (e.g., 1→2 costs 6; 2→3 costs 9).

- **Skills**: Each step costs *new level* ×2 XP (e.g., 0→1 costs 2; 1→2 costs 4).

- **Resources**: Minor 4 XP; Standard 8 XP; Major 12 XP.

- **Special Abilities**: Generally 4–8 XP (advanced 12+ XP).

6.6 Progression Planning

Early Game (0–40 XP)

Focus on establishing core capabilities:

- Reach attribute rating 3 in your primary area

- Develop 2–3 key skills to rating 2–3

- Acquire basic resources or one special ability

- Establish your character's niche in the group

Mid Game (41–90 XP)

Expand and specialize:

- Increase primary attribute to 4

- Specialize key skills to rating 3–4

- Develop supporting capabilities

- Build strategic resources or networks

- Acquire signature special abilities

Late Game (91–150 XP)

Master your chosen path:

- Achieve peak attributes (rating 4–5)

- Master key skills (rating 4–5)

- Build substantial influence or unique capabilities

- Develop advanced special abilities

- Consider legacy projects or organizations

6.7 Path Combination Strategies

Many players mix elements from different paths:

Combat Specialist with Resources

- Strong personal combat capabilities

- Moderate resource investment for support

- Good for frontline fighters who need logistical support

- Example: Warrior with a fortified base and loyal troops

Social Character with Personal Skills

- Excellent social capabilities

- Solid personal skills for self-defense

- Good for diplomats who operate independently

- Example: Ambassador with combat training and persuasion skills

Technical Expert with Networks

- Deep technical or magical expertise

- Network of contacts and resources

- Good for specialists who need support systems

- Example: Master crafter with supplier network and apprentices

6.8 Resource Management

Each path requires different management approaches:

Personal Path Management

- Minimal upkeep requirements

- Focus on equipment maintenance

- Occasional skill practice or training

- Low complexity, high reliability

Balanced Path Management

- Moderate upkeep for resources

- Relationship maintenance with contacts

- Skill development alongside resource management

- Balanced time investment

Influencer Path Management

- Significant upkeep demands

- Network maintenance and expansion

- Resource allocation and development

- Strategic planning and opportunity management

6.9 Risk Assessment

Each path carries different risks:

Personal Path Risks

- Over-specialization in one area

- Vulnerability to problems outside specialty

- Limited growth options later in game

- May become predictable in approach

Balanced Path Risks

- Jack-of-all-trades, master of none

- Spread too thin across capabilities

- Moderate risks in multiple areas

- May lack standout capabilities

Influencer Path Risks

- Network vulnerability to attacks

- High maintenance requirements

- Cascade failure potential

- Personal safety concerns

6.10 Building for Group Synergy

Consider how your path complements other party members:

Complementary Paths

- Personal path characters provide reliable combat capability

- Balanced path characters handle diverse challenges

- Influencer path characters create opportunities and resources

- Mixed groups cover all bases effectively

Redundant Paths

- Multiple personal path characters may overlap in combat

- Multiple influencer path characters may compete for resources

- Consider diversifying within similar paths

- Example: Different combat specialties or resource types

6.11 Adapting Your Path

Your chosen path isn't permanent—you can shift focus as the game progresses:

Early Shift (0–40 XP)

- Easy to change direction

- Minimal sunk cost in any approach

- Good time to experiment with different styles

- Can respond to group needs or story developments

Mid Game Shift (41–90 XP)

- Requires more deliberate planning

- Some capabilities may need to be maintained

- Can fill emerging gaps in group capability

- May require temporary performance dip during transition

Late Game Shift (91+ XP)

- Significant investment in current path

- Major shift requires substantial XP investment

- Consider adding complementary capabilities rather than replacing

- May be better to develop existing strengths further

XP Path Quick Reference

Personal Path (70–90% self):

- Reliable individual performance
- Low upkeep, high consistency
- Best for combat and specialist roles

Balanced Path (50–65% self):

- Good all-around capability
- Moderate risk and upkeep
- Flexible supporting role

Influencer Path (25–40% self):

- Strategic power and influence
- High upkeep, high reward
- Creates opportunities for group

Starting XP: 30 base + up to **+4** from Bonds/Complications (max start **34**).

6.12 Practical Building Examples (Narrative Roles, Legal Starts)

Example 1: The Guardian

Path: Personal   **Total: 30 XP**

- **Attributes**: Body 3 (15), Wits 2 (6) = **21 XP**

- **Skills**: Melee 2 (6), Athletics 1 (2) = **8 XP**

- **Bank**: **1 XP**

- **Role at table**: Frontline protection, reliable duel pressure. With +4 XP, add *Shield Wall* (4 XP ability) or *Perception 0→1* (2) plus *Endurance 0→1* (2).

Example 2: The Explorer

Path: Balanced   **Total: 30 XP**

- **Attributes**: Wits 2 (6), Body 2 (6) = **12 XP**

- **Skills**: Survival 2 (6), Perception 1 (2), Stealth 1 (2) = **10 XP**

- **Resources**: Minor mapping kit & route notes = **4 XP**

- **Ability**: Trail Sense = **4 XP**

- **Totals**: **30 XP**. With +4 XP, raise *Perception 1→2* (+4) or add a trained beast (Minor Resource, 4).

Example 3: The Schemer

Path: Influencer   **Total: 30 XP**

- **Attributes**: Presence 2 (6), Wits 2 (6) = **12 XP**

- **Skills**: Sway 2 (6), Deception 1 (2), Lore 1 (2) = **10 XP**

- **Resources**: Standard safehouse & message drops = **8 XP**

- **Totals**: **30 XP**. With +4 XP, take *Market Insight* (4 XP ability) or add *Minor informant ring* (4 XP).

Reminder: All builds above assume baseline *Attributes at 1* and *Skills at 0* before spending.

Attribute and Skill advances are cumulative by step (see costs in §6.5).

Remember: Your chosen path should reflect both your character concept and your preferred play style. There's no single "correct" path—only what works for you and your group.

Chapter 7

Talents and Special Abilities

Talents are unique abilities that expand your character's capabilities beyond basic attributes and skills. They represent specialized training, innate gifts, or hard-won expertise that sets your character apart.

7.1 Understanding Talents

Talents are purchased with **Experience Points (XP)** and provide special capabilities:

- They go beyond simple skill bonuses

- They often have specific **activation conditions**

- They may provide **narrative permissions** (you can try things others cannot)

- They can define your character's **unique identity**

Talent Costs at a Glance

Tier	Typical Cost	Scope
General	3–8 XP	Broad, low prerequisites
Cultural	4–10 XP	Background/heritage-tied
Advanced	12–25 XP	High reqs, campaign-defining

Activation Types.

- **Passive**: Always on; no action

- **Active**: Requires an action or scene focus

- **Reactive**: Triggers on a condition (e.g., when surprised)

Limits and Economy. Unless a talent says otherwise:

- **Per Scene** uses refresh at scene end

- **Per Session** uses refresh after downtime

- Some talents allow you to spend **Advancement Points** to push effects

7.2 Talent Categories

General Talents

Broad abilities available to any character:

- **Cost**: 3–8 XP typically

- **Prerequisites**: Minimal or none

- **Examples**: Combat reflexes, quick thinking, resistance to elements

- **Best for**: Rounding out character capabilities

Cultural Talents

Abilities tied to specific backgrounds or heritages:

- **Cost**: 4–10 XP typically

- **Prerequisites**: Cultural background or specific training

- **Examples**: Stone-sense (dwarven), wildcraft (nomadic), courtly grace (noble)

- **Best for**: Emphasizing character origins and heritage

Advanced Talents

Powerful abilities with significant requirements:

- **Cost**: 12–25 XP typically

- **Prerequisites**: High attributes, specific skills, or other talents

- **Examples**: Master spellcasting, leadership auras, legendary crafts

- **Best for**: Defining character pinnacle capabilities

7.3   Selecting Talents

Consider Your Character Concept

Choose talents that reinforce your character's identity:

- **Warrior**: Combat talents, physical enhancements, tactical abilities

- **Expert**: Knowledge talents, craft specialties, investigation abilities

- **Socialite**: Persuasion talents, network building, influence abilities

- **Specialist**: Unique talents matching your specific focus

Balance Offense and Defense

Consider both active and passive talents:

- **Active**: Abilities you choose to use (attacks, creations, influences)

- **Passive**: Constant benefits (resistance, bonuses, immunities)

- **Reactive**: Abilities triggered by events (counterattacks, escapes)

Think About Frequency

Consider how often you'll use each talent:

- **Constant use**: Passive benefits always active

- **Frequent use**: Several times per session

- **Occasional use**: Once per session or scene

- **Rare use**: Campaign-defining moments

7.4   Talent Building Strategies

The Specialist

Focus on talents supporting one primary role:

- Choose talents that **synergize** with each other

- Develop a clear specialty identity

- Become the go-to character for specific challenges

- **Risk**: May be less effective outside specialty

The Generalist

Spread talents across multiple areas:

- Cover different types of challenges

- Provide support to other party members

- Adapt to diverse situations

- **Risk**: Less peak capability in any area

The Combo Builder

Choose talents that work together in combinations:

- Look for talent synergies

- Plan activation sequences

- Create powerful combined effects

- **Risk**: May require specific conditions to be effective

7.5 Talent Examples

Combat Talents

Quick Draw (3 XP, *Active*) — Draw and ready a weapon as a free action once per scene.

Precise Strike (4 XP, *Active*) — Once per scene, ignore armor on one attack if you had **Controlled** or **Risky** position.

Combat Reflexes (5 XP, *Reactive*) — +1 die on defense rolls when surprised or flanked.

Weapon Mastery (6 XP, *Passive*) — Choose a weapon type; +1 die when using it.

Social Talents

Silver Tongue (3 XP, *Passive*) — +1 die on persuasion attempts when stakes are clearly stated.

Read Emotions (4 XP, *Active*) — Once per scene, automatically detect surface emotions in a social exchange.

Command Presence (5 XP, *Passive*) — +1 die on leadership and intimidation rolls when you hold **Risky** or better position.

Network Builder (6 XP, *Passive*) — Gain a minor contact in each new settlement visited (GM defines details).

Exploration Talents

Keen Senses (3 XP, *Passive*) — +1 die on perception checks to spot danger or hidden details.

Wilderness Lore (4 XP, *Passive*) — Automatically find food and water in hospitable biomes.

Trackless Step (5 XP, *Active*) — Leave no trail for the rest of the scene (or day during travel).

Urban Navigation (6 XP, *Passive*) — Never get lost in cities; the GM will offer a shortcut or side path each session.

Knowledge Talents

Quick Study (3 XP, *Passive*) — Learn new information twice as fast during downtime.

Linguist (4 XP, *Passive*) — Learn new languages in half the usual time; +1 die to decipher.

Research Mastery (5 XP, *Active*) — +2 dice on a single research or investigation roll, once per scene.

Technical Expert (6 XP, *Passive*) — Understand and operate most unfamiliar mechanisms after brief inspection.

7.6 Cultural Talent Examples

Dwarven Talents

Stone Sense (5 XP) — Detect structural weaknesses in stone; +1 die on engineering rolls underground.

Deep Memory (6 XP) — Perfect recall of underground layouts once visited.

Ancestral Craft (7 XP) — Create items with dwarf-made quality bonuses (GM sets exact tags).

Elven Talents

Wild Empathy (5 XP) — Communicate simple intent with animals; +1 die on Nature rolls.

Graceful Movement (6 XP) — Move silently in natural environments automatically.

Ancient Lore (7 XP) — +2 dice on rolls involving ancient history or magic once per scene.

Human Talents

Adaptable (4 XP) — +1 die when attempting unfamiliar tasks or mixed-method approaches.

Ambitious Drive (5 XP) — Reroll one failed roll per session when pursuing declared goals.

Innovative Thinking (6 XP) — Propose a plausible tool or method to reframe a challenge; the GM adjusts DV down by 1 once per scene.

7.7 Advanced Talent Examples

Combat Mastery

Weapon Grand Mastery (15 XP; Req: Weapon Mastery) — +2 dice with the chosen weapon type; add a distinctive flourish.

Battlefield Dominance (18 XP; Req: Body 4, Tactics 2) — Affect multiple nearby foes with a single attack once per scene.

Untouchable Defense (20 XP; Req: Combat Reflexes) — Automatically avoid the first successful attack against you each combat.

Social Influence

Master Diplomat (15 XP; Req: Sway 3) — In a **Controlled** social scene, resolve a dispute with one decisive conversation once per session.

Kingmaker (18 XP; Req: Network Builder) — Install an ally into a meaningful position of local power over an arc; unlocks faction clocks in your favor.

Legendary Reputation (20 XP; Req: any 2 Social talents) — Your name opens doors; begin important social scenes at **Controlled** unless fiction forbids.

Magical Arts

Spell Shaping (15 XP; Req: Arcana 3) — Modify non-ritual spell factors (range/scale/targeting) by one step when you Weave.

Ritual Mastery (18 XP; Req: Ritual practice) — Perform powerful rituals with reduced risk: the GM spends 1 fewer SB on ritual backlash (min 0).

Arcane Dominance (20 XP; Req: Spirit 4, Arcana 4) — Overpower weaker magical effects automatically when you contest them.

7.8 Talent Synergies

Some talents work particularly well together:

Combat Synergies

- **Quick Draw + Weapon Mastery**: Ready and strike with a bonus in one beat.

- **Precise Strike + Battlefield Dominance**: Pierce armor on multiple targets during your surge.

- **Combat Reflexes + Untouchable Defense**: Nearly impossible to surprise or land the first hit on.

Social Synergies

- **Silver Tongue + Command Presence**: Charm or command with equal force.

- **Read Emotions + Master Diplomat**: Diagnose the room, then end the conflict.

- **Network Builder + Kingmaker**: Grow contacts and place them where they matter.

Exploration Synergies

- **Keen Senses + Trackless Step**: Find others while leaving no trace.

- **Wilderness Lore + Urban Navigation**: Comfortable in wilds and streets alike.

- **Quick Study + Research Mastery**: Learn fast, dig deep.

7.9 Talent Limitations and Balance

Usage Restrictions

Most talents have limits to maintain game balance:

- **Per scene**: Common for strong actives and reactives

- **Per session**: Reserved for swingy effects

- **Per story arc**: Campaign-defining uses

- **Resource cost**: Some require spending Advancement Points or consuming items

Prerequisite Systems

Advanced talents require meeting certain conditions:

- **Attribute minimums**: e.g., Body 4, Wits 3

- **Skill requirements**: Specific skills at set levels

- **Previous talents**: Foundational picks first

- **Story achievements**: Complete relevant quests or milestones

7.10 Building Your Talent Set

Early Game (0–40 XP)

Focus on foundational talents:

- 1–2 general talents for reliability

- 1 cultural talent for identity

- Save XP for attribute and skill improvements

- Choose talents that work with your core capabilities

Mid Game (41–90 XP)

Develop your specialty:

- 2–3 synergistic talents

- Aim toward advanced-prereq milestones

- Balance active and passive picks

- Plan for your character's peak moments

Late Game (91+ XP)

Achieve mastery:

- 1–2 advanced talents defining your apex

- Picks that create legacy effects

- Talents that benefit the whole party

- Prepare for end-game challenges

7.11 Talent Customization

Work with your Game Master to create custom talents:

- **Based on story events**: Reflect character experiences

- **Unique concepts**: Fit your specific character niche

- **Balanced costs**: Match similar scope to existing talents

- **Clear rules**: Define activation, effects, and limits

7.12 Talents and Group Dynamics

Consider how your talents complement the party:

- **Fill gaps**: Cover party weaknesses

- **Synergize**: Coordinate with other players

- **Avoid overlap**: Don't duplicate another character's specialty

- **Support role**: Talents that help the whole group

7.13 Talent Respecification

If your character concept changes, you may respec talents:

- **GM approval required**: Discuss proposed changes

- **Downtime cost**: Represent retraining or relearning

- **Story justification**: Explain the change in-narrative

- **Limited frequency**: Avoid frequent reshuffles

Talent Selection Guide

Early Game (0–40 XP):

- 1–2 general talents (3–6 XP each)

- 1 cultural talent (4–7 XP)

- Focus on core-concept support

Mid Game (41–90 XP):

- 2–3 synergistic talents (5–8 XP each)

- Plan advanced prerequisites

- Balance active/passive abilities

Late Game (91+ XP):

- 1–2 advanced talents (12–20 XP)

- Legacy-defining capabilities

- Party-supporting abilities

Remember: Talents should reflect your character's story and growth.

7.14 Practical Talent Examples

Example 1: The Guardian

- **Combat Reflexes** (5 XP) — Better defense when surprised

- **Shield Mastery** (6 XP) — +1 die with shield attacks and defense

- **Bodyguard** (4 XP) — Intercept attacks aimed at allies

- **Endurance** (3 XP) — Resist fatigue and environmental effects

- **Total**: **18 XP** invested in protective talents

Example 2: The Scholar

- **Quick Study** (3 XP) — Learn information quickly

- **Research Mastery** (5 XP) — +2 dice on research rolls

- **Linguist** (4 XP) — Learn languages rapidly

- **Technical Expert** (6 XP) — Understand unfamiliar technology

- **Total**: **18 XP** invested in knowledge talents

Example 3: The Face

- **Silver Tongue** (3 XP) — +1 die on persuasion

- **Read Emotions** (4 XP) — Detect surface emotions

- **Network Builder** (6 XP) — Gain contacts everywhere

- **Command Presence** (5 XP) — +1 die on leadership

- **Total**: **18 XP** invested in social talents

Final Note. The best talents are those that fit your concept and table playstyle. Choose abilities you'll enjoy using, that create interesting consequences, and that contribute to your character's unfolding story.

Chapter 8

Assets and Followers

Your character's influence extends beyond personal capabilities through **Assets** and **Followers**. These represent worldly possessions, connections, and allies that can solve problems, provide assistance, and shape the narrative.

8.1 Understanding Assets and Followers

Key Differences

- **Assets**: Off-screen resources that solve problems between scenes.

- **Followers**: On-screen allies who assist during gameplay.

- **Assets** change the fictional situation before you arrive.

- **Followers** act alongside you in the moment.

Management Requirements

Both require maintenance and carry risks:

- Regular upkeep costs (XP or downtime).

- Vulnerability to complications and attacks.

- Narrative consequences for misuse or neglect.

8.2 Assets System

Assets are possessions, properties, or resources you control.

Asset Types and Costs

Type	XP Cost	Establishment Time
Minor	4 XP	1 day
Standard	8 XP	1 week
Major	12 XP	1 month

Asset Examples

Minor Assets Small shop, safehouse, minor title, basic workshop.

Standard Assets Noble title, guild membership, trading post, spy network.

Major Assets Fortress, city license, major enterprise, regional influence.

Using Assets

Assets provide benefits in different ways:

Free Off-Screen Use Each asset has a specific off-screen effect you can use once per session:

- **Safehouse**: Provide secure lodging for the party.

- **Spy Network**: Gather basic intelligence about a location.

- **Workshop**: Repair or create simple items between adventures.

- **Trading Post**: Acquire common goods at better prices.

Boon Activation Spend **1 Advancement Point** to use an asset dramatically during a scene:

- **Safehouse**: Suddenly reveal a hidden escape route.

- **Spy Network**: Produce crucial information at a critical moment.

- **Workshop**: Create an improvised solution to an immediate problem.

- **Trading Post**: Call in a favor from a business contact.

XP Activation Spend **2 XP** to use an asset's off-screen effect outside your normal allowance:

- Emergency use when you've already used your free activation.

- Additional uses during downtime periods.

- Special circumstances requiring extra asset support.

8.3   Asset Conditions

Assets have condition states affecting their usefulness:

Condition Levels

Maintained Fully functional, no penalties.

Neglected −1 die when used; requires attention.

Compromised Unavailable until repaired or recovered.

Maintenance Requirements

- **Regular Upkeep**: Pay XP equal to asset value each downtime period.

- **Alternative**: Spend a scene tending to the asset.

- **Neglect**: Assets deteriorate if not maintained.

- **Recovery**: Compromised assets require significant effort to restore.

8.4   Followers System

Followers are characters who assist you directly.

Follower Capability Ratings

Followers are rated by Capability (**Cap**) from 1 to 5:

Cap	Description
1	Novice helper, basic assistance
2	Competent assistant, reliable support
3	Skilled specialist, valuable aid
4	Expert ally, significant capability
5	Master companion, exceptional ability

Follower Costs

- **XP Cost**: Capability squared (Cap^2).

- **Example**: Cap 3 follower costs $3^2 = 9$ XP.

- **Recruitment**: 1–3 days downtime to find and brief.

- **Limits**: The GM may set maximum followers based on story.

Follower Types

Combat Allies Warriors, guards, mercenaries.

Technical Experts Craftspeople, engineers, specialists.

Social Contacts Informants, diplomats, agents.

Specialists Unique capabilities like magic or stealth.

8.5 Using Followers

Assistance in Scenes

Followers can help with your actions:

- **Assist Dice**: Add dice equal to $\min(Cap, relevant skill)$.

- **Maximum Bonus**: +3 dice total from all sources.

- **Exception**: *Exceptional Coordination* talent allows +4 from one follower.

- **One Helper**: Only one follower can assist per action.

Independent Actions

Once per scene (party-wide), a follower can take a small action:

Scout & Signal Change an ally's next action to **Controlled** position.

Distract & Draw Reduce a threat clock by 1 segment.

Fetch & Carry Move an object through danger safely.

Cost of Independent Actions

- Mark +1 **Exposure** (attention or stress), *or*

- Take **Harm 1** (injury or trauma).

- Cannot be used if the follower is already **Compromised**.

8.6 Follower Conditions

Followers track two condition types:

Exposure

Represents attention, stress, or narrative pressure:

- **Gains**: From independent actions, dangerous situations, complications.

- **Effects**: Increased risk, reduced effectiveness, attention from enemies.

- **Recovery**: Downtime activities, careful management.

Harm

Represents injury, trauma, or damage:

- **Gains**: From combat, accidents, enemy attacks.

- **Effects**: Penalties to assistance, possible incapacity.

- **Recovery**: Medical care, rest, magical healing.

Condition States

Maintained Ready and reliable, full capability.

Neglected Needs attention, −1 die to assistance.

Compromised Unavailable: captured, defected, lost, or incapacitated.

8.7 Follower Risks

Using followers carries significant risks:

Complication Targeting

When the GM spends **2+ Story Beats** on an action where you have assistance:

- The follower may face consequences instead of you.

- Could be injury, capture, betrayal, or other complications.

- Fictionally appropriate to the situation.

Off-Screen Capability

Once per downtime, a **Cap 5** follower can solve a significant problem:

- But generates **1 Story Beat** for the party.

- The GM describes how this creates story consequences.

- Useful for emergencies but costly.

8.8 Upkeep and Maintenance

Both assets and followers require regular maintenance.

Asset Upkeep

- **XP Cost**: Equal to asset value each downtime.

- **Scene Alternative**: Spend a scene managing the asset.

- **Neglect**: Assets deteriorate to *Neglected*, then *Compromised.*

- **Recovery**: Compromised assets require significant investment.

Follower Upkeep

- **XP Cost**: Equal to follower's *Cap* each downtime.

- **Scene Alternative**: Spend a scene maintaining the relationship.

- **Loyalty**: Followers may leave if neglected or mistreated.

- **Recovery**: Compromised followers require rescue or reconciliation.

8.9 Strategic Considerations

When to Invest in Assets

- You need reliable off-screen capabilities.

- Your character concept involves wealth or influence.

- The party lacks certain logistical support.

- You want to build long-term influence.

When to Invest in Followers

- You need on-screen assistance.

- Your character works better with support.

- The party needs specific capabilities you lack.

- You want character-driven story opportunities.

Balance Recommendations

- **Personal Path**: 0–10% assets/followers.

- **Balanced Path**: 15–25% assets/followers.

- **Influencer Path**: 35–55% assets/followers.

8.10 Loyalty and Relationships

Loyalty Levels

Optional system for tracking follower loyalty:

Wary Cautious, may leave if pressured; +1 XP upkeep cost.

Steady Reliable, standard performance; normal upkeep.

Devoted Loyal, may sacrifice; can convert one major complication to a minor setback per arc.

Building Loyalty

- Fair treatment and respect.

- Sharing rewards and successes.

- Protecting followers from harm.

- Honoring agreements and promises.

Losing Loyalty

- Mistreatment or disrespect.

- Unreasonable demands or risks.

- Broken promises or betrayal.

- Consistent neglect.

8.11 Advanced Follower Management

Follower Groups

For multiple similar followers, you can manage them as a group:

- **Single Rating**: Treat as one entity with combined capability.

- **Condition Tracking**: Group shares exposure and harm.

- **Maintenance**: Single upkeep cost for the group.

- **Risks**: Problems affect the entire group.

Follower Advancement

Followers can improve over time:

- **Experience**: Gain capability through successful assistance.

- **Training**: Spend XP to improve follower capabilities.

- **Equipment**: Better gear can enhance effectiveness.

- **Limits**: Followers typically cap at lower levels than PCs.

8.12 Risk Management

Asset Risks

- **Financial**: Assets can be costly to maintain.

- **Security**: Assets can be attacked or stolen.

- **Attention**: Valuable assets draw unwanted notice.

- **Dependency**: Over-reliance can be problematic.

Follower Risks

- **Safety**: Followers can be harmed or captured.

- **Loyalty**: Followers may betray or leave.

- **Attention**: Followers can draw enemy interest.

- **Morale**: Followers have needs and limits.

Mitigation Strategies

- **Diversification**: Don't put all resources in one place.

- **Security**: Protect valuable assets and followers.

- **Relationships**: Maintain good terms with your people.

- **Contingencies**: Have backup plans for losses.

Assets and Followers Quick Reference

Assets:

- Minor: 4 XP | Standard: 8 XP | Major: 12 XP

- Free off-screen use: once per session

- Boon activation: spend 1 Advancement Point for scene impact

- Conditions: *Maintained → Neglected → Compromised*

Followers:

- Cost: Cap^2 XP

- Assistance: $+\min(Cap, skill)$ dice (max +3 from all sources)

- Independent action: once per scene (party-wide)

- Conditions: *Exposure* and *Harm* tracks

Upkeep: Pay XP or spend a scene each downtime

8.13   Practical Examples

Asset Example: The Safehouse

- **Type**: Minor Asset (4 XP)

- **Free Use**: Secure lodging, basic supplies between adventures.

- **Boon Activation**: Reveal a hidden escape route during pursuit.

- **Upkeep**: 4 XP or one scene each downtime.

- **Risks**: Discovery by enemies, maintenance costs.

Follower Example: The Scout

- **Capability**: 3 (9 XP cost)

- **Assistance**: +3 dice on tracking and survival rolls.

- **Independent Action**: Scout ahead to improve party position.

- **Upkeep**: 3 XP or relationship scene each downtime.

- **Risks**: Injury in dangerous scouting; disloyalty if mistreated.

Combination Example: The Merchant

- **Assets**: Trading post (8 XP), caravan (4 XP) — *12 XP total*

- **Followers**: Cap 2 guards **(two)** (4 XP each = 8 XP), Cap 3 factor (9 XP) — *17 XP total*

- **Total Investment**: **29 XP** in assets and followers

- **Upkeep**: Assets 12 XP + Followers (2+2+3 = 7 XP) = **19 XP** per downtime period

- **Benefits**: Trade income, transport, protection, business contacts

- **Risks**: Competition, bandit attacks, employee issues, regulatory attention

Note on Upkeep Math: If you instead hire *one* Cap 2 guard (4 XP) and keep the Cap 3 factor (9 XP), follower upkeep becomes $2 + 3 = 5$ and total upkeep becomes $12 + 5 = \mathbf{17}$ per downtime.

Remember: Assets and followers can greatly expand your capabilities, but they require careful management and carry significant risks. Invest wisely based on your character concept and the needs of your group.

Chapter 9

World Interaction

In **Fate's Edge**, the world is not a backdrop—it's a partner in the conversation. Dikes groan under black rain in Viterra, clan horns answer across Acasia's ridgelines, Ecktoria's marble halls echo with careful words, and Kahfagia's pilots read storms by taste. Wherever you go, place, culture, and pressure push back.

9.1 Travel Framework

Travel abstracts distance into *legs* with tension and color rather than miles and meal counts. Each leg has a **Travel Clock** and draws on a **regional deck** to seed fiction.

Regional Travel Decks

Each major region has a themed prompt list or card table (see §14):

Viterra Fen causeways, dike-brotherhoods, crown law.

Acasia Border-lace titles, ruined towers, clan tempers.

Ecktoria Imperial roads, precinct gates, temple schedules.

Ubral Stone passes, toll-cloisters, ghosted fields.

Kahfagia Current maps, pilot-mirrors, storm lanes.

Aelinnel Mist paths, bell-mounds, spirit ways.

Core Travel Procedure

For each **leg**:

1. **Set the Leg:** Name origin & aim; start a Travel Clock (size below).

2. **Draw Prompts:** Draw up to *one* from each axis (or roll on tables):

   - **Spade (Place)** from destination region: terrain/site framing.

   - **Heart (People)** from destination region: actors/factions.

   - **Club (Pressure)** from wilds/authority: hazards, patrols, weather.

   - **Diamond (Leverage)** from local institutions: passes, rites, favors.

3. **Play the Leg:** Players take actions to *advance* or *mitigate*. GM spends SB from rolls showing **1**s to complicate (washouts, tolls, storms).

4. **Resolve:** When the clock fills, arrive changed: on a clean close, keep momentum; on a cost, mark fatigue, supplies, or entanglements.

Clock Size by Region

Use the highest card rank drawn to size the clock; add +2 segments for notably vicious routes.

Rank	Travel Clock
2–5	4 segments (minor leg)
6–10	6 segments (standard leg)
J, Q, K	8 segments (major leg)
Ace	10 segments (perilous leg)

Dangerous zones—Acasia border heats, Ubral peaks in thaw, deep Dolmis gale seasons—add +2 segments.

Resolving Travel—Examples

- **Spade (Place):** "Beacon hill above the dales"—winds strip cover; ranged actions gain Effect, stealth loses Position.

- **Heart (People):** "Queen's Justiciar at the mile-stone"—social tests default Risky; produce writs or risk fees (SB bait).

- **Club (Pressure):** "Dolmis gale-train"—Move/Survival rolls face upgrade to Desperate on a miss; gear may take *Compromised.*

- **Diamond (Leverage):** "Parish ferry priority"—once this leg, improve Position by one step crossing water.

9.2 Narrative Time

Time is measured by *importance.*

A Moment A glance, a strike, a whisper over a law-stone.

Some Time A skirmish, a negotiation, a careful climb.

Significant Time Hours of march, rites, audits, stakeouts.

Days Drills, recoveries, research, roadwork.

GM Tip: If the fiction implies logistics, tick the **Supply Clock** (§9.7) instead of counting coins.

9.3 Movement and Positioning

Space is tracked with **range bands** and **Position**.

Range Bands

Close Grapples, knife-work, hand on the relic.

Near Same room/yard/deck; a rush away.

Far Same site but distant; route or time needed.

Absent Off-screen; requires scene change.

Move: 1 band for a *beat*; **Dash:** 2 bands as your action (terrain may require a roll).

Position in the World

Controlled Cover, leverage, or ritual footing.

Risky Exposed lanes, rivals near, watchful eyes.

Desperate Bad ground, bad odds, bad timing.

Shifts: GM can spend **1 SB** to worsen Position; a player can spend **1 Boon** to improve it (once per action).

9.4 Social Interactions

Social scenes use the same engine with **cultural color**.

Cultural Skill Emphases

Viterra Rapport with parishes; Sway for markets; Command under writ.

Acasia Rapport for kin-bridges; Command with banner-rights; Deceive risks honor clocks.

Ecktoria Sway in salons; Deceive at court; Perform in temple fora.

Kahfagia Rapport aboard; Sway at piers; Command on a storming deck.

Social Stakes & Clocks

- **Alliance Clock (Viterra):** Parishes and guilds come to your side.

- **Honor Clock (Acasia):** Feasts, oaths, wyrd—trust builds (or frays).

- **Bureau Clock (Ecktoria):** Stamps, seals, approvals—delay is pressure.

- **Trust Clock (Kahfagia):** Pilots and crews extend favors and routes.

Region-Tinted Consequences

- **Viterra:** Loss of ferry priority, tithe hikes, dike shifts (fees/obstacles).

- **Acasia:** Feud spark, escort withdrawn, border-right rescinded.

- **Ecktoria:** Blacklist, temple censure, archive access revoked.

- **Kahfagia:** Quay denial, pilot suspicion, storm-omen pinned on you.

9.5 Deck of Consequences (In the World)

When SB accumulates, the GM may draw a card to color fallout (see §**??**).

Hearts Relationships, morale, rumor.

Diamonds Permits, fees, supplies, auspices.

Clubs Hazards, pursuit, violence, terrain.

Spades Law, omens, patron attention, the unseen.

Regional lens: A Heart in Viterra is a parish feud; in Ecktoria, salon gossip; in Kahfagia, crew grumbling.

9.6 Tags and Setting Interactions

Tags are portable rules-words expressed differently by culture.

[**WARD**] Viterra dike-wards; Acasia boundary-knots; Ecktoria seal-cords; Kahfagia storm-lines.

[**BANISH**] Everflame purgations; ancestor appeasement; temple exorcism; sea-calming rites.

[**FORTIFY**] Timber & turf; hall-bracing; civic bulwarks; hull-hardening.

Components vary: A BANISH might need Everflame ash in Viterra, bell-water in Aelinnel, or salt-thread in Kahfagia.

9.7 Supply and Resources

Track scarcity with a **Supply Clock** shared by the party's expedition.

Segments	State & Effects
0 (Full)	Well-provisioned; no penalty.
2 (Low)	Minor frictions; -1 to resource checks.
3 (Dangerous)	Each PC gains *Fatigue 1*.
4 (Empty)	Severe penalties; desperate measures.

Regional ticks: Ecktoria tariffs, Acasia tribute, Viterra tithes, Kahfagia storm losses, Aelinnel offerings.

9.8 Condition Tracks in the World

Fatigue reads as dike-labor ache (Viterra), watch-cold (Acasia), petition-wear (Ecktoria), or salt-burn (Kahfagia). **Harm** follows the usual ladder (see §**??**), and **Stress** rises in courts, sieges, and storms alike.

9.9 Engaging the World—Table Tools

- **Scout & Signal:** A follower can make the next travel action *Controlled* (mark Exposure or Harm 1 on them).

- **Local Color:** Briefly state what locals notice about you; GM offers a small fictional edge *or* a tempting clock—choose.

- **Mark the Map:** On arrival, declare one change to the fiction (new ford, patron's shrine, toll-skip). GM may attach a minor clock as cost.

9.10 Regional Quick Reference

Viterra — The Last Kingdom

- *Travel*: causeways, toll-stairs, levy musters.

- *Social default*: Rapport/Sway; writs matter.

- *Common fallout*: flooded detours, tithe audits.

Acasia — Broken Marches

- *Travel*: disputed fords, ruined towers.

- *Social default*: Rapport/Command; oaths bind.

- *Common fallout*: feud sparks, hostage customs.

Ecktoria — Marble & Fire

- *Travel*: precinct gates, census nights.

- *Social default*: Sway/Deceive; paperwork clocks.

- *Common fallout*: blacklists, temple censure.

Kahfagia — Pilot's Mirror

- *Travel*: tide windows, quay politics.

- *Social default*: Rapport/Sway on the docks.

- *Common fallout*: pilot suspicion, storm debris.

Ubral — Stone Between Spears

- *Travel*: toll-cloisters, ice chutes.

- *Social default*: Command/Resolve in halls.

- *Common fallout*: avalanches, monastic law.

9.11 Summary

The world has opinions. Movement is clocks and color, position rises and sinks with weather and words, and every suit you draw speaks in a regional accent. Ask the land for a favor—then pay it back on the road.

Chapter 10

Example Character Concepts

This chapter presents example character concepts to illustrate how the game's systems can create diverse and interesting heroes. These are **examples only**—not prescriptive templates or exhaustive lists. Use them for inspiration, as pre-generated characters, or as starting points for your own unique creations.

10.1 Important Disclaimer

These examples are provided for illustrative purposes only. They demonstrate how the game's mechanics can support different character archetypes and play styles. You are encouraged to:

- Modify these concepts to fit your preferences
- Create completely original characters
- Mix and match elements from different examples
- Work with your Game Master to develop unique concepts

The game system is designed to support a wide variety of character types beyond these examples.

10.2 How to Use These Examples

Each concept includes:

- **Concept Overview**: Narrative identity and role
- **Mechanical Foundation**: Suggested starting capabilities
- **Play Style**: How the character typically engages with challenges
- **Development Path**: Potential growth directions
- **Story Hooks**: Plot opportunities for the Game Master
- **Build Blocks**: A *legal 30 XP* starting build, plus an optional *34 XP* variant using Bonds/Complications (+4 XP)

10.3 1. The Guardian

Concept: A protector who stands between danger and those they've sworn to defend. *Steel in hand, vow in heart.*

Typical Inspiration: Paladins, knights, bodyguards, sworn shields

Mechanical Foundation:

- **Primary**: Body, Spirit
- **Skills**: Melee, Athletics, Command
- **Talents**: Defensive stance, protective instincts

Play Style:

- Frontline combat and protection

- Drawing attention away from allies

- Using presence and authority to control situations

- Taking risks to protect others

Development Path:

- Increase defensive capabilities

- Develop leadership skills

- Acquire better protective gear

- Learn area control abilities

Story Hooks:

- Who or what are they protecting?

- What oath or duty drives them?

- What happens if they fail in their protection?

- What personal costs do they bear for their role?

Build Blocks. Legal Starting Build (30 XP).

- **Attributes** (Cost = rating × 3 XP): Body 3 (9), Spirit 2 (6), Wits 1 (3), Presence 1 (3) → **21 XP**

- **Skills** (Cost = level × 2 XP): Melee 2 (4), Athletics 1 (2), Command 1 (2) → **8 XP**

- **Total**: 29 XP (bank 1 XP)

With Bonds/Complications (34 XP).

- Add **Talent**: Combat Reflexes (5 XP) using banked 1 + 4 = 5

- **Revised Total**: 34 XP

10.4 2. The Scholar

Concept: A seeker of knowledge who uses information as power. *Candlesmoke, marginalia, and dangerous truths.*

Typical Inspiration: Wizards, sages, researchers, historians

Mechanical Foundation:

- **Primary**: Wits, Spirit

- **Skills**: Lore, Investigation, Arcana

- **Talents**: Quick Study, Research Mastery

Play Style:

- Information gathering and analysis

- Solving puzzles and mysteries

- Using knowledge to gain advantages

- Researching solutions between adventures

Development Path:

- Specialize in specific knowledge areas

- Develop magical or technical capabilities

- Build research networks

- Create unique inventions or discoveries

Story Hooks:

- What knowledge are they seeking?

- What dangerous information might they uncover?

- How do they handle forbidden knowledge?

- Who opposes their research?

Build Blocks. Legal Starting Build (30 XP).

- **Attributes**: Wits 3 (9), Spirit 2 (6), Body 1 (3), Presence 1 (3) → **21 XP**

- **Skills**: Lore 2 (4), Investigation 1 (2), Arcana 1 (2) → **8 XP**

- **Total**: 29 XP (bank 1 XP)

With Bonds/Complications (34 XP).

- Add **Talent**: Research Mastery (5 XP) using banked 1 + 4

- **Revised Total**: 34 XP

10.5   3. The Scout

Concept: A wilderness expert who navigates dangerous territories. *Quiet footfalls, hawk eyes, and the long road.*

Typical Inspiration: Rangers, hunters, trackers, explorers

Mechanical Foundation:

- **Primary**: Wits, Body

- **Skills**: Survival, Stealth, Perception

- **Talents**: Wilderness Lore, Keen Senses

Play Style:

- Scouting ahead and gathering intelligence

- Wilderness survival and navigation

- Ambush and skirmish tactics

- Finding paths and resources

Development Path:

- Improve stealth and tracking abilities

- Develop animal companions or allies

- Master specific environments

- Learn advanced survival techniques

Story Hooks:

- What uncharted territory are they exploring?

- What secrets have they discovered in the wild?

- How do they balance civilization and wilderness?

- What threats have they encountered beyond settled lands?

Build Blocks. Legal Starting Build (30 XP).

- **Attributes**: Wits 3 (9), Body 2 (6), Spirit 1 (3), Presence 1 (3) → **21 XP**

- **Skills**: Survival 2 (4), Stealth 2 (4) → **8 XP**

- **Total**: 29 XP (bank 1 XP)

With Bonds/Complications (34 XP).

- Add **Asset**: Hidden Cache (Minor Asset, 4 XP) using banked 1 + 4

- **Revised Total**: 33 XP (bank 1 XP remains)

10.6   4. The Diplomat

Concept: A negotiator who resolves conflicts through words and influence. *A smile for the foyer, steel for the parlor.*

Typical Inspiration: Bards, ambassadors, merchants, politicians

Mechanical Foundation:

- **Primary**: Presence, Wits

- **Skills**: Sway, Investigation, Lore

- **Talents**: Silver Tongue, Read Emotions

Play Style:

- Social interaction and negotiation

- Gathering information through contacts

- Resolving conflicts without violence

- Building alliances and relationships

Development Path:

- Expand social influence and networks

- Develop economic or political power

- Learn cultural specialties

- Master manipulation or inspiration techniques

Story Hooks:

- What major conflict are they trying to resolve?

- What alliances have they built or broken?

- How do they handle betrayal or failed negotiations?

- What personal relationships affect their diplomacy?

Build Blocks. Legal Starting Build (30 XP).

- **Attributes**: Presence 3 (9), Wits 2 (6), Spirit 1 (3), Body 1 (3) → **21 XP**

- **Skills**: Sway 2 (4), Investigation 1 (2), Lore 1 (2) → **8 XP**

- **Total**: 29 XP (bank 1 XP)

With Bonds/Complications (34 XP).

- Add **Talent**: Silver Tongue (3 XP); add **Skill** Lore +1 (now 2) for 2 XP using remaining 1 + 4 = 5

- **Revised Totals**: Skills Sway 2, Investigation 1, Lore 2; **34 XP exact**

10.7 5. The Specialist

Concept: An expert with unique capabilities beyond typical roles. *The right tool, the right touch, at the right time.*

Typical Inspiration: Artisans, healers, engineers, spies

Mechanical Foundation:

- **Primary**: Varies by specialty (often Wits or Body)

- **Skills**: One specialty at focus, plus two support skills

- **Talents**: Unique techniques that unlock niche actions

Play Style:

- Solving problems with unique expertise

- Creating or repairing specialized items

- Providing services others cannot

- Using niche knowledge for advantage

Development Path:

- Master their specialty area

- Develop related capabilities

- Build reputation and clientele

- Create unique inventions or methods

Story Hooks:

- What makes their specialty unique or valuable?

- How did they acquire their special skills?

- What problems require their specific expertise?

- Who seeks to control or exploit their abilities?

Build Blocks (Artificer example). Legal Starting Build (30 XP).

- **Attributes**: Wits 3 (9), Body 2 (6), Presence 1 (3), Spirit 1 (3) → **21 XP**

- **Skills**: Craft 2 (4), Mechanics 2 (4) → **8 XP**

- **Total**: 29 XP (bank 1 XP)

With Bonds/Complications (34 XP).

- Add **Talent**: Technical Expert (6 XP) using banked 1 + 4 = 5 (insufficient) *or* choose **Quick Study** (3 XP) and bank 2 XP

- **Revised Total**: 32 XP (bank 2 XP for an early upgrade)

10.8   6. The Survivor

Concept: Someone who has endured hardship and developed resilience. *Scars are maps; read them well.*

Typical Inspiration: Veterans, refugees, outcasts, hardened adventurers
Mechanical Foundation:

- **Primary**: Spirit, Body

- **Skills**: Endurance, Survival, (optionally) Perception/Insight

- **Talents**: Endurance, Adaptable

Play Style:

- Enduring difficult conditions

- Overcoming physical and mental challenges

- Using experience to avoid dangers

- Helping others survive hardships

Development Path:

- Improve physical and mental resilience

- Develop survival-related skills

- Acquire better equipment and resources

- Learn to teach survival to others

Story Hooks:

- What trauma or hardship have they survived?

- How has their past shaped their present?

- What survival skills have saved them repeatedly?

- How do they help others facing similar challenges?

Build Blocks. Legal Starting Build (30 XP).

- **Attributes**: Spirit 3 (9), Body 2 (6), Wits 1 (3), Presence 1 (3) → **21 XP**

- **Skills**: Endurance 2 (4), Survival 2 (4) → **8 XP**

- **Total**: 29 XP (bank 1 XP)

With Bonds/Complications (34 XP).

- Add **Talent**: Endurance (3 XP) using banked 1 + 4; bank 2 XP

- **Revised Total**: 32 XP (bank 2 XP)

10.9   7. The Innovator

Concept: A creative problem-solver who finds new solutions. *Blueprints on napkins, tomorrow in your pocket.*

Typical Inspiration: Inventors, strategists, reformers, visionaries
Mechanical Foundation:

- **Primary**: Wits, Presence

- **Skills**: Craft, Lore, Investigation

- **Talents**: Creative/Innovative thinking, Quick Study

Play Style:

- Finding novel solutions to problems

- Creating new devices or methods

- Analyzing systems for improvement

- Convincing others to try new approaches

Development Path:

- Develop specific technical specialties

- Create increasingly complex inventions

- Build support for innovative ideas

- Overcome resistance to change

Story Hooks:

- What problem are they trying to solve?

- How do others react to their innovations?

- What unintended consequences might their creations have?

- Who benefits or suffers from their changes?

Build Blocks. Legal Starting Build (30 XP).

- **Attributes**: Wits 3 (9), Presence 2 (6), Body 1 (3), Spirit 1 (3) → **21 XP**

- **Skills**: Craft 2 (4), Lore 2 (4) → **8 XP**

- **Total**: 29 XP (bank 1 XP)

With Bonds/Complications (34 XP).

- Add **Talent**: Quick Study (3 XP); bank 2 XP

- **Revised Total**: 32 XP (bank 2 XP)

10.10   8. The Networker

Concept: Someone who builds and leverages social connections. *A web of favors, a chorus of names.*

Typical Inspiration: Merchants, spies, socialites, community leaders

Mechanical Foundation:

- **Primary**: Presence, Wits

- **Skills**: Sway, Lore, (optionally) Command/Deception

- **Talents**: Network Builder, Command Presence / Silver Tongue

Play Style:

- Building and maintaining relationships

- Gathering information through contacts

- Leveraging social influence

- Navigating complex social situations

Development Path:

- Expand social network and influence

- Develop specific community ties

- Acquire political or economic power

- Master manipulation or leadership techniques

Story Hooks:

- What networks or communities are they part of?

- How do they balance multiple relationships?

- What happens when loyalties conflict?

- How do they handle betrayal or broken trust?

Build Blocks. Legal Starting Build (30 XP).

- **Attributes**: Presence 3 (9), Wits 2 (6), Body 1 (3), Spirit 1 (3) → **21 XP**

- **Skills**: Sway 2 (4), Lore 2 (4) → **8 XP**

- **Total**: 29 XP (bank 1 XP)

With Bonds/Complications (34 XP).

- Add **Talent**: Silver Tongue (3 XP); bank 2 XP

- **Revised Total**: 32 XP (bank 2 XP)

10.11 Creating Your Own Concept

Start with Narrative

- What is your character's background and motivation?

- What role do they play in their community or society?

- What relationships are important to them?

- What goals are they pursuing?

Add Mechanical Support

- Choose attributes that support your concept

- Select skills that reflect their training and experience

- Consider talents that provide unique capabilities

- Think about assets that represent their resources

Consider Group Role

- How does your concept complement other party members?

- What gaps in group capability can you fill?

- What unique contributions can you make?

- How will you work with other characters?

Plan for Growth

- What short-term improvements make sense?

- What long-term development aligns with your concept?

- How might your character change over time?

- What legacy do you want to build?

Character Concept Worksheet

Narrative Elements:

- Concept:
  _____

- Motivation:
  _____

- Background:
  _____

- Relationships:
  _____

Mechanical Foundation:

- Primary   Attributes:
  _____

- Key   Skills:
  _____

- Starting   Talents:
  _____

- Initial   Assets:
  _____

Development Plan:

- Short-term   goals:
  _____

- Long-term   vision:
  _____

10.12 Final Notes

Remember that these examples are starting points, not limitations. The most interesting characters often combine elements from multiple concepts or create entirely new approaches. Work with your Game Master to ensure your character concept fits the campaign and provides engaging story opportunities.

The best characters are those that you find interesting to play and that contribute to an enjoyable experience for everyone at the table.

Chapter 11

Character Backgrounds

> **From the journal of a Thepyrgosi Witch Hunter**
>
> They call it mercy when the Tower does it and cruelty when I do. The difference is a seal of wax and a hymn at the gate.
>
> I was a bright spark once—could taste iron on my tongue when the air went thin before a working. The masters in Thepyrgos tested me, weighed me, and found me *nearly* enough. "Nearly" is a door that never opens again.
>
> So I learned the other doors.
>
> I keep a ledger: names, places, the hour the lamps guttered in a tenement, the way the brick sweats when a child hums without meaning to. I carry writs that make people look away. I carry cord and a promise I do not speak aloud. The University pays for talent delivered in time; the city pays for fires that never start. Between those accounts, I balance what I can.
>
> You will say I go too far. Sometimes I do. Sometimes the street is a tinderbox and a wrong whisper is a spark. Sometimes a family would rather believe in saints than in ash. I give them a story they can live with and take away the one that might kill them.
>
> When the bells of Thepyrgos answer the river wind, I walk the colonnade to the bursar's door and do not look at the windows. The work is ugly. The work is necessary. The night does not care which of those is true—only that the lamps keep burning.

Before your character took their first deliberate risk, they belonged somewhere. Backgrounds are the trail-dust on your boots, the school-ink on your fingers, the bell-pattern you still tap when frightened. They explain how you know what you know—and who still knows *you*.

11.1 Understanding Backgrounds

Backgrounds serve several important functions:

- Provide narrative context for abilities and choices

- Explain how you gained skills, languages (§**??**), and connections

- Create ties to regions and factions (§**??**)

- Offer roleplaying hooks, obligations, and privileges

- Seed reliable *contacts*, *customs*, and *places* that matter on-screen

Mechanical Hooks. Choose **one background** at character creation. It grants:

- **Access Tags** (narrative permissions; see below)

- **A Signature Contact** (named NPC; usually a Cap 1 follower you *do not* pay XP for; they cannot take independent actions, but can grant +1d *once per scene* when their help is plausible)

- **A Background Boon** (once per session, gain a +1d or reduce DV by 1 for a task strongly tied to the background's sphere)

- **An Obligation Clock** (4 segments; when filled, it creates a *call-in* from that world—debt, favor, duty; see §11.9)

Access Tags. Tags describe *where* and *with whom* you have standing. Examples: *Guild-Ledgered, Court-Announced, Veteran-of-the-Marches, Bell-Kin of the Causeways, Wind-Rider's Tokens, Charter-Stamped.* When a scene engages a tag, the GM may:

- Waive a trivial gate (no roll) or

- Lower Position risk by one step for first contact or

- Offer a *Devil's Bargain* tied to that society's expectations

11.2 Common Background Categories

Social Class Backgrounds

Aristocratic House Scion

- **Access Tags**: *Court-Announced, Heraldic Right*

- **Skills**: Sway, Command, Lore (customs)

- **Signature Contact**: Family steward (Cap 1)

- **Background Boon**: Once/session in a formal setting, treat Social Position as one step better for an exchange.

- **Obligation Seeds**: Marriage alliances, estate audits, house feuds

- **Challenges**: Intrigue clocks, reputation stakes

Merchant Factor

- **Access Tags**: *Guild-Ledgered, Caravan Rights*

- **Skills**: Sway (negotiation), Investigation (accounts), Lore (markets)

- **Signature Contact**: Bookkeeper or quartermaster (Cap 1)

- **Background Boon**: Once/session when buying/selling or logistics, reduce DV by 1 or gain +1d.

- **Obligation Seeds**: Notes due, partner demands, embargoes

Common Folk

- **Access Tags**: *Neighborhood Trust, Guild-Friend*

- **Skills**: Craft (one), Endurance, Streetwise or Nature

- **Signature Contact**: Elder, foreman, or midwife (Cap 1)

- **Background Boon**: Once/session among familiar folk, convert a failure on routine labor to a success-with-cost.

- **Obligation Seeds**: Communal favors, festival work, mutual aid

Professional Backgrounds

Marcher Veteran

- **Access Tags**: *Veteran-of-the-Marches, Muster Papers*

- **Skills**: Melee or Ranged, Tactics, Endurance

- **Signature Contact**: Old sergeant (Cap 1)

- **Background Boon**: Once/session in organized violence, ignore the first point of situational Disadvantage from confusion or fear.

- **Obligation Seeds**: Recall to colors, feud legacies, back-pay claims

Academic of the Dialogues

- **Access Tags**: *School-Sealed, Reading Privileges*

- **Skills**: Lore, Investigation, Sway (debate)

- **Signature Contact**: Lecturer or archivist (Cap 1)

- **Background Boon**: Once/session in research or disputation, ask one clarifying question the GM must answer plainly or point to the shelf that does.

- **Obligation Seeds**: Citations owed, controversial thesis, patron politics

Underworld Hand

- **Access Tags**: *Harbor Handsigns, Black Banner Cant*

- **Skills**: Stealth, Deception, Streetwise

- **Signature Contact**: Fence or fixer (Cap 1)

- **Background Boon**: Once/session when using a *cant* (§**??**), gain +1d to set up or slip out.

- **Obligation Seeds**: Debts, heat with a rival crew, burned safehouse

Regional Backgrounds

Urban Child of Silkstrand

- **Access Tags**: *Street-Stall Rights, Night-Patrol Familiar*

- **Skills**: Streetwise, Perception, Sway (fast talk)

- **Signature Contact**: Watch-lantern or stall-keeper (Cap 1)

- **Background Boon**: Once/session in a dense city, you know a *shortcut or rumor* that reduces time/cost by one step.

Rural Valewood Forager

- **Access Tags**: *Green Courts Token, River-Ferry Nod*

- **Skills**: Nature, Survival, Lore (spirits)

- **Signature Contact**: Leaf-warden (Cap 1)

- **Background Boon**: Once/session in the wild, downgrade a Travel complication by one step.

Frontier Marcher Homesteader

- **Access Tags**: *Land-Grant Papers, Border Moot Voice*

- **Skills**: Craft (build), Endurance, Tactics or Diplomacy

- **Signature Contact**: Neighboring elder (Cap 1)

- **Background Boon**: Once/session at a contested site, shift Position up by one step when defending what's yours.

11.3 World-Linked Backgrounds

Aeler Charter Apprentice

- **Access Tags**: *Charter-Stamped, Stone-Speech Initiate*

- **Skills**: Craft, Lore (engineering), Investigation (plans)

- **Signature Contact**: Oathscribe (Cap 1)

- **Boon**: Once/session around structures, ignore the first *environmental* complication from collapse or strain.

Mistlands Bell-Keeper

- **Access Tags**: *Bell-Law, Causeway Rights*

- **Skills**: Perception, Lore (omens), Survival (fens)

- **Signature Contact**: Dusk-warden (Cap 1)

- **Boon**: Once/session, ring a lawful pattern to reframe a fog scene's Position from *Risky* to *Controlled* for one exchange.

Steppe Wind-Runner

- **Access Tags**: *Wind-Knot Tokens, Banner Hospitality*

- **Skills**: Survival (steppe), Ranged or Riding, Sway (customs)

- **Signature Contact**: Banner-aunt (Cap 1)

- **Boon**: Once/session in open country, coordinate allies at distance; they gain a one-time *Boon* if they can hear your call.

Sun Coast Dock-Priest Acolyte

- **Access Tags**: *Harbor Blessings, Beacon Rights*

- **Skills**: Lore (sea rites), Sway (crews), Investigation (cargo)

- **Signature Contact**: Beacon-keeper (Cap 1)

- **Boon**: Once/session at sea or harbor, treat one navigation check as if aided by favorable weather (DV–1).

11.4 Background Benefits and Limits

Typical Benefits

- **Skill Access**: Strong narrative justification for certain tests

- **Resource Access**: Borrowed tools, rooms, shrines, or records (scene-time instead of XP; see Assets, §8)

- **Social Access**: Entry to circles your tag recognizes

- **Knowledge**: Clues, maps, or customs that lower DV by 1

- **Reputation**: Advantage on *first impressions* in-tag

Common Limitations

- **Obligations**: Duties to house, guild, banner, or court

- **Restrictions**: Codes, taboos, or public expectations

- **Enemies**: Rival houses, crews, or schools

- **Secrets**: Leverage others can pull

- **Dependencies**: Loss of standing if you neglect ties

11.5 Custom Backgrounds

Build Procedure (Player & GM)

Pick **1 Access Tag**, **1 Signature Contact**, **1 Boon**, and **1 Obligation Seed**. Name places and people.

- **Origin**: Where were you taught/raised/forged?

- **Training**: Which *two* skills does this background naturally support?

- **Experiences**: One memory that still changes how you act

- **Relationships**: One ally, one rival; both want something

- **Values**: What won't you let slide?

Mechanical Considerations

- **Boon Scope**: DV–1 or +1d once/session when strongly on-theme

- **Contact Use**: +1d as assist; cannot take independent actions unless purchased as a *Follower* (Cap² XP; §8)

- **Assets**: Borrowing an institutional asset costs *scene time* (counts as upkeep for that asset this downtime) but 0 XP

- **Languages**: Choose one tongue linked to the background (see §**??**); at least *Conversational*

11.6 Integration with Development

Early Career

- Apprentice, recruit, junior clerk, initiate bell-keeper

- Boon is modest; obligation triggers are frequent but small

Mid-Career

- Foreman, sergeant, factor, lecturer

- Add a **second Access Tag** or elevate contact to Cap 2 by *paying XP* for a follower

Late Career

- Master, banner-aunt, beacon-warden, arbiter

- Background Boon may become a *scene-long permission* at GM approval tied to a vow or festival

11.7 Background Combinations

Sequential

- **Veteran → City Watch**: Access shifts from *Muster Papers* to *Badge Rights*

- **Scholar → Diplomat**: Keep libraries, gain court

Parallel

- **Noble Merchant**: Both *Court-Announced* and *Guild-Ledgered*; obligations multiply

Contrasting

- **Criminal Penitent**: Underworld ties vs. temple vows; great hooks, sharp bargains

11.8 Using Backgrounds in Play

Player Applications

- Name your places: the specific stall, shrine, or yard you know

- Cash your Boon when you leverage that familiarity

- Call on your contact to assist or to introduce a new lead

GM Applications

- Offer choices where background allegiance matters

- Turn Access Tags into *gates* and *keys*

- Spend Story Beats (§9) to *complicate the old ties*

11.9 Obligations & Evolution

Obligation Clock (4)

When filled by misses, bargains, or story, something is *due*.

1–2 Minor favor, time, or tithe

3 Significant service, costly honesty, dangerous escort

4 Defining ordeal: duel, audit, rite, or trial

Clear segments by honoring duties on-screen, sacrificing resources, or changing affiliation (which creates new clocks).

Enhancement & Transformation

- **Enhance**: Add a tag or upgrade the contact via XP (Follower rules)

- **Transform**: Rewrite the background after a major arc; keep one tag, swap the rest, reset the clock

- **Resolution**: Retire a background after paying its *price*; gain a *Legacy Note*—a small permanent permission

11.10 Tables & Tools

Quick Background Seeds

d6	Seed
1	Failed heir with an honest steward and a dishonest cousin
2	Caravan accountant who knows three border tariffs by heart
3	Bell-tender whose dusk pattern saved a village once
4	Charter apprentice who broke a measure and hid it
5	Steppe courier who owes horses to two banners
6	Dock acolyte who lit the beacon in a storm against order

GM SB Menu: Background Complications

- **1 SB**: A rival claims your tag is invalid here; prove it or pay time

- **2 SB**: Your contact is *busy* or *watched*; help will cost you exposure

- **3 SB**: Obligation advances; an audit, rite, or muster arrives early

- **4 SB**: An enemy weaponizes your background—publicly

Background Quick Reference

At Creation

- Choose: 1 *Access Tag*, 1 *Signature Contact* (Cap 1 assist), 1 *Boon* (once/session), 1 *Obligation Seed.*

- Pick 1 language tied to the background at *Conversational* or better (§**??**).

In Play

- Invoke tags to open doors or shift Position.

- Call your contact for +1d assist (no independent actions).

- Track the *Obligation Clock* (4). Pay it on-screen.

Advancing

- Upgrade contact to a *Follower* by paying XP (Cap^2).

- Add a second tag after a major arc or training.

11.11 Worked Examples

House Shield (Aristocratic-Military Hybrid)

- **Tags**: *Court-Announced, Veteran-of-the-Marches*

- **Skills**: Command, Melee, Lore (protocol)

- **Contact**: House steward (Cap 1)

- **Boon**: Once/session while guarding a principal, treat one consequence as one step less severe.

- **Hook**: Duel clock from an old slight; an audit of campaign spoils

Ledger Lantern (Merchant-Temple Bridge)

- **Tags**: *Guild-Ledgered, Beacon Rights*

- **Skills**: Sway, Investigation (accounts), Lore (sea rites)

- **Contact**: Beacon-keeper (Cap 1)

- **Boon**: Once/session, secure safe harbor or fair rate; DV−1.

- **Hook**: Rivals whisper of skimming tithe; prove the books

Fog Warden (Mistlands Civic)

- **Tags**: *Bell-Law, Causeway Rights*

- **Skills**: Perception, Survival, Sway (local law)

- **Contact**: Dusk-warden (Cap 1)

- **Boon**: Once/session in mist, choose *route-or-safety*: negate a travel delay or downgrade a hazard.

- **Hook**: Someone silences the bells; obligation advances

Let your background do work for you. Speak its language, call its favors, and pay its debts in play. The world will answer.

Chapter 12

Followers

In *Fate's Edge*, your reach is measured by more than sword-arms and spell-forms. **Assets** move the world when you are elsewhere; **Followers** act at your side when the camera is on you. Both are power—and both are promises you'll be asked to keep.

A Lantern in the Rain. The courier taps twice on the shutters of the riverside inn. Inside, your *Safehouse* (§13) has already warmed a room, stocked dry clothes, and left an unmarked letter. Outside, your *Scout* whistles a two-note warning; the watch turns down a side street. Neither scene happens by accident. You paid for it—in XP, in care, and sometimes in blood.

12.1 Assets: Off-Screen Influence

Assets are establishments, titles, networks, ships, charters, vaults, shrines, or specialist tools that operate primarily *between scenes*. They alter Position, cancel specific complications, or frame a scene in your favor without needing you on-site.

Acquisition and Costs

Invest XP and time to found or formalize an Asset:

Minor (4 XP) 1 day downtime. *Examples:* safehouse, scholar's cell, barge, petty title, courier route.

Standard (8 XP) 1 week downtime. *Examples:* guild seat, spy ring, trading charter, workshop block, temple chapter.

Major (12 XP) 1 month downtime. *Examples:* city charter, fortress, university college, monopoly license, regional network.

Condition States

Track an Asset's operational health:

Maintained Full capability; all text applies.

Neglected -1d to *any* use; fiction reflects leaks, dust, or sullen staff.

Compromised Unavailable until repaired (downtime scene + test DV 3+, or an appropriate XP spend).

Activation and Use

- **Off-Screen Effect (free, per session):** Each Asset lists a routine benefit you may claim between scenes or as a scene opener.

- **On-Screen Activation (1 Boon):** Pull an Asset into the moment—call in a favor, open the hidden door, flash the seal. The effect must fit the Asset's scope.

- **Emergency Use (Compromised):** You *may* force a Compromised Asset to act; the GM adds **+3 SB** to the scene and narrates the messy fallout.

Maintenance

- **Regular Upkeep:** Each downtime, maintain at least one Asset or it slips one step (Maintained → Neglected → Compromised).

- **Recovery:** Neglected → Maintained with a brief scene or 1 XP; Compromised → Neglected with a full downtime action and successful test (DV 3+, skill varies).

- **Portfolio Size:** You can comfortably maintain **Spirit** + 2 Assets. Each Asset beyond that imposes +1 DV to maintenance tests this downtime.

Regional Color. On the Sun Coast, a *Trading Charter* opens gates at dusk; in the Mistlands, a *Bell-Right* safehouse answers three-tones at night; in the Stone Kingdoms, a *Charter-Script Vault* remembers debts even when stewards die.

12.2 Followers: On-Screen Allies

Followers are named allies who stand in the same spotlight you do. They add dice, take risks, carry messages, and complicate your life in the best possible way.

Capability Rating (Cap)

Followers are rated **Cap 1–5**. Cost to recruit is **Cap^2** XP; 1–3 days of downtime to find, brief, and bind.

Cap 1 (4 XP) Novice or narrow specialist

Cap 2 (8 XP) Competent professional

Cap 3 (12 XP) Skilled specialist / veteran

Cap 4 (16 XP) Expert with reputation

Cap 5 (20 XP) Master; scarce and storied

Limit: You can support **Presence** + 1 Followers without loyalty complications.

Assistance Mechanics

- **Base Assist:** Add dice equal to $\min(Cap, relevantSkill)$.

- **Hard Cap:** Total assist from *all* sources ≤ **+3d**.

- **Specialization:** Some Followers list a *Specialty* granting +1d in a narrow context (still obeys +3d cap).

- **One Pair of Hands:** Only one Follower may assist a given action.

Condition: Exposure and Harm

Track two meters:

- **Exposure**—attention, stress, notoriety, overextension.

- **Harm**—injury, trauma, broken tools, shaken nerve.

Each meter uses: 0 None, 1 Light, 2 Moderate (-1d), 3 Severe (-2d & risk of Compromised), 4 Critical (Out). Followers also have *Maintained/Neglected/Compromised* states mirroring Assets.

Independent Initiative

Once per scene (party-wide), one Follower can act independently:

Scout & Signal Shift an ally's next action to *Controlled.*

Distract & Draw Reduce a Threat/Hunt/Escape clock by 1 tick.

Fetch & Carry Move an object/person through hazard.

Cover & Protect Eat a consequence meant for a PC.

Cost: Mark +1 *Exposure* or *Harm 1* on that Follower.

Upkeep and Risks

- **Maintenance:** Each downtime, pay XP equal to Cap *or* devote a relationship scene. Skip it and they become *Neglected*.

- **Complication Targeting:** When you gain 2+ SB of consequences on an assisted roll, the GM may assign the fallout to the assisting Follower (fiction first).

- **Off-Screen Actions:** Cap 3+ can attempt notable off-screen tasks during downtime; doing so **generates 1 SB** for the next related scene.

12.3 Loyalty and Bonds

Loyalty States

Wary Costs +1 XP to maintain; needs convincing to risk.

Steady Normal; no extra costs or perks.

Devoted Once per arc, downgrade a complication that targets them (Major → Minor).

Bond Integration

Tie Followers to your *Bonds*. A Bonded Follower grants +1d when the action speaks to that Bond. Resolving a Follower's personal quest yields a *Boon* and may bump Loyalty upward.

12.4 Advanced Follower Management

Advancement

On significant shared accomplishments, a Follower may increase Cap by 1 (max PC tier - 1). XP cost equals $newCap^2 - currentCap^2$. One advancement per major arc.

Common Specializations

Combat Specialist +1d assisting violent actions; may duel Cap≤3 foes.

Social Specialist +1d on parley, rumor-work, courtly rites.

Technical Specialist +1d on craft/repair; may clear *Compromised* on one item per downtime.

Magic Specialist +1d assisting *Weave* (§4); may absorb 1 SB of backlash once/session.

Groups and Cohorts

A squad, crew, or circle can be run as a single *Group Follower* with one Cap, one Exposure track (shared), and distributed Harm. Treat as one assistant in play.

12.5 Sample Followers

Cap 1: Street Informant (Wary)

Skills: Stealth 2, Sway 1, Notice 1   **Assist:** +1d to urban intel
Quirk: Paid in favors and gossip; hates written notes.
Vignette: "Two taps on the shutters if it's Watch. Three if it's worse."

Cap 3: Veteran Mercenary (Steady)

Skills: Melee 3, Tactics 2, Athletics 2   **Assist:** +3d (capped) on combat/tactics
Specialty: Holds lines; can *Cover & Protect* without taking Harm once/session.
Quirk: Won't fight for "poetry" or "exposure."

Cap 5: Master Artificer (Devoted)

Skills: Craft 4, Lore 3, Investigation 3   **Assist:** +3d crafting/research (cap rules)
Off-Screen: Can produce a minor magical item per downtime (GM frames a hook).
Quirk: Collects flawed prototypes "for teaching."

12.6 Asset & Follower Synergy

- **Workshop + Artificer:** Clear *Compromised* on gear automatically once/session.

- **Spy Ring + Informant:** First recon opener starts *Controlled and* yields a concrete lead.

- **Temple Chapter + Social Specialist:** Convert a *Crowd* complication into a *Petition* clock.

12.7 Integration with Core Systems

- **SB Economy:** Asset use under pressure invites SB spends; Followers can catch those consequences if fictionally exposed.

- **Boons:** Spend to activate an Asset in-scene, rally a Follower from *Moderate* to *Light* condition, or fuel an Independent Initiative.

- **Downtime:** Best place to repair, recruit, advance, and negotiate terms. Tie these scenes to Bonds to harvest story.

12.8 Tactical and Strategic Play

Choosing Assets

- **Complement** weaknesses; don't double-buy the same tag—take the best one.

- **Map** your routes: ports, passes, bell-precincts; buy where you travel.

- **Plan** a ladder: Minor → Standard → Major that all talk to each other.

Building Your Bench

- **Diversity** beats duplication: one blade, one face, one fixer.

- **Reliability** over raw Cap if the mission needs quiet.

- **Spread risk:** Rotate who takes Exposure to avoid Critical spikes.

12.9 GM Menus & Tables

Quick SB Menu (Assets)

- **1 SB:** Schedule slips; you arrive late or early (GM's choice).

- **2 SB:** A gatekeeper wants proof or a costly token.

- **3 SB:** Rival influence undercuts your Asset this scene.

- **4 SB:** Audit, raid, or scandal; Asset flips to *Compromised.*

Quick SB Menu (Followers)

- **1 SB:** Mark *Exposure 1*—they're noticed by the wrong eyes.

- **2 SB:** *Harm 1* or *Exposure 2*—their nerves fray or they're bruised.

- **3 SB:** Lose a tool or contact; -1d until replaced.

- **4 SB:** *Compromised*—captured, spooked, or defecting under pressure.

12.10 Narrative Seeds

The Broken Ledger. Your *Banking Charter* flags a forged letter-of-mark. Do you protect the account or the client's life?

The Bell at Dusk. A Mistlands *Safehouse* stops answering the three-tone law. The bell rope's been cut from the outside.

The White Flag. Your Cap 3 mercenary refuses to take a fortified bridge without pay in hand. He's right—someone's playing both sides.

Quick Reference

> **Assets & Followers Quick Reference**
>
> **Assets**
>
> - Cost/Time: Minor 4 XP/1 day; Standard 8 XP/1 week; Major 12 XP/1 month.
>
> - Use: 1 free off-screen effect/session; 1 Boon to activate in-scene.
>
> - Condition: Maintained $\rightarrow$ Neglected (-1d) $\rightarrow$ Compromised (repair in downtime).
>
> - Portfolio: Maintain up to Spirit + 2 comfortably.
>
> **Followers**
>
> - Cost: Cap^2 XP; Limit: Presence + 1 without strain.
>
> - Assist: +min(Cap, Skill) dice, *max +3d total*.
>
> - Independent Action (party 1/scene): Scout & Signal; Distract & Draw; Fetch & Carry; Cover & Protect (cost: +Exposure or Harm 1).
>
> - Tracks: Exposure/Harm 0–4; states mirror Assets.

Closing Image

A shuttered lamp, a sealed ledger, a scarred gauntlet resting on a map. You don't move pieces—you invest in people and places. When you step into the street, the city already leans your way.

Chapter 13

Compendium of Assets

In *Fate's Edge*, **Assets** are your off-screen levers—properties, charters, networks, and institutions that change the fiction between scenes. They do not fight beside you (see §8 for *Followers*) but they shape the field you enter.

13.1   Design Principles

Assets are written to:

- **Shift fiction** between scenes: open doors, quiet rumors, stock larders, calm crowds.

- **Create hooks**: each Asset suggests opportunities *and* complications if neglected.

- **Stay narrative-first**: prefer position, scale, and access over flat modifiers.

  Assets do **not**:

- Act inside a scene on their own (Followers do that, §8).

- Print wealth or XP automatically.

- Stack identical tags—if two Assets would grant the same edge, take the best one.

13.2   Asset Mechanics (Summary)

All Assets share the following properties (expanded rules: §8):

Cost Minor **4 XP**, Standard **8 XP**, Major **12 XP**.

Establishment 1 day / 1 week / 1 month respectively to become operational.

Upkeep Each downtime, either pay XP equal to the Asset's base cost *or* devote a full scene tending it. Neglect degrades condition (Maintained → Neglected → Compromised).

Free Use Once per session, trigger the listed *off-screen* benefit (framed at scene start or as flashback with GM assent).

Scene Surge Spend **1 Advancement Point** to turn an Asset into a dramatic *on-screen* intervention as described (one beat, fiction permitting).

Extra Use Spend **2 XP** to trigger the off-screen benefit an additional time this session.

Risk Interface When an Asset covers risk, it typically **improves Position**, **lowers DV by 1**, **fills 1 segment on a relevant clock**, or **mitigates 1 SB** (Story Beat) from a thematically linked complication.

Capacity (Optional Rule). As a soft cap, a character comfortably maintains a number of Assets up to their **Spirit** rating. For each Asset beyond this, increase its upkeep by +50% or require an additional downtime scene to keep it *Maintained*.

13.3   Minor Assets (4 XP)

Small holdings, charters, or kits that grant reliable leverage.

Signature Weapon A named heirloom or masterpiece. *Free Use:* If gear damage would compromise it, downgrade to a minor flaw and clear with a quiet maintenance scene. *Surge:* Produce it at the perfect moment; improve Position one step for your first attack this scene.

Scholar's Cell A quiet room, permits, and a custodian. *Free Use:* Begin one research scene at **Controlled** or lower DV by 1. *Surge:* Reveal a cited source now; fill 1 segment on a relevant *Information* clock.

Safehouse Network (Quarter) Two or three bolt-holes in one district. *Free Use:* Start an entry/exit scene **Controlled**. *Surge:* Produce a hidden egress; convert one *pursuit* consequence into a temporary complication you can interact with.

Artisan's Bench Tools for field repairs and fabrication. *Free Use:* Remove *Compromised* from one mundane item between scenes. *Surge:* Improvise a single-use tool; gain a *Boon* on the immediate Craft check.

Courier Chain Runners, dead-drops, and codes in one city. *Free Use:* Move a message or small parcel safely; start the related parley **Controlled**. *Surge:* A courier appears now; mitigate 1 SB tied to delay.

Small Holding (Farm/Orchard) Steady larder. *Free Use:* Waive a minor Supply complication or clear Fatigue 1 for one PC during downtime. *Surge:* Produce a timely wagon, mule, or crates to justify a plausible cover story.

Neighborhood Inn/Tavern A familiar house of bread and rumor. *Free Use:* First social opener in that neighborhood starts **Controlled**. *Surge:* Call in the proprietor; shift a hostile crowd one step toward neutral.

Ritual Niche/Shrine A consecrated corner. *Free Use:* Clear Fatigue 1 or mitigate 1 SB from *morale/fear*. *Surge:* Sanctify a doorway; hostile supernatural presence must reveal itself or back away one band (§9).

River Skiff/Barge Share Limited access to a hull and pilot. *Free Use:* Water crossing scenes begin **Controlled**. *Surge:* Evade a patrol with a practiced channel; lower DV by 1 on the escape roll.

Herbal Plot Beds of restoratives. *Free Use:* Remove Fatigue 1 from one character or gain a *Boon* to a single mundane healing attempt this downtime. *Surge:* Produce a rare poultice; convert a *Severe* healing clock tick into two *Moderate* ticks.

13.4 Standard Assets (8 XP)

Established holdings with regional reach.

Charter or Minor Title Recognized papers and privileges. *Free Use:* Secure an audience or official hearing; start **Controlled**. *Surge:* Invoke prerogative to delay immediate sanctions; mitigate 1 SB of civic backlash.

Guild Seat Voting rights and shop-rights. *Free Use:* Commission or procurement opens **Controlled** or DV 1. *Surge:* A guild factor vouches; fill 1 segment on a *Permit/Access* clock.

Market Front A fixed stall and regulars. *Free Use:* Treat one *Minor* Asset's upkeep as waived this downtime. *Surge:* Liquidate stock; justify on-hand mundane gear within reason.

Informant Ring Eyes and ears on retainer. *Free Use:* Targeted inquiry begins **Controlled**. *Surge:* Reveal a hidden schedule or route now; mitigate 1 SB from *ambush/surprise.*

Mercenary Contract (Cap 2) Access to a small trained unit. *Free Use:* Introduce temporary *off-screen* security that downgrades "raid" to "attempted raid." *Surge:* One on-screen intervention (one beat) that improves Position for a withdrawal or breach.

Trading Charter Right-of-way at gates and tolls. *Free Use:* Border/inspection scenes start **Controlled**. *Surge:* Produce stamped manifests; DV 1 on the next scrutiny roll.

Licensed Library Stacks and a learned custodian. *Free Use:* Deep-topic research begins **Controlled** and gains a *Boon. Surge:* Cite a precedent to force a pause in debate (one exchange).

Craftsman's Quarter Shop plus apprentices. *Free Use:* Clear *Compromised* from a crafted item or structure. *Surge:* Rush a bespoke piece; fill 1 segment on a *Build/Repair* clock.

Temple Complex Courts, choirs, charity. *Free Use:* Among adherents, start **Controlled** or mitigate 1 SB from *crowd/morale. Surge:* Sanctuary: hostile social pressure must escalate openly or wait.

Harbor Office Berths, booms, bells. *Free Use:* Priority loading/unloading; start **Controlled**. *Surge:* Hold the chain for one beat; negate a single *pursuit by water* consequence.

13.5 Major Assets (12 XP)

Significant holdings that bend regional outcomes.

Ward License You run a city district's levers. *Free Use:* In-ward civic openers start **Controlled**. *Surge:* Re-route patrols or light—shift a chase route 1 step in your favor.

Exclusive Right (Monopoly) Control of a staple (salt, timber, ferries). *Free Use:* In market scenes, ignore the first *supply* complication. *Surge:* Declare a brief scarcity/surplus to leverage terms; DV 1 on a single negotiation.

Fortress/Stronghold Stone, stores, signals. *Free Use:* In raid/siege framing, negate the first *breach* consequence. *Surge:* Sound beacons; allies arrive in time to improve Position for withdrawal or stand.

Demesne (Estate) Fields, mills, tenants. *Free Use:* Waive minor Supply fallout this arc or treat one additional Minor Asset as having free upkeep. *Surge:* Muster teamsters and hands; fill 1 segment on a *Logistics* clock.

Fleet Share A cut of hulls and signals. *Free Use:* Maritime travel starts **Controlled**. *Surge:* Signal a safe corridor; mitigate 1 SB from *storm/patrol.*

College (University Seat) Faculty, quad, seal. *Free Use:* In downtime, reduce *one* Skill advancement cost by 1 (min 1). *Surge:* Convene a colloquy to force a pause in magical proceedings (§4).

Banking Charter Letters and liens. *Free Use:* Present credit to bypass petty fees and minor delays. *Surge:* Freeze a rival's access for one exchange; mitigate 1 SB from *bribery/extortion.*

Diplomatic Enclave Flag, immunity, ink. *Free Use:* In foreign courts, begin **Controlled**. *Surge:* Invoke safe-conduct; hostile action must escalate openly or withdraw.

Mine/Quarry Ore, stone, skilled crews. *Free Use:* Clear *Compromised* on one structure or armament. *Surge:* Deliver timbers/stone now; DV 1 on a *reinforce/repair* roll.

13.6   Tier III Institutions (16–20 XP)

Empire-shaping engines. Each requires ongoing political play.

Grand Forge-Citadel (18 XP) City heat and hammer. *Free Use:* Treat a batch of masterwork gear as immune to the first *gear* complication this arc. *Surge:* Rush a critical piece; fill 2 segments on a *Build/Arm* clock.

Great Library (16 XP) Memory palace of the region. *Free Use:* Major inquiry begins **Controlled** and gains a *Boon.* *Surge:* Produce a sealed citation; negate a single *misinterpretation* complication.

Grand Exchange (20 XP) Markets move when you breathe. *Free Use:* In high finance, ignore the first *market shock. Surge:* Halt trading bells for one exchange; DV 1 on one decisive deal.

Fleet Command (18 XP) Signals across sea lanes. *Free Use:* Declare blockade/corridor; hostile egress gains +1 step of difficulty. *Surge:* Redirect a squadron; improve Position for a maritime raid or escape.

Hydraulic Works (16 XP) Water is wealth. *Free Use:* Cancel the first *shortage/drought* fallout this arc. *Surge:* Flood or feed a field at the critical moment; fill 1 segment on a *Famine Relief* clock.

Palace Complex (20 XP) Keys to office and omen. *Free Use:* Political openers start **Controlled**. *Surge:* Convene a chamber; convert one *scandal* consequence into a public inquiry you can contest.

13.7 Specialized Assets

Narrow tools with sharp edges.

Magical Laboratory (10 XP) Wards, benches, focus. *Free Use:* Once per session, reduce Ritual Backlash by 1 SB (§4). *Surge:* Contain an emergent effect for one beat; begin the control roll **Controlled**.

Healing House (8 XP) Beds, herbs, bells. *Free Use:* During downtime, clear *Harm 1* or *Fatigue 2* from one ally. *Surge:* Stabilize now; convert a *Severe* consequence into a clock you can work.

Observatory (8 XP) Lenses and ephemerides. *Free Use:* Predict timing; navigation/timing openers start **Controlled**. *Surge:* Name a narrow window; DV 1 for an action attempted inside it.

Performance Venue (6 XP) Stage and regulars. *Free Use:* Begin Performance with a receptive crowd. *Surge:* Spotlight an ally; shift a crowd one step toward your desired mood.

Intelligence Bureau (10 XP) Analysts and cut-outs. *Free Use:* Avoid surprise; the first recon opener starts **Controlled**. *Surge:* Burn a channel; mitigate 1 SB from *counterintelligence.*

Hospitality House (6 XP) Beds, bread, rumor. *Free Use:* Gain a *Protected pause* in parley on your ground. *Surge:* Invoke guest-right; hostile social pressure must step into the open.

Storage Vault (6 XP) Locks and ledgers. *Free Use:* Ignore the first *theft/sabotage* targeting stored goods. *Surge:* Produce a cached item plausibly stored here.

Signal Relay (8 XP) Fires, flags, drums. *Free Use:* Coordinated actions across distance start **Controlled**. *Surge:* Push a ready signal now; mitigate 1 SB from *confusion/lag.*

Training Academy (12 XP) Masters and mats. *Free Use:* In downtime, reduce *one* Skill advancement cost by 1 (min 1) for a designated trainee. *Surge:* Call in a drilled team to assist off-screen; fill 1 segment on a *Preparation* clock.

13.8 Upgrades & Variants

Bolster an existing Asset with additional investment (costs stack).

Enhanced Security (+2 XP) Hardened doors, sober watchers. *Effect:* Each session, ignore or mitigate 1 SB from theft/sabotage against this Asset.

Expanded Scope (+3 XP) Wider footprint or second site. *Effect:* Use the Asset's *Free Use* twice per session *or* across two adjacent districts/routes.

Arcane Wards (+4 XP) Sanctified and sigiled. *Effect:* Once per session, reduce magical Backlash by 1 SB on-site *or* treat supernatural intrusion as one step easier to detect.

Political Patrons (+3 XP) Seals and signatures. *Effect:* In civic scenes tied to this Asset, begin **Controlled** or DV 1.

13.9 Creating Your Own Asset

When drafting a new Asset, answer:

1. **Scope**: Who benefits? (you / party / named faction)

2. **Fictional Edge**: What doors open or dangers dim?

3. **Cost Tier**: Minor 4 / Standard 8 / Major 12 / Tier III 16–20.

4. **Free Use**: One clear, repeatable off-screen benefit.

5. **Scene Surge**: One flashy, plausible *on-screen* move (1 beat) at the cost of 1 Advancement Point.

6. **Upkeep Hook**: What happens if you neglect it?

13.10 Using Assets in Play

- **Frame the benefit** at scene start (*why is today easier?*).

- **Flash back** with a modest cost to show the Asset's prior work.

- **Tie complications** to Asset condition—if it's *Neglected*, the GM has permission to spend SB against it first.

- **Spotlight spread**: Rotate which Assets take the stage so each investment breathes on-screen now and then.

Asset Quick Reference

- **Costs**: Minor 4 XP / Standard 8 XP / Major 12 XP / Tier III 16–20 XP.

- **Free Use**: Once per session, off-screen leverage (position, DV 1, fill 1 clock segment, or mitigate 1 SB).

- **Scene Surge**: Spend 1 Advancement Point for a one-beat, on-screen intervention.

- **Upkeep**: Pay XP = base cost *or* devote a downtime scene; neglect degrades condition.

- **Capacity (Optional)**: Assets ≤ **Spirit** are easy; beyond that, upkeep taxes mount.

13.11 Summary

Minor Assets grease doors; Standard ones bend routes; Major holdings set tables; Tier III institutions tilt the map. Choose what to own, then let the world answer.

Chapter 14

Deck Generators

In *Fate's Edge*, a well-cut deck can do the work of a crowded prep document. **Deck Generators** turn ordinary playing cards into places, people, pressures, and payoffs—then bind them to the core *Clock*, *SB*, and *Boon* economy so your table's surprises land with teeth.

Vignette: The Cut at Dusk. On the ferry stairs at Belworth, the GM fans four cards. A spade and a heart tap the boards: *flooded causeway, dike-guild reeve.* A club follows—*audit at dawn.* Last, a diamond—*priority ferry token.* The clock stands at eight, the wind at your backs, the line of eel-carts impatient. *Play.*

14.1   Core Structure

Each suit maps to a narrative axis:

Spades Places: terrain, sites, hidden features, *position* levers.

Hearts People & Factions: NPCs, circles, rivals, *motives.*

Clubs Complications & Threats: hazards, pressure, *setbacks.*

Diamonds Rewards & Leverage: treasure, writs, favors, *advantages.*

Rank → Clock

The *highest* rank among the drawn seed sets the primary Clock:

Rank	Clock Size
2–5	4 segments (*Minor*)
6–10	6 segments (*Standard*)
J,Q,K	8 segments (*Major*)
Ace	10 segments (*Pivotal*)

Color Inflection

- **Black ()** skew toward travel hazards, tangible threats, fatigue.

- **Red ()** skew toward social pressure, reputation, moral leverage.

14.2   Draw Procedures

Quick Hook (2 cards)

Draw **1× + 1×**. The Spade sets the where; the Heart sets the who. Highest rank sets the main Clock. *Optional:* If both are the same color, GM gains **+1 SB** for that opening beat.

Full Seed (4 cards)

Draw until you have one of each suit: ♠, ♡, ♣, ♢. Map to *Place, Actor, Complication, Leverage* in that order. Highest rank sets the mission Clock. Stash any extra Diamonds to foreshadow or *cash* later for a scene-start **Boon**.

Act Builder (3 cards/act)

For each act/session, draw three cards: *setting, actor, complication.* Keep any Diamonds aside as act payoffs. When the act Clock completes, flip the banked Diamond and pay it out in-fiction.

14.3   Combo Rules

If multiple drawn cards form poker-style patterns:

Pair (same rank) Recurring motif returns with a twist; reduce DV of *follow-up* checks by 1 within that motif.

Run (3+ sequential ranks) Momentum: *reduce* the main Clock by 1 segment immediately.

Flush (3+ same suit) Strong theme: the GM biases new clocks toward that axis (e.g., more place-driven obstacles).

Face + Ace Reveal a hidden patron/power behind the drawn element; add a *Shadow Clock* at 4 segments.

All one color GM gains **+1 SB** at scene start.

Optional Jokers

Include 1–2 *Jokers.* When drawn:

- **Wild Place/Person:** Player names either the Spade or Heart entry this time.

- **Cut to Cost:** Everyone may take 1 *Fatigue* to reshuffle and redraw the last card; if refused, GM gains +1 SB.

14.4   Table Use: From Card to Fiction

1. **Seed the Scene.** Read suits aloud; ask one question per card to the table (*"What rumor makes this reeve uneasy?"*).

2. **Set the Clock.** Size from rank; place it where players can see it.

3. **Lean into Color.** Black = roads bite; Red = rooms breathe.

4. **Spend the SB.** Use Clubs and black-weighted draws to justify early SB pressure.

5. **Pay the Diamond.** Convert Diamonds into concrete leverage: writs, salvage tags, audience slots, sanctuary hours.

Player Options with Cards

- **Boon for Bias:** Spend 1 *Boon* before a pull to bias the next card toward a suit (draw two, keep one).

- **Cut for Consequence:** Take a GM-offered *Bargain* to swap one revealed card with the top of the deck; the GM immediately marks +1 SB.

- **Keep the Diamond:** A player who *earned* the Diamond describes how it appears on-screen when cashed.

14.5   Regional Deck Generators

Each region carries its own texture. Use the same suit mapping; swap in entries below for local color. (Ranks 2–A correspond top-to-bottom.)

Viterra — *The Last Kingdom*

Spades — Places

- 2. Fen causeway stile with a toll-rod and a patient line of eel carts.

- 3. Hedgerow muster-green in the Dales; bows strung under apple trees.

- 4. Beacon hill above the Highlands; watch-fire grate and slate steps.

- 5. Belworth ferry-stairs with wet ledgers and a nervous horn.

- 6. Old iron-bloom quarry turned drill yard; hammer echoes carry.

- 7. Parish-stone maze where three maps disagree by a field.

- 8. Fairport tideworks at the river mouth; Dolmis swell under the planks.

- 9. Valora law quarter—archives, oathrooms, Hall of Dawning nearby.

- 10. Tarlington counting fields by the mustering ground; quiet efficiency hums.

- J. River dike crown: ring of turf and timber; brotherhood bells for flood watch.

- Q. The Queen's Progress encampment—canvas palisade, fresh standards, full schedule.

- K. Hall of Dawning tilt-yard at first light; Dawn-knights run clean drills.

- A. Queen's Highway milestone above the Dolmis road; customs writ posted.

Hearts — People and Factions

- 2. Fen reeve with a tally-rod; speaks for the dike guilds.

- 3. River-carter syndic who moves grain faster than rumor.

- 4. Parish surveyor with three maps and one opinion.

- 5. Quartermaster of the Dawn (logistics first, lances second).

- 6. Dales levy serjeant—longbow calm, cider breath.

- 7. Two-altars cleric-pair (Light circuit-preacher vs. Everflame canon lawyer).

- 8. Fairport shipwright with Dolmis cousins and a quiet skiff.

- 9. Fenwood comptroller who can conjure wagons with a signature.

- 10. Queen's Justiciar—law on the road, polite as a gallows.

- J. Border routier-captain who reads ledgers as well as ambushes.

- Q. The newly crowned queen—patient sums, sharp promises.

- K. Crown in Council (Fenwood, duchy envoys, guild voices).

- A. Tarling-blood rumor—a lost sigil surfaces; old loyalties twitch.

Clubs — Complications & Threats

- 2. Dike breach in black rain; carts bog and tempers sink.

- 3. Feast-day clash: Light vs. Everflame processions collide over tithes.

- 4. "Quiet tolls" sprout on the Highway; escorts sniff a trap.

- 5. Counting-house audit freezes your cargo until dawn.

- 6. Border-lace snarl: overlapping titles spark arrests mid-parish.

- 7. Isle refusal: Theona's moot withholds levy; quay rumors harden.

- 8. Delta spat: Fairport vs. Marcott customs—barges stack three deep.

- 9. Routier arrears: free-company flips unless someone pays.

- 10. Salt pinch—import prices spike; bakers barricade.

- J. Dawn recall: your escort pulled to a flood-girded parish.

- Q. Aberielist intrigue: a royalist ring stirs against the crown.

- K. Levy call-up: dalesmen muster; wagons conscripted "for the realm".

- A. Dolmis gale-train: bora winds slam the coast; schedules drown.

Diamonds — Rewards & Leverage

- 2. Ferry priority at a named Belworth crossing (once).

- 3. Dike-work allotment—brotherhood labor on your timetable.

- 4. Market-day license in Valora's square.

- 5. Dawn escort letter (four lances at first light).

- 6. River-carter line—guaranteed haul on the grain artery.

- 7. Parish-map correction—move a border a hedgerow over.

- 8. Fairport customs seal for Dolmis-bound cargo.

- 9. County Thing ruling in your favor; local teeth, real bite.

- 10. Salt allotment from a guarded depot (winter only).

- J. Wardship of a minor fen-keep; men-at-arms "for now".

- Q. Private audience with the queen; one secret exits as policy.

- K. Fenwood ducal warrant to enforce Highway customs.

- A. Coronation writ—temporary amnesty and tax remission for allies.

Acasia — *Broken Marches*

Spades — Places

- 2. Ruined signal tower over a contested valley.

- 3. Abandoned mine shaft with fresh chalk marks.

- 4. River ford where three clan ranges meet.

- 5. Burned steading reclaimed by bramble.

- 6. Standing stones that disagree with the new maps.

- 7. Pass-fort whose stones remember older oaths.

- 8. Hidden glen for clandestine parley.

- 9. Chieftain's trophy hall; laughter with a knife in it.

- 10. Oath-fall where blood and water mix.

- J. Border watchtower with a loyal horn.

- Q. Hill market where iron buys silence.

- K. Strategic bridge that courts three banners.

- A. Lost ledger of lineages and feuds.

Hearts — People and Factions

- 2. Young heir trying not to look afraid.

- 3. Veteran smuggler with clean boots.

- 4. Glen-seer reading crows and cloud breaks.

- 5. Consortium factor with clenched smiles.

- 6. Border captain with a pocket of broken seals.

- 7. Exiled noble rehearsing apologies.

- 8. Clan-mother who can count to war.

- 9. Company commander who keeps a fair ledger.

- 10. Reform preacher with a road-stained book.

- J. Master hunter tracking debts as well as deer.

- Q. Envoy who never says *no*, only *later*.

- K. Rebel banner-lord stitching counties together.

- A. Old spirit that remembers a wider forest.

Ecktoria — *Marble & Fire*

Spades — Places

- 2. Public baths where deals rinse clean.
- 3. Temple precinct of quarreling choirs.
- 4. Magistrate's court, docket humming.
- 5. Academy stacks with a sealed staircase.
- 6. Merchants' floor where prices learn to dance.
- 7. Garrison parade, armor bright as law.
- 8. Cistern halls where whispers carry.
- 9. Garden villa with polite shadows.
- 10. Arena staging tomorrow's heroics.
- J. Society chamber with masked rules.
- Q. Imperial archives—ink that bites back.
- K. Oracle's cave, answers priced in shame.
- A. Senate floor under thunderous hands.

Ubral — *Stone Between Spears*

Spades — Places

- 2. Mountain shrine where breath shows vows.
- 3. Toll pass with counting scars on the gate.
- 4. Under-river where lanterns learn to float.
- 5. Nomad way-ring with smoke like script.
- 6. Fortified monastery deaf to bribes.
- 7. Crystal cave that hums to the wrong seasons.
- 8. Battlefield with orderly ghosts.
- 9. Caravan making the long turn home.
- 10. Oracle peak where the path tests knees.

- J. Hidden valley with inconvenient riches.
- Q. Distant outpost enforcing nearer laws.
- K. Tribal moot-stone with old grooves.
- A. Portal menhir that answers to weather.

Mistlands — *Where Bells Speak*

Spades — Places

- 2. Causeway bell-frame missing its third tone.
- 3. Peat-cutters' path that moves by night.
- 4. Fog orchard; fruit sweet, steps treacherous.
- 5. Fen barrow with polite bones.
- 6. Reed maze that echoes your name.
- 7. Ferry knoll with a rope cut from the outside.
- 8. Lantern-field where lights argue directions.
- 9. Sluice-gate that chooses favorites.
- 10. Bell-foundry that remembers voices.
- J. Embanked hall on stilts; law hangs from rafters.
- Q. Marsh-witch's walk lined in driftwood charms.
- K. Tithe-island where debts get heavier.
- A. Greywater mirror: see what is owed.

Sun Coast — *Ports and Pledges*

Spades — Places

- 2. Vineyard switchback with lazy guards.

- 3. Drydock cradle creaking like old oaths.

- 4. Salt pan glinting with secrets.

- 5. Harbor chain that rises at dusk.

- 6. Customs quay with three stamps, one truth.

- 7. Pearl market where whispers are currency.

- 8. Lighthouse whose shadow points wrong.

- 9. Sea gate that eats small boats kindly.

- 10. Citrus court under painted awnings.

- J. Private quay flown under two flags.

- Q. Guild loggia tiled with confessions.

- K. Admiral's balcony over polite threats.

- A. Stormline where ships earn names.

14.6   Specialized Generators

Urban Encounter Generator

Districts markets, temples, slums, docks, courts, baths.

City Folk guards, brokers, criminals, priests, nobles.

Dangers corruption, gangs, fires, collapses, curfews.

Opportunities contacts, writs, maps, rumors, favors.

Tip: On a **Flush** of Hearts, add a *Reputation* clock; on **Flush** of Clubs, GM +1 SB.

Wilderness Journey Generator

Terrain rivers, ridges, thickets, ruins, passes.

Encounters rangers, nomads, hermits, spirits, caravans.

Hazards weather, predators, scarcity, getting lost.

Discoveries sanctuaries, shortcuts, forage, sign.

Tip: On a **Run**, reduce the *Travel Clock* by 1.

Mystical Adventure Generator

Sites leys, altars, libraries, portal stones, bellprecincts.

Personae mages, oathscribes, cultists, patrons, witnesses.

Threats backlash, taboos, rival rites, unquiet relics.

Rewards formulae, sigils, favors, sanctities, insights.

Tip: **Face + Ace** creates a *Patron Attention* clock at 4.

14.7   Advanced Techniques

Multi-Deck Integration

Combine regional + specialized decks:

- City-magic: Ecktoria (places) + Mystical (actors/complications).

- Border trek: Acasia (actors) + Wilderness (places/hazards).

- Sea intrigue: Sun Coast (places/rewards) + Urban (actors/complications).

Progressive Drawing

Start with a 2-card *Hook*. Each time the main Clock crosses a quarter, draw one more card to introduce a new wrinkle. On completion, flip any banked Diamonds as epilogues.

Player-Involved Drawing

Let the player most invested in the scene draw. Offer a *Boon-for-bias* before the draw or a *Cut-for-consequence* after.

14.8 Custom Deck Creation

To homebrew a deck:

1. Define theme/region focus and a one-line vibe.

2. Brainstorm 13 entries per suit; keep three "quiet" ranks (2–4), five "working" (5–9), three "loud" (J–K), one "crown" (Ace).

3. Seed mechanical hooks (Position shifts, DV nudges, SB hooks) into Clubs and Diamonds.

4. Playtest: draw 10 random hands; adjust entries that repeat tone too often.

Quick Reference

Deck Generators at a Glance

- **2-card Hook:** ♠ place + ♡ actor; highest rank = Clock.

- **4-card Seed:** add ♣ complication + ♢ leverage.

- **Combos:** Pair = motif; Run = -1 segment; Flush = theme bias; Face+Ace = hidden power; one-color = GM +1 SB.

- **Boon-for-bias:** draw two, keep one suit.

- **Bank Diamonds:** foreshadow now, pay later.

Closing Image

Cards slap the table; the ferry horn answers from the fog. The Clock ticks, the crowd leans, and somewhere a Diamond waits in a ledger with your name spelled right this time. Cut the deck. See who bleeds first.

Chapter 15

Example Character Builds

In *Fate's Edge*, a build isn't just math—it's a point of view. These ten ready-to-play characters marry crisp mechanics to living voices. Use them as pregens, templates, or lodestars for your own designs.

How to Read These Builds

Each entry includes **Concept**, a **Build Summary** (attributes, skills, talent), typical **Dice Pools**, a **Signature Move**, **Complication Hooks**, and a sketched **Advancement Path**.

About XP math. Unless noted, each build spends **29 XP** (with **1 XP unspent**) using a consistent starting template:

- **Attributes:** one at 3 (9 XP), one at 2 (6 XP), two at 1 (0 XP) ⇒ 15 XP

- **Skills:** one at 3 (6 XP), one at 2 (4 XP) ⇒ 10 XP

- **Talent:** one starting talent (4 XP)

- **Total:** 29 XP (+1 XP unspent). Add Bonds/Complications as your table permits.

15.1   1. The Witch Hunter

"I was meant for lecture halls. The halls spat me out. The roads taught me the rest."

Concept: A Thepyrgosi-trained washout who now hunts illicit rites, selling dangerous finds to the University and sleeping badly afterwards.

Build Summary (29/30 XP):

- **Attributes:** Wits 3 (9), Body 2 (6), Spirit 1 (0), Presence 1 (0)

- **Skills:** Skulduggery 3 (6), Sway 2 (4)

- **Talent:** Witch-Finder's Sigil (4) — you can *test* for recent ritework; on a clean success, gain a Boon to the next related action.

Dice Pools:

- Wits + Skulduggery (locks, traps, contraband): **6d**

- Presence + Sway (press a suspect): **3d** (4d with positioning/Boons)

Signature Move: *Cold Reading* — Once per scene, ask the GM one yes/no about a suspect's *recent* ritual activity after a brief interaction.

Complication Hooks:

- The University's purse strings knot at awkward moments.

- Evidence chains fray; informants burn.

- You know the words to open doors you should leave shut.

Advancement Path:

- *Early:* Lore 2 (4) or Investigate 2 (4) for paper trails.

- *Mid:* Resolve 2 (4) and the *Oath-Tongue* talent (6) to bind deals.

- *Late:* Presence 2 (6) and *Network Builder* (6) to run informants safely (safer).

15.2   2.   The Oath-Bound Blade

"Name the charge. I will be the wall."
Build Summary (29/30 XP):

- **Attributes:** Body 3 (9), Spirit 2 (6), Wits 1, Presence 1

- **Skills:** Melee 3 (6), Resolve 2 (4)

- **Talent:** Vow-Keeper's Word (4) — when acting in defense of a sworn charge, begin from *Controlled* once per scene.

Dice Pools: Body+Melee **6d**; Spirit+Resolve **5d**.
Signature Move: *By My Word.*
Hooks: Oaths tangle; mercy and mandate collide.
Advancement: Shield Mastery (6); Presence 2 (6) for command.

15.3   3. The Spirit-Speaker

"Ask. Pay. Thank. Repeat."
Build Summary (29/30 XP):

- **Attributes:** Spirit 3 (9), Wits 2 (6), Body 1, Presence 1

- **Skills:** Arcana 3 (6), Sway 2 (4)

- **Talent:** Spirit Whisperer (4) — once per scene gain a short, truthful impression from a willing local spirit.

Dice Pools: Spirit+Arcana **6d**; Spirit+Sway **5d**.
Signature Move: *Whisper to the Unseen.*
Hooks: Favors accrue; taboos tighten.
Advancement: Familiar (6); Arcana 4 (8).

15.4   4. The Border-Warden

"Lines on maps mean little. Lines in mud mean more."
Build Summary (29/30 XP):

- **Attributes:** Wits 3 (9), Body 2 (6), Spirit 1, Presence 1

- **Skills:** Survival 3 (6), Stealth 2 (4)

- **Talent:** Territory Sense (4) — in familiar ground, *Notice/Survey* starts one step better in Position once per scene.

Dice Pools: Wits+Survival **6d**; Body+Stealth **5d**.
Signature Move: *Warden's Eye.*
Hooks: Patrol politics; shifting posts.
Advancement: Safehouse (4); Survival 4 (8).

15.5   5. The Guild Agent

"A stamped paper is a door. I bring keys."
Build Summary (29/30 XP):

- **Attributes:** Presence 3 (9), Wits 2 (6), Body 1, Spirit 1

- **Skills:** Subterfuge 3 (6), Investigate 2 (4)

- **Talent:** Guild Connections (4) — once/session invoke guild backing for *Controlled* entry to a civic negotiation.

Dice Pools: Presence+Subterfuge **6d**; Wits+Investigate **5d**.
Signature Move: *Guild Authority.*
Hooks: Rival charters; audit knives.
Advancement: Contact Network (4); Subterfuge 4 (8).

15.6   6. The Spirit-Touched Warrior

"An old hand steadies mine."
   Build Summary (29/30 XP):

- **Attributes:** Body 3 (9), Spirit 2 (6), Wits 1, Presence 1

- **Skills:** Melee 3 (6), Survival 2 (4)

- **Talent:** Ancestral Echo (4) — once/combat, spend a Boon to add +2d to a strike if you name the forebear who guides it.

Dice Pools: Body+Melee **6d**; Spirit+Survival **5d**.
Signature Move: *Echo Strike.*
Hooks: Family debts; omen dreams.
Advancement: Spirit-Weapon (6); Body 4 (12).

15.7   7. The Lore-Keeper

"Ink can be a weapon if you read the edge."
   Build Summary (29/30 XP):

- **Attributes:** Wits 3 (9), Spirit 2 (6), Body 1, Presence 1

- **Skills:** Lore 3 (6), Arcana 2 (4)

- **Talent:** Scholarly Insight (4) — when you present sourced citations, lower DV by 1 for the relevant argument or analysis.

Dice Pools: Wits+Lore **6d**; Wits+Arcana **5d**.
Signature Move: *Hidden Connection.*
Hooks: Gatekept archives; rival theses.
Advancement: Library (4); Lore 4 (8).

15.8   8. The Cycle-Warden

"All growth is theft from somewhere. Pay back."
   Build Summary (29/30 XP):

- **Attributes:** Spirit 3 (9), Wits 2 (6), Body 1, Presence 1

- **Skills:** Survival 3 (6), Lore 2 (4)

- **Talent:** Balance Sense (4) — when you restore, name a cost; if paid in-scene, gain a Boon immediately.

Dice Pools: Spirit+Survival **6d**; Wits+Lore **5d**.
Signature Move: *Cycle's Price.*
Hooks: Industry vs. watershed.
Advancement: Grove Sanctuary (4); Survival 4 (8).

15.9   9. The Story-Weaver

"Tell it right and even the room must listen."
   Build Summary (29/30 XP):

- **Attributes:** Presence 3 (9), Wits 2 (6), Body 1, Spirit 1

- **Skills:** Performance 3 (6), Insight 2 (4)

- **Talent:** Narrative Influence (4) — once/session reframe a social scene; on a clean success, shift one attitude step.

Dice Pools: Presence+Performance **6d**; Wits+Insight **5d**.
Signature Move: *Story's Turn.*
Hooks: Counter-bards; public gaffes.
Advancement: Venue (4); Performance 4 (8).

15.10   10.   The Focused Adept

"Breath is a blade you sharpen from the inside."
   Build Summary (29/30 XP):

- **Attributes:** Spirit 3 (9), Body 2 (6), Wits 1, Presence 1

- **Skills:** Resolve 3 (6), Melee 2 (4)

- **Talent:** Mind–Body Unity (4) — spend a Boon to ignore the first point of Fatigue/Light Harm this scene.

Dice Pools: Spirit+Resolve **6d**; Body+Melee **5d**.
Signature Move: *Focused Flow.*
Hooks: Austerity's costs; brittle calm.
Advancement: Spirit 4 (12); Meditation Sanctuary (4).

Dice Pools: Spirit+Faith **6d**; Presence+Sway **5d**.
Signature Move: *Divine Sign.*
Hooks: Schisms; public doubt.
Advancement: Shrine (4); Faith 4 (8).

15.11   11. The Faithful Petitioner

"Mercy is a kind of architecture."

Build Summary (29/30 XP):

- **Attributes:** Spirit 3 (9), Presence 2 (6), Body 1, Wits 1

- **Skills:** Faith 3 (6), Sway 2 (4)

- **Talent:** Divine Interpretation (4) — once/session, treat a fresh, plausible omen as a Boon for a guidance action.

Quick Conversion

- Want tougher starts? Shift the unspent 1 XP into *savings* and take a Bond for +2 XP to buy a third skill at 2.

- Want louder talents? Bank your early attribute raise and pick a 6 XP talent as your first advancement beat.

- Want gear leverage? Trade the next skill-up for a Minor Asset (4 XP) tied to your concept.

Chapter 16

Enhanced Player Play

The world of **Fate's Edge** sings when players help steer the tune. This chapter gathers *player-facing dials*—lightweight, opt-in mechanics that turn your table's choices into momentum in the fiction of Viterra, Acasia, Ecktoria, Ubral, and the long coasts besides. Treat these as a menu: use a few, or layer many as your group grows comfortable.

16.1 Player Resources

Two shared languages of play appear throughout this chapter:

Boons Core system edge; spend to power talents or convert to XP (per core rules).

SB The GM's Story Beats; several options here invite players to accept SB in exchange for narrative benefits.

16.2 Engagement Rewards

16.2.1 Session Investment Tracker

At session close, each player privately rates their *investment* (1–3). The tracker rewards steady participation without penalizing quiet nights.

1 — Low You followed others' lead. Gain **+1d** once next session on any *support* action.

2 — Medium You took initiative in some scenes. Gain **+1d** once next session on a *relationship* roll and bank **1 Momentum** (see §16.5.1).

3 — High You anchored or elevated multiple scenes. Gain **+1d** twice next session (different scenes) and bank **1 Momentum**.

Table Boon. If *all* players report 2+ in a session, the GM may award the table **1 free Boon** to assign at the start of the next session.

16.2.2 Cultural Immersion Bonus

Reward lived-in play with light, predictable benefits.

- **Earn 1 Culture Point** when you enrich a scene with apt language, rites, or customs (Sea-Patter hail; bell-speech courtesy; Aeler craft-honorifics). Max **3/session**.

- **Spend 3 Culture** for **+1d** on a culturally keyed roll.

- **Spend 5 Culture** (across sessions) to declare a *trusted door*: one institution in that culture treats you as Friendly for the next approach.

16.3 Collaborative Play

16.3.1 Information Trading

When the table hunts answers, convert curiosity into structure.

Request & Price. State the question and choose a price the table accepts:

Devil's Bargain Offer the GM a future complication to "pay" for deeper intel.

Accept SB The GM gains **+1 SB** now; you gain a strategic clue or reduced DV.

Spend Boon Spend **1 Boon** to lower DV by 1 on the research/social approach.

Creative Methods. Swap coin for color: poetry duels, shrine petitions, map-reading at a parish stone. If your method sings with setting, take **+1 effect** on the check.

16.3.2 Clock Manipulation

Players can nudge tension without rewriting stakes.

- **Slow** a visible Clock by **1 segment** by either **spending 1 Boon** *or* **accepting +1 SB** into the scene (fiction must justify delay).

- **Hasten** a visible Clock by **1 segment** by **spending 1 Momentum** (§16.5.1) *or* **taking a Devil's Bargain**.

- **Limit:** Once per player per scene. If three or more players affect the same Clock in a scene, the GM gains **+1 SB**.

16.3.3 Complication Bargaining

Invite the kind of trouble you want to play.

- Name a *type*: social, physical, mystery, or moral (e.g., Valora court etiquette; Ubral scree; Isoka whispers; oath vs. mercy).

- The GM frames the complication accordingly and grants you **+1d** on your next roll *within* that trouble, or reduces DV by 1 if your approach leans into the specified texture.

16.4 Faction Awareness

16.4.1 Loyalty Recognition

Track a simple ladder $(-3 \ldots + 3)$: *Enemy, Hostile, Unfriendly, Neutral, Friendly, Supportive, Ally.* When you act *with* an institution's aims, mark a **tick** toward the next step (GM pacing). When you betray a stated value, drop one step immediately and the GM banks **+1 SB** for future headaches.

16.4.2 Cross-Cultural Synergies

Spotting a neat cultural combo (Zakov pilots + Kahfagia signals; Aeler engineering + Ecktoria charters) grants **+1d** once per scene the synergy is actively used.

16.5 Advanced Techniques

16.5.1 Momentum Banking

When your team resolves a Clock *early* (segments unspent), bank **1 Momentum** per unused segment (max **2/session**). Spend 1 Momentum to:

- Gain **+1d** on a future approach tied to that victory (*lessons learned*); or

- *Telescope* a travel beat (skip a routine obstacle the same route would present); or

- Trigger a *Prepared Move*: declare a sensible minor setup you plausibly arranged off-screen.

16.5.2 Escalation Management

Trade heat for shape.

- **De-escalate (spend 1 Boon):** Downgrade a Major consequence to Minor with a plausible concession (quiet tolls paid, harsh words eaten).

- **Redirect (accept +1 SB):** Shift pressure to a new venue or actor you name; the GM places that SB there as attention.

- **Truce (spend 1 Momentum):** Freeze a faction's hostility for one scene if you can cite a shared value (oath, rite, charter clause).

16.6   Character Creation Enhancements

Players may take up to **2 Bonds** (+2 XP total) and up to **2 Starting Complications** (+4 XP total) for a cap of **34 XP**. Each unresolved starting Complication adds **+1 banked SB** to early scenes until cleared. Favor *storyful* picks (clan honor, guild debt, patron notice) over pure math.

16.7   Downtime

Between sessions, tend your garden—quietly moving the world.

16.7.1   Bookkeeping

- Allocate XP (respecting days required).

- Update Assets/Followers (status: Maintained, Neglected, Compromised).

- Track Boons (conversion cap remains 2 XP/session).

- Note SB Debt from unresolved Complications.

16.7.2   Activities

- **Recovery:** Clear Harm/Exposure with scenes that show the work.

- **Training:** Buy advances; narrate mentors, gyms, scriptoria.

- **Research:** Lower DVs with good sources; log new leads.

- **Social:** Strengthen Bonds; tune faction attitudes.

- **Preparation:** Cache gear, sow rumors, line up ferries.

16.7.3   Strategic Considerations

Clear SB-debt complications first; synchronize travel plans; decide which Asset gets love this interval, and which follower needs face-time to avoid Neglect.

16.8   Implementation Timeline

Sessions 1–3

Investment Tracker, Information Trading (via Boons/Bargains), light Complication Bargaining.

Sessions 4–6

Clock Manipulation (Boon/Momentum/SB), Cultural Immersion, Faction Awareness, Momentum Banking.

Sessions 7+

Cross-Cultural Synergies, Escalation Management, advanced pacing choreography.

> **At-Table Prompts**
>
> **Seed the Scene.** "Ask for the kind of complication you want."
> **Name the Stakes.** "Is this clock worth slowing? Who pays—Boon, SB, or Momentum?"
> **Pay with Color.** "What custom or rite do you invoke to make this work?"
> **Close the Loop.** "Mark your Investment; one sentence of what you learned."

16.9   Between Sessions Activities Log

Use or print the following trackers.

16.9.1 Character Advancement

XP Allocation

- **Total XP Available**: _____
- **Attributes Spent**: _____ (=_____ days)
- **Skills Spent**: _____ (=_____ days)
- **Remaining XP**: _____

Attribute Improvements

Attribute	Old	New	Cost	Days
Body				
Spirit				
Presence				
Wits				

Skill Improvements

Skill	Old	New	Cost	Days
Arcana				
Combat				
Investigate				
Lore				
Move				
Notice				
Physique				
Resolve				
Stealth				
Sway				
Survival				

16.9.2 Asset & Follower Management

Assets

Name	Tier	Status	Notes

Followers

Name	Role	Harm	Exposure	Sta

16.9.3 Bonds & Complications

Bonds Updated

- **With**: _____ — **Change**: _____

Complications

Complication	Resolution or Status

16.9.4 Boons & Momentum Summary

- **Boons Held**: ___/5   **Converted to XP**: ___ (max 2 XP/session)

- **Momentum Banked**: ___ (max 2/session)

16.9.5 Campaign Clocks

- **Mandate**: ___ / 6   **Crisis**: ___ / 6

- **Notables**: _____

16.9.6 Notes & Reflections

16.10   The Witch Hunter

Concept: A sanctioned tracker of illicit rites and rogue talents. Part detective, part exorcist, part collector of debts owed to the law.

Typical Inspiration: Inquisitors, occult constables, hedge-wardens, contract witch-finders.

Mechanical Foundation:

- **Primary**: Wits 4, Spirit 3

- **Skills**: Investigation 3, Lore (occult) 2, Melee 2, Insight 1

- **Talents**: *Witch-Sign Reader* (spot residue of workings), *Cold Iron Practice* (gain +1d when disrupting active magic), *Calm Under Oath* (resist panic, intimidation once/scene)

- **Assets**: Writ of limited authority (opens doors, closes some), informant in a temple archive

Play Style:

- Tracks leads, reads scenes, corners quarry with paperwork and steel

- Uses Position and leverage in social spaces before blades are drawn

- Treats magic as both *evidence* and *hazard* (§4)

Development Path:

- Specialize in *Baneful Techniques* (counter-rites, bindings)

- Build a network of informants and safe cells (§8)

- Learn one tradition deeply to turn it against itself

Story Hooks:

- A vanished ledger ties a noble salon to forbidden rites

- A *sanction* arrives with no seal—who really wrote it?

- Your oldest informant begs you to burn a file with your name on it

---

Witch Hunter Quick Boons

Once per session when confronting an occult scene, either:

- Reduce the DV of the first *read-the-signs* check by 1, or

- Shift Position one step safer for the first attempt to break an ongoing effect.

Index