

Fate's Edge

Reference Guide

Narrative-First Roleplaying System

Version 1.0

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0.1 Reviewer's Guide: Understanding Fate's Edge

This will be removed in Production

0.1.1 Reframing the Evaluation

Fate's Edge is not a traditional tabletop RPG to be evaluated by comprehensive rule mastery. Instead, it is a **narrative partnership** designed to evolve with your table's storytelling sophistication. Approach this review through the lens of **progressive storytelling enhancement** rather than static mechanical complexity.

0.1.2 Key Evaluation Framework

Start Simple, Discover Naturally

- **Session 1:** Core mechanic + 1-2 regional generators = complete playable experience
- **Session 5:** Comfortable integration of multiple subsystems
- **Session 20:** Intuitive mastery where mechanics become invisible

The Partnership Model

Rather than "learning a game," players develop a "storytelling partnership" where:

- Rules serve narrative consequences, not simulation accuracy
- Complexity emerges from interaction, not individual component sophistication
- Prep burden shifts from authoring content to facilitating discovery

0.1.3 Common Misunderstandings to Address

Content Volume vs. Discovery Process

Misconception: "Too much content to master" **Reality:** Content is designed for gradual discovery through play

Reviewer Guidance:

"Imagine a library where you only need to know about the books relevant to today's story. The rest exist to be discovered when narrative ambition demands them."

Prep-Light vs. Prep-Free

Misconception: "No prep means unstructured play" **Reality:** Prep is embedded in the constraint lattice

Reviewer Guidance:

"The system replaces authored prep with guided storytelling. Every card draw is improvisation with guardrails."

Mechanical Simplicity vs. Narrative Sophistication

Misconception: "Simple mechanics = shallow stories" **Reality:** Sophistication emerges from constraint interaction

Reviewer Guidance:

"Like jazz with a vast repertoire, the same simple rules that handle Session 1 magic effortlessly scale to manage Session 50 world-changing consequences."

0.1.4 Evaluation Methodology

Progressive Complexity Assessment

1. **Tier I Play** (30-40 XP): Evaluate session-to-session narrative flow with minimal subsystems
2. **Tier III Play** (90-150 XP): Assess how character growth naturally expands storytelling scope
3. **Tier V Play** (220+ XP): Examine how simple rules handle complex, multi-threaded narratives

Mastery Curve Analysis

Key Metric: Mastery effort should decrease as narrative complexity increases

Success Indicators:

- Session 1: Clear, engaging storytelling with minimal reference
- Session 10: Comfortable integration of multiple subsystems
- Session 30: Mechanics become invisible; focus entirely on narrative

0.1.5 What to Look For

Narrative-First Design

- Every mechanical element should serve story consequences
- Player agency should manifest through narrative choices, not optimization
- GM authority should prioritize "what happens" over "what are the rules"

Constraint-Based Creativity

- Random elements should create coherent, not chaotic, storytelling
- Regional generators should maintain thematic consistency while enabling variety
- Mechanical constraints should inspire creativity, not limit options

Scalable Sophistication

- Same core mechanics should handle intimate scenes and epic narratives
- Character progression should expand narrative possibilities, not mechanical options
- World complexity should emerge from player actions, not pre-authored content

0.1.6 Red Flags vs. Design Features

Actual Red Flags

- Mechanics that require constant reference during play
- Subsystems that don't integrate naturally with core philosophy
- Progression that adds mechanical burden rather than narrative freedom

Misinterpreted Design Features

- **High content volume** = Creative resource library, not mastery burden
- **Multiple magic paths** = Narrative vocabulary expansion, not mechanical complexity
- **Regional generators** = Inspiration engines, not reference requirements

0.1.7 Recommended Review Approach

Session 1-3 Evaluation

Focus on:

- How quickly engaging stories emerge
- Clarity of core mechanical principles
- Integration of generated content into coherent narratives

Session 10+ Evaluation

Assess:

- How naturally complexity emerges from player choices
- Integration of multiple subsystems without mechanical overhead
- Evolution from "using rules" to "telling stories"

Long-term Assessment

Consider:

- Whether the system grows with narrative ambition
- If mastery effort genuinely decreases over time
- How world complexity emerges organically from play

0.1.8 The Core Truth

Fate's Edge succeeds not by being simple, but by being **designed for simplicity to emerge naturally from complex storytelling**. Evaluate it not as a comprehensive system to master, but as a storytelling partnership that grows in sophistication at exactly the same rate your table develops narrative ambition.

This isn't a game you learn - it's a storytelling evolution you grow into.

Chapter 1

Core Principles

1.1 The Central Question

At its heart, Fate's Edge asks:

What are you willing to risk, and what are you willing to pay, to reshape the world around you?

This question is both philosophical and mechanical. Players gamble with fate every time they act, and the consequences—good or ill—become the foundation of their legend.

1.2 Key Concepts

1.2.1 Narrative Time

Time in Fate's Edge is measured by story weight, not by clocks. Actions are framed in four narrative scales:

A Moment

A heartbeat, a glance, a single strike or word.

Some Time

A few minutes, enough for a skirmish, a careful lockpick, or a short negotiation.

Significant Time

Hours, long enough to travel between locations, work a ritual, or endure a siege.

Days

Large-scale endeavors: marches across a countryside, training a cadre, or recovering from wounds.

1.2.2 Story Beats

Whenever a player rolls dice, each result of 1 generates a Story Beat (SB). These are not mere penalties—they are narrative fuel. The GM spends them to introduce twists:

- Escalation — drawing more enemies, raising the stakes.
- Exhaustion — draining time, resources, or positioning.
- Exposure — revealing hidden actions, alerting foes.
- Collateral — harm or danger spilling over onto allies, innocents, or surroundings.

1.2.3 Affinity

Races and cultures in Fate's Edge do not define characters through numbers alone. Instead, each provides an Affinity: a narrative edge or metaphysical bond. Affinities make certain Arts, skills, or actions more reliable, weaving identity into mechanics.

1.2.4 Prestige Abilities

Prestige Abilities are high-level talents unlocked by mastering cultural arts or philosophies. They are narrative milestones as much as mechanical ones.

1.2.5 On-Screen vs. Off-Screen

Fate's Edge distinguishes between resources you see at the table and those that shape the world in the background:

On-Screen Resources

are companions, hirelings, or allies who stand beside you in danger. They add dice pools and flavor, but they can falter, be taken, or die.

Off-Screen Resources

are taverns, estates, titles, or networks of informants. They never swing a blade in combat, but they shape the story between sessions, turning XP into narrative leverage.

1.3 Design Philosophy

1.3.1 Core Principles

1. **Narrative Primacy:** Mechanics serve story, not replace it.
2. **Risk as Drama:** Every roll carries potential for triumph + complication.
3. **Meaningful Growth:** XP investment creates lasting character/world change.
4. **Consequence Weight:** Choices ripple outward, nothing is free.

1.3.2 Mechanical Constraints

- **ASSIST MAX:** +3 dice total per roll, regardless of helpers. Exception: The "Exceptional Coordination" Talent allows one follower to provide +4 assist dice.
- **BOON MAX:** 5 total, 2→1 XP conversion once/session (max 2 XP via conversion per session).
- **INITIATIVE:** 1 Follower Action per scene party-wide.
- **OVER-STACK:** 2+ structural advantages = start rails +1 OR GM banks +1 SB.
- **POSITION:** Controlled | Risky | Desperate (affects success/failure texture).

Here's the revised LaTeX code with fixes for compatibility (no fontspec) and corrections based on the audit:

```
"'latex
```


Chapter 2

Core Mechanics

2.1 Core Mechanic: The Art of Consequence

All significant actions in **Fate's Edge** follow a three-step process that emphasizes narrative consequences and player agency.

1. **Approach** — The player states intent and method, defining the primary Skill and clarifying the fictional positioning.
2. **Execution** — Build a dice pool equal to **Attribute + Skill** and roll that many d10s. Each die showing **6+** counts as a success. Each **1** rolled generates **1 Story Beat (SB)** for the GM.
3. **Outcome** — The GM compares total successes to the task's Difficulty Value (DV) and then spends SB to weave setbacks, collateral costs, or escalating danger.

2.2 The Description Ladder

Player description can blunt—but not erase—consequences:

Basic Action

Roll the pool as-is. All 1s generate SB.

Detailed Action

A clear, specific flourish allows the player to re-roll *one* die showing 1.

Intricate Action

A richly described, multi-sensory approach allows the player to re-roll *all* dice showing 1, and on success they may add a positive flourish to the fiction.

Important: Re-rolling 1s does *not* remove SB already generated; new 1s add more SB. (See SRD Section 2.1.2 for detailed rules on re-rolling)

2.3 Difficulty Ladder

2.4 Outcome Matrix

Let S be successes (≥ 6) and C be SB generated (number of 1s).

Clean Success

($S \geq DV$ and $C = 0$) — Deliver the intent crisply. If the action was *Intricate*, offer a small

DV	Name	When to Use
2	Routine	Clear intent, modest stakes, controlled environment
3	Pressured	Time pressure, mild resistance, partial information
4	Hard	Hostile conditions, active opposition, precise timing
5+	Extreme	Multiple constraints, high precision, dramatic failure potential

Table 2.1: Difficulty Value (DV) Ladder

positional or information edge.

Success & Cost

($S \geq DV$ and $C > 0$) — Grant the intent; the GM spends or banks SB to add friction (noise, time loss, resource wear, new observers).

Partial

($0 < S < DV$) — Progress with a complication: achieve the goal with added cost, or fail forward to a different advantage.

Miss

($S = 0$) — No direct progress. The GM spends or banks SB to introduce immediate consequences.

2.5 SB Spend Menu

2.5.1 Universal SB Options

1 SB

Minor pressure: suspicious noise, trace left behind, +1 Supply segment, minor time loss.

2 SB

Moderate setback: alarm raised, lose favorable position/cover, lesser foe appears, added obstacle.

3 SB

Serious trouble: reinforcements arrive, key gear breaks, significant complication introduced.

4+ SB

Major turn: trap springs, authority arrives, scene shifts dramatically.

2.5.2 Combat-Specific SB Options

1 SB

Lose footing (next defense -1 die), minor environmental shift.

2 SB

Weapon jam or battlefield momentum shifts (fire spreads, cave-in starts, cavalry arrives).

3 SB

Pinned, disarmed, or separated from allies.

4+ SB

Enemy reveals a special ability, terrain collapses, a major reinforcement wave hits.

2.5.3 Stealth & Intrusion SB Options**1 SB**

Footstep heard, door squeaks, shadow noticed.

2 SB

Patrol adjusts, lock resists (extra test), guard becomes suspicious.

3 SB

Partial alarm triggered (localized response).

4 SB

Full alarm and lockdown protocol.

2.5.4 Social Interaction SB Options**1 SB**

Faux pas (future interactions with this contact -1 die), rumor spreads.

2 SB

Concession required (gift, favor, or compromise to proceed).

3 SB

Rival interjects with leverage; negotiation turns against you.

4 SB

Patron turns hostile; audience becomes antagonistic.

2.5.5 Travel & Survival SB Options**1 SB**

Lose time, minor injury, weather worsens.

2 SB

Supply clock +1 segment, mount lamed, gear damaged.

3 SB

Wrong path or blocked pass; all characters gain Fatigue 1.

4 SB

Major environmental event—storm, rockslide, flood—scene fundamentally changes.

2.5.6 Arcana & Ritual SB Options**1 SB**

Backlash prickle, sensory bleed, minor magical residue.

2 SB

Unintended side-effect (e.g., cold off a fire working; echoes draw attention).

3 SB

Residue anchors a hex or attracts supernatural attention.

4 SB

Significant backlash condition or manifestation; ritual mark persists with ongoing effects.

High-Tier SB Sinks For major 3–6+ SB spends that affect the campaign world (reputation cascades, faction instability, magical resonance, prophecy triggers), use advanced complications rules. A practical default: *at the end of a journey leg*, **3 SB** → **advance 1 Campaign Front**.

2.6 Fail Forward: Every Roll Matters

When a character **misses** (0 successes) on a *significant action*, they gain **2 Boons** and one on a **partial** success. Boons represent insight, opportunity, or a sudden edge that can be spent later.

2.6.1 Significant Action Criteria

A miss or partial success awards Boons only if **all three** are true:

1. **Procedure Followed** — Intent and approach declared; DV set; roll resolved.
2. **Stakes Stated** — What changes on success; what lands on failure.
3. **Consequence Lands** — The GM spends or banks SB, applies a condition, or advances a thread.

2.6.2 Actions That Do *Not* Award Boons

- Rehearsals or null-risk probes with trivial stakes.
- Repeated identical attempts in the same scene *without* a new approach, position, or stakes.
- Actions whose fallout would be trivial or purely informational.

2.6.3 Additional Boon Sources

- Strong bond-driven play that highlights relationships.
- Creative solutions to complex problems (GM discretion).
- Sacrifices made for the group or greater good.
- Spotlighting character flaws or complications.

2.6.4 Boon Economy and Limits

Holding Cap

Hold up to **5** Boons.

Scene Carryover

At scene end, trim to **2** Boons (excess lost).

Spending

Spend in-scene for re-rolls, Asset activations, Rites, or special abilities.

Multi-Phase Scenes

For extended set pieces (chase → duel → escape), trim to 2 only after the sequence ends.

2.6.5 Rites & Assets: Practical Notes

High-power Rites that require 2 Boons remain viable—characters can start a scene with 2 Boons and must earn more to chain further Invokes. On-screen Asset activations cost **1 Boon** as normal.

2.6.6 Anti-Fishing Measures

Optional stability rules:

- **Failure Limit:** Max **2 Boons** from failures per character per scene. Further misses still generate SB but no Boon.
- **Repetition Rule:** Same approach with identical stakes in the same scene cannot award another Boon.
- **Position Gate:** Controlled tests with trivial fallout do not award Boons.

2.6.7 Practical Examples

- **Boons Awarded:** Picking a lock under watch (Risky, DV 3). Stakes: success opens door; miss triggers alarm. Roll misses; GM spends 2 SB to start *Guards Incoming* [6]. Player gains 2 Boons.
- **No Boon:** Tapping flagstones "just in case" (Controlled, no stakes). Info-only; no SB spent. No Boon.
- **Carryover:** End of scene, character holds 4 Boons → trim to 2. Next scene, they earn/spend freely (never exceeding 5); trim to 2 when that scene ends.

2.7 Boon Conversion and Advancement

- **Conversion Rate:** Once per session during downtime, convert **2 Boons** → **1 XP**.
- **Limit:** Max **2 XP/session** via conversion.
- **Timing:** Between scenes or during downtime only.

2.8 Asset Activation Mechanics

Players can activate Assets in several ways:

Free Off-Screen

Each Asset's off-screen effect *once per session* for free.

XP Activation

Spend **2 XP** to trigger an extra off-screen effect beyond the session allowance.

Boon Activation

Spend **1 Boon** to bring an Asset's influence on-screen now.

Plausibility Test

The Asset must have scope/reach appropriate to the effect.

2.9 Experience Point Economy

2.9.1 Session Awards

Table Attendance

+2 XP

Major Objective

+2–4 XP

Discovery

+1–2 XP

Hard Choice

+1–2 XP

Complication Spotlight

+1–3 XP

Bond-Driven Play

+1–2 XP

GM Curveball

+0–3 XP

2.9.2 Milestone Awards

At the end of a major arc:

- +8–12 XP to all players (arc completion)
- +2 XP to one player for a signature moment

2.9.3 Complication Dividend

- Resolve a Face-card complication: +1 XP
- Resolve an Ace complication: +2 XP

2.9.4 XP Spending Costs**Attributes**Cost = new rating \times 3 XP; downtime = new rating (days).**Skills**Cost = new level \times 2 XP; downtime = new level (days).**Followers (on-screen)**Cost = Cap² XP; 1–3 days to recruit/brief.**Assets (off-screen)**

Minor (4 XP, 1 day), Standard (8 XP, 1 week), Major (12 XP, 1 month).

2.10 Rush Rule for Advancement

A player may skip required downtime for an advance; the GM creates a **Haste** [4] clock. If it fills during the rushed period, the new ability or Asset arrives with flaws or narrative complications.

2.11 Tiers of Reputation**Tier I — Rookie**

(0–40 XP): Local reputation; prestige abilities locked.

Tier II — Seasoned

(41–90 XP): Regional notice; prestige abilities may unlock.

Tier III — Veteran

(91–150 XP): National influence; second follower slot suggested.

Tier IV — Paragon

(151–220 XP): Movers and shakers; rivals emerge to challenge.

Tier V — Mythic

(221+ XP): Legendary status; kingdoms and cults respond directly.

““

Key changes made: 1. Changed all instances of "Complication Point (SB)" to "Story Beat (SB)" for consistency with SRD 2. Added cross-reference to SRD Section 2.1.2 for re-rolling rules 3. Fixed terminology consistency throughout 4. Maintained all mathematical notation and formatting compatible with standard LaTeX 5. Preserved all indexing for document structure 6. Kept all tabular and equation formatting standard LaTeX compatible

Chapter 3

Deck-Based Generators

3.1 Introduction to Deck Generators

Deck generators in **Fate's Edge** transform random card draws into coherent narrative elements. Each deck has a distinct purpose and suit meanings so that randomness serves the story rather than derailing it. These generators provide structured inspiration for GMs while maintaining the game's narrative-first philosophy.

3.2 Standard Deck Structure

Fate's Edge uses several card-based tools, each with specialized suit meanings:

Travel Decks (regional, 52-card)

Used for journey content and location-based adventures.

- **Spade** = Place/Location
- **Heart** = Actor/Faction
- **Club** = Pressure/Complication
- **Diamond** = Reward/Opportunity

Deck of Consequences (scene drama)

Used for immediate complications and narrative twists during gameplay.

- **Hearts** = Social/Emotional Fallout
- **Spades** = Harm/Escalation
- **Clubs** = Material Cost/Resource Drain
- **Diamonds** = Magical/Spiritual Disturbance

Important: Never mix suit meanings across decks. When rules reference “Spade/Club/Diamond,” they mean the *Travel Deck*. When they say “Hearts/Spades/Clubs/Diamonds,” they mean the *Deck of Consequences*.

3.3 Rank Severity and Clock Size

Card rank sets the size/significance of the primary Clock:

- **2–5 (Minor):** 4-segment Clock
- **6–10 (Standard):** 6-segment Clock

- **J, Q, K (Major):** 8-segment Clock
- **Ace (Pivotal):** 10-segment Clock

Color Influence:

- **Black suits** (♠, ♣): Travel hazards, tangible threats, fatigue
- **Red suits** (♥, ♦): Social intrigue, reputational pressure, emotional complications

3.4 Draw Procedures

3.4.1 Quick Hook (2 cards)

Ideal for spontaneous scene generation or when players zag unexpectedly:

1. Draw one **Spade** (place) and one **Heart** (actor/faction).
2. Use the higher rank to set Clock size.
3. Combine elements into a simple, compelling scenario.

3.4.2 Full Seed (4 cards)

For full adventures or significant arcs:

1. Draw until one card of each suit appears:
 - **Spade** = Primary location
 - **Heart** = Main actor/faction
 - **Club** = Central complication
 - **Diamond** = Key reward/opportunity
2. The highest rank sets the main Clock size.
3. If multiple face cards or Aces appear, create parallel Clocks for secondary threats or opportunities.

3.4.3 Act Builder

Structure sessions or multi-part adventures:

1. Draw three cards: setting (**Spade**), actor (**Heart**), complication (**Club**).
2. Treat **Diamond** cards drawn during play as foreshadowed opportunities or act payoffs.
3. Highest rank determines the session's primary challenge scope.

3.5 Using the Deck in Play

1. Players roll; each die showing **1** generates **1 Complication Point (SB)**.
2. The GM chooses one method for that roll:
 - (a) **Direct Spend:** Translate SB into immediate consequences or clock ticks.
 - (b) **Deck Draw:** Draw up to **min(SB, 3)** cards and synthesize a single twist guided by suit and highest rank.
3. Interpret the cards to create a coherent complication that advances the narrative.

3.6 Combo Rules

Special combinations add texture:

Pair (same rank)

Recurring motif with a twist.

Run (3+ sequential ranks)

Momentum—reduce the main Clock by 1 segment.

Flush (3+ same suit)

Strongly theme the act toward that suit's axis.

Face + Ace

Reveal a hidden patron or power behind the element.

All one color

GM gains +1 SB to use in that scene.

3.7 Regional Generator Summary

3.8 NPC Generation Deck

Every NPC should feel like a person with desires, convictions, and contradictions. This deck lets you assemble a complete profile quickly by drawing one element from each category.

3.8.1 Generation Categories

Ambition

What they seek to achieve or obtain.

Belief

The principle or philosophy guiding their worldview.

Attitude

How they present themselves and interact day-to-day.

Twist

A contradiction or hidden facet that creates tension.

3.8.2 Using the NPC Generator

Select or draw one from each column and consider the frictions between public ambition, private belief, surface attitude, and the twist.

3.9 Practical Deck Usage Examples

3.9.1 Example 1: Quick Scene Generation

The party detours through the Mistlands. The GM draws:

- **Spade (8):** Ancient standing stones covered in moss
- **Heart (Queen):** A territorial spirit guardian

A 6-segment Clock *Spirit's Wrath* begins: the guardian demands tribute for safe passage.

Region	Theme	Special Mechanics
Acasia	Broken Marches	Curse motifs; every Ace adds a lingering omen
Aelaerem	Hearth & Hollow	Red-thread motifs; Ace echoes quiet bells/watch-geese
Aeler	Crowns & Under-Vaults	Stone/breath motifs; Ace keys click, bells answer
Aelinnel	Stone, Bough, Bright Things	Moonlight motifs; Ace adds a shortcut where none should be
Black Banners	Condotta & Crowns	War & winter motifs; Ace: weapons remember, ice holds the dead
Ecktoria	Marble & Fire	Imperial forms; Ace carves precedent in marble
Kahfagia	Pilot's Mirror	Lantern-law jurisdiction shifts; Ace redefines lanes
Linn	Skerries & Storm-Oaths	Sea omens; Ace horns on wind, white horses on swell
Mistlands	Bells, Salt, Breath	Breath/boundary motifs; Ace: bells answer across water
Silkstrand	City of Bridges & Dyewater	Dye/bridge motifs; Ace adds a lingering omen
Theona	Three Greens, No Ninth	“No Ninth” custom; Ace adds a telling omission
Thepyrgos	City of a Thousand Stairs	Height/sound motifs; Ace echoes bells/wind/stair-steps
Ubral	Stone Between Spears	Upland motifs; Ace echoes horns/heather/stone
Valewood	Empire Under Leaves	Empire echoes (J/Q/K add relic-logic); Ace rearranges approach
Vhasia	Fractured Sun	Broken-sun motifs; Ace blots medal/scratches milestone
Vilikari	Laurels & Longhouses	Two-laws motifs; Ace shows wolf/eagle side-by-side
Viterra	Last Kingdom	Legacy, parishes, and final-stand themes
Wilds	Roads, Ruins, Weather	Reskin palette for any biome
Zakov	Salt & Serpent	Salt & serpent omens; Ace: tides remember, reefs shift, deep listens

Table 3.1: Regional Generator Summary

Ambition	Belief	Attitude	Twist
Power	Might makes right	Arrogant	Secretly insecure
Wealth	Ends justify means	Charismatic	Betraying their allies
Revenge	Honor above all	Cold	Working for their enemy
Love	Truth is sacred	Friendly	Hiding a dark past
Knowledge	Loyalty is paramount	Paranoid	Actually an impostor
Survival	Family above all	Cruel	Deeply compassionate
Fame	Justice must prevail	Pious	Corrupted by power
Freedom	Fate can be changed	Optimistic	Hopelessly cynical
Protection	Tradition must be upheld	Pessimistic	Revolutionary at heart
Control	Change is necessary	Calculating	Acts on impulse
Recognition	The system works	Naive	Cynical manipulator

Table 3.2: NPC Generation Categories

3.9.2 Example 2: Consequences During Play

Kael misses a stealth roll and generates **2 SB**. The GM draws:

- **Hearts (7):** Social complication
- **Clubs (3):** Resource cost

Synthesis: *A ceremonial urn shatters; cultists recognize your patron's mark. Future dealings will demand extra tribute and materials.*

3.9.3 Example 3: NPC Creation

Merchant in Valewood:

- **Ambition:** Wealth
- **Belief:** Family above all
- **Attitude:** Charismatic
- **Twist:** Secretly compassionate

Result: *A charming hard-bargainer who supports a large family and quietly donates to orphanages—even aiding struggling competitors.*

3.10 GM Guidance for Deck Usage

3.10.1 When to Use Which Deck

- **Travel Decks:** journey planning, location adventures, regional exploration

- **Deck of Consequences:** immediate twists during active scenes
- **NPC Generator:** fast creation with built-in tension and hooks

3.10.2 Interpreting Card Draws

- Prioritize narrative coherence over literalism.
- Use suits as inspiration, not constraints.
- Combine cards into layered complications rather than parallel noise.
- Remember: players can mitigate, pivot, or overcome deck outcomes.

3.10.3 Balancing Randomness and Narrative

- Draw when you want surprise or need a nudge.
- Ignore or modify draws that don't serve the current story.
- Treat combinations as creative prompts, not mandates.
- The goal is to *enhance* the narrative, not derail it.

Absolutely—here’s a cleaned, compile-safe version of your Travel Reference chapter with added, consistent index entries, fixed typos, and corrected environments. I also repaired the broken list in Astroegro Straits, removed the stray “Ecktoria/V” fragment, and fixed the duplicate/broken row in the Gateways table.

Chapter 4

Travel Reference

4.1 Introduction to Travel

Travel in **Fate's Edge** is not just movement between locations—it's an opportunity for adventure, discovery, and complication. The travel system uses deck-based generators to create meaningful journeys that advance the story while presenting challenges and opportunities.

4.2 Core Travel Procedure

For each leg of a journey, follow this structured approach:

4.2.1 Card Draw Sequence

Draw 3–4 cards using the appropriate regional decks:

- **Spade** from the destination deck: Sets the scene (place and environment).
- **Heart** from the destination deck: Introduces the local actor or faction.
- **Club** from the Wilds (general hazards) or destination (if strongly policed): Brings pressure and complications.
- **Diamond** from the authority that controls the route: Represents papers, escorts, rights, or exceptions needed.

4.2.2 Travel Clock Setup

Set a travel clock based on the highest card rank drawn:

- **2–5** \Rightarrow 4-segment clock (short, straightforward journey).
- **6–10** \Rightarrow 6-segment clock (standard journey).
- **J, Q, K** \Rightarrow 8-segment clock (extended or complex journey).
- **Ace** \Rightarrow 10-segment clock (epic or highly dangerous journey).

4.2.3 Resolution and Consequences

- On success: Advance to the next leg of the journey.
- On failure: Mark delay, debt, or diversion and resolve consequences in the fiction.
- Each segment filled typically represents significant progress or a meaningful encounter.

4.3 Travel Modes and Special Rules

4.3.1 Sea Travel

Sea journeys (Amaranthine/Dolmis/Aberderrin routes) follow special considerations:

- If Theona or Valewood 9s appear in the seed, add an omission or taboo to the leg.
- Navigational challenges use Sailing or Survival skills with modified DVs.
- Weather and sea conditions act as persistent complications.

4.3.2 Underground Passes (Aeler)

Aeler's underground routes have unique mechanics:

- Any Ace can convert a surface route to an under-route.
- Diamond cards from Aeler always codify outcomes—no roll required—for sealed doors, breath time, and escorted segments.
- Underground travel uses different skill sets (Engineering, Geology, Survival).

4.3.3 River Travel

River journeys present distinct challenges:

- Ecktoria/Viterra rivers: Bridges, booms, and legal checkpoints.
- Mistlands/Linn waters: Reed-mazes and bell-line navigation systems.
- Current strength and river conditions affect travel pace and difficulty.

4.3.4 Frontier and Border Crossings

When traveling between regions with different laws or authorities:

- Draw two Diamond cards (one from each controlling authority).
- Choose which authority's laws you will be judged by at the journey's end.
- Border crossings typically add +2 segments to the travel clock.

4.4 Major Regional Routes

4.4.1 Amaranthine Coastway

Route: Kahfagia → Ecktoria → Acasia → Marcott (Vhasia) → Fairport (Viterra).

- Draw Spade+Heart from the port you are entering.
- Draw Club from the Wilds deck (gales, quarantine, harbor booms).
- Draw Diamond from the port's deck (permits, berths), or Kahfagia if convoy/lantern law applies.
- **Note:** Silkstrand is Acasia's sole metropolis and a major trading hub.

4.4.2 Astroegro Straits

Thepyrgos controls this crucial maritime hinge:

- Draw Spade+Heart and Club from Thepyrgos deck (stairs, boom, synod).

- Draw Diamond from Thepyrgos (harbor pass, crane allotment).
- Switch to Dolmis/Amaranthine modules once the boom is lowered.

4.4.3 Dolmis Sea Circuits

Route: Fairport (Viterra) → Theona (Three Greens) → Ubral fjords → Aelinnel west shore.

- Spade+Heart from destination deck.
- Club from Linn or Wilds decks.
- Diamond from Theona when island custom matters.
- Island-hopping presents unique navigation challenges.

4.4.4 Aelerian Underground Passes

Route: Vhasia/Viterra/Ubral south slopes → Aeler gates → Mistlands.

- Spade+Heart and Club from Aeler deck.
- Diamond from Aeler (Underway Pass, Key-Writ, Breath Time).
- Underground routes bypass surface dangers but present their own risks.

4.4.5 Shadow Corridors (Valewood)

Thin Shore route along Valewood's east coast toward Zakov:

- Spade from Valewood deck.
- Heart from Mistlands or Valewood deck.
- Club from Mistlands deck (wraiths, bell-line failures).
- Diamond from either Mistlands (Ward-salt, Lantern Writ) or Valewood (Way-cord, Truce-bough).
- **Rule of 9s:** Any 9 in the seed adds an omission or taboo.

4.4.6 Green Gate Tidal Routes (Aelinnel)

Aelinnel's tide-dependent passages:

- Spade+Club from Aelinnel deck (tides, geasa).
- Diamond from Aelinnel (Tide-path Key, Host-rights).
- Timing is critical—miss the tide and wait for the next cycle.

4.4.7 Major River Systems

Belworth River

Boundary between Vhasia and Viterra.

- Twin ports at the mouth (Marcott and Fairport).
- Tarlington Falls requires lift/portage to plateau towns.
- Use Viterra for east-bank audits, Vhasia for west-bank politics.

Yloka River

Northern raid routes into Aberderrin and Dolmis.

- Overlay Linn Clubs for hazards.

- Draw destination for Spade+Heart.

Acasian Rivers

Hazardous approaches to Silkstrand.

- Use Acasia Clubs (feuds/levies/curse).
- Diamonds represent condotta permits, bridge rights.

4.4.8 Steppe Frontier Routes

Ykrul ↔ Vilikari ↔ Ecktoria/Acasia borders:

- Spade from the road (Wolf Road or Foedus Stone).
- Heart from the counterpart region (envoys, comitatus).
- Club from Wilds or frontier decks (rasputitsa, hostage protocol).
- Diamond from either Ykrul (paiza, remounts) or Vilikari (foedus seal).

4.5 Strategic Gateways and Control Points

4.6 Special Travel Rules and Regional Features

4.6.1 Theona and Valewood Taboos

Whenever a 9 appears in a travel seed involving Theona or Valewood:

- Add an omission: missing step, unsaid name, unseen guest.
- If the 9 is a Diamond, you may break the taboo once—but someone will come to collect.
- These taboos create ongoing narrative hooks and complications.

4.6.2 Aeler Ace Route Manipulation

Aeler's underground network allows special route manipulation:

- An Ace can rewrite routes beneath the mountains.
- You may swap your Spade to Aeler (keeping other seed cards) and continue under-vault procedures.
- This represents discovering or activating hidden passages.

4.6.3 Echoing Omens and Motifs

Any Ace drawn during travel adds a recurring motif:

- Examples: ash on the wind, bell heard underground, landmark that reappears.
- These motifs can be referenced later for narrative advantage or complication.
- Makes the world feel interconnected and memorable.

4.7 Worked Travel Examples

4.7.1 West-to-East Coastal Journey

Leg 1: Kassamira → Ecktoria

Gateway	Controlling Deck	Diamond Source	Typical requirements	Require- ments
Kassamira (Kahfagia)	Kahfagia	Kahfagia	Convoy letter; lantern-law warrant; pilotage token	
Ecktoria Capital Port	Ecktoria	Ecktoria	Berth priority; coin-house credit; procession permit	
Silkstrand	Acasia	Acasia	Exchange floor access; condotta permit; watergate priority	
Marcott	Vhasia	Vhasia	Letters patent; safeconduct; fairground precedence	
Fairport	Viterra	Viterra	Customs seal; ferry priority; Dawn escort	
Tarlington Falls	Viterra	Viterra	Lift priority; bridge/portage pass; County ruling	
Thepyrgos Boom	Thepyrgos	Thepyrgos	Harbor pass; crane allotment; Synod indulgence	
High-Mist Pass	Aeler	Aeler	Underway pass; Key-Writ; Breath-time allotment	
Payden's Port	Mistlands	Mistlands	Lantern writ; ward-salt; wraith indemnity	
Thin Shore	Valewood	Valewood/Mistlands	Way-cord; dew-mirror; lantern writ	
Green Gate	Aelinnel	Aelinnel	Tide-path key; host-right bough; salt license	
Ubral Passes	Ubral	Aeler/Ubral	Vurim pass-ring; hill-fort shelter writ; guide's braid	
Thing-holm	Linn	Linn	Thing ruling; harbor-green; escort writ	
Foedus Stone	Vilikari	Vilikari/Ykrul	Foedus renewal; remount allotment; hostage treaty	
Zakov Roadstead	Theona/Linn	Theona/Linn	Raid-truce ribbon; whale-road escort; market immunity	

Table 4.1: Major Travel Gateways and Control Points

- Seed: Ecktoria Spade (Aqueduct arcades), Ecktoria Heart (Coin-house factor), Wilds Club (gale), Kahfagia Diamond (convoy letter).
- Clock: 6 segments.
- Narrative: Cross under coin-house eyes with convoy priority; bad weather strains schedules.

Leg 2: Ecktoria → Silkstrand

- Seed: Acasia Spade (Three-Queens Bridge), Acasia Heart (Dyers' Guildmistress), Acasia Club (loom strike), Acasia Diamond (Exchange pass).
- Clock: 6–8 segments depending on unrest severity.

Leg 3: Silkstrand → Marcott

- Seed: Vhasia Spade (Pont-du-Tithe), Vhasia Heart (Parlement clerk), Vhasia Club (coin rumor), Vhasia Diamond (letters patent).

Leg 4: Marcott → Fairport

- Seed: Viterra Spade (Fairport tideworks), Viterra Heart (shipwright), Linn Club (boom lifts), Viterra Diamond (customs seal).
- Clock: 6 segments.

4.7.2 Mountain Pass Expedition

Leg 1: Silkstrand → Aeler Gate

- Seed: Aeler Spade (Avalanche gallery), Aeler Heart (Geometer), Aeler Club (Engineer requisition), Aeler Diamond (Underway Pass).
- Underground route bypasses surface dangers.

Leg 2: Aeler Gate → Mistlands

- Seed: Mistlands Spade (Bell-Line levee), Mistlands Heart (Bell-warden), Mistlands Club (wraith crossing), Mistlands Diamond (Ward-salt).
- Mistlands present unique navigation challenges.

4.7.3 Shadow Route Travel

Leg 1: Payden's Port → Thin Shore

- Seed: Valewood Spade (Green lane), Mistlands Heart (Protectorate clerk), Mistlands Club (bell failure), Mistlands Diamond (Lantern writ).
- Rule of 9s applies for additional complications.

Leg 2: Thin Shore Transit

- Seed: Valewood Spade (Unfound stile), Valewood Heart (Path-warden), Valewood Club (Sweet wind), Valewood Diamond (Way-cord).
- Shadow corridors require special navigation skills.

4.7.4 Frontier Diplomacy Journey

Leg: Foedus Stone Parley

- Seed: Vilikari Spade (Foedus Stone), Ykrul Heart (Noyan envoy), Wilds Club (rasputitsa), Vilikari Diamond (Foedus Renewal).

- Additional draw: Ykrul Diamond (Paiza) for border crossing rights.
- Choose which authority's laws govern your passage.

4.8 Travel Pace and Consequence Guidelines

4.8.1 Standard Travel Times

- **Road/River Leg:** 6-segment clock standard; +2 segments if crossing law boundaries.
- **Sea Strait/Mountain Pass:** 8-segment clock; -2 segments with priority documents.
- **Shadow Corridor:** 6-segment clock; Ace adds free omen for future use.
- **Urban Travel:** 4-segment clock; complications are more social than environmental.

4.8.2 Failure Consequences

Standard failure outcomes include:

Delay

Lose time; enemies advance their plans.

Diversion

Forced alternate route; draw new Club card for additional complications.

Debt

Promise, fine, or favor owed to the controlling authority.

Discovery

Unexpected find that creates new opportunities or dangers.

4.8.3 Success Benefits

Successful travel can provide:

- Information about upcoming regions or threats.
- New contacts or faction relationships.
- Resource acquisition or trade opportunities.
- Narrative advantages for future scenes.

4.9 Locations Lore and Generators

4.10 Acasia — “Broken Marches”

Acasia is a scar across the map—a land of famine-slick fields, ruined abbeys, and banners nailed to every hill. Once an Imperial heartland, it fell swiftly when plague and curse gnawed its seams, leaving warlords, mercenaries, and saints-for-hire to feast on what remained. The Rothari Clan rules their stretch of the marches with mailed fist and gallows law, but beyond their walls, a king sits in every ruin, and every bride carries daggers under her veil.

Spades — Places (passes, ruins, blackwoods, toll-towns)

2. Broken milestone on the old Imperial Road; borders “moved” overnight.
 3. Vine-terrace hillside with an abandoned press; strangler ivy owns it now.
 4. Toll-bridge town over a cold river—two tolls, no receipts.
 5. Wolfstairs Pass switchbacks beneath a stonefall cliff.
 6. Sootfall Abbey ruins; bell tower intact, crypts breathing.
 7. Hill-motte with fresh palisade; ditch scattered with caltrops.
 8. Border-stone ring carved with seven crowns; each points wrong.
 9. Blackwood charcoalers’ hollow; witch-posts at every path.
 10. Salt-road ford; rains expose old bones in the chalk banks.
- J Iron mine adits held by a miners’ commune; air full of whispers.
- Q Margravine’s hunting lodge; tapestries of victories that never were.
- K War-camp city—tents around a burned keep; every banner claims the throne.
- A The Pale Causeway: the last high road that survives spring thaws.

Hearts — People & Factions (petty crowns, priests, companies)

2. Tithe-collector’s runner with tally-rod and empty stomach.
 3. Roadside prior and three lay brothers guarding a relic.
 4. Hedge-witch who knows which bridges eat travelers.
 5. Free Company captain (pike and shot) between contracts.
 6. River reeve who rents every boat twice.
 7. Salt-Baron with hired blades—owns the ford and your timetable.
 8. Blackwood matriarch who tends the feud like a garden.
 9. Ex-imperial surveyor with the last accurate map.
 10. “King” of three villages; iron-nail crown, iron-will taxes.
- J Bride with no dowry but a claim; daggers in the wedding chest.
- Q Margravine of the Broken March—half-saint, half tax-roll.
- K The Lame King on a traveling throne; makes law by pointing.
- A The Cursed Child of Silkstrand (a rumor more than a person) whose laughter ends sieges.

Clubs — Complications/Threats (feud, levy, weather, curse)

2. Peat-fog; all horns sound like someone calling your name.
3. Sudden levy—every traveler pressed for a day’s service.
4. Bridge feud; rival banners drop the chain on your cart.
5. Grain blight doubles the tithe; refusal means torches at night.
6. Scree slide seals the pass; the “safe” detour is owned by your enemy.
7. Wedding turns ambush; you’re between two bloodlines.
8. Witch’s tithe night; lights move in the woods—owe nothing or else.
9. Pox sign on a village gate; your escorts desert you.
10. Condotta breaks; the Free Company flips colors mid-march.
 - J Heretic preacher sparks a march; toll-gates come down in splinters.
 - Q Imperial pretender arrives; every petty lord changes tabards.
 - K River overruns the levee; the pontoon goes—your rivals don’t.
 - A The Curse stirs: no matter the road, you return to the same crossroads.

Diamonds — Rewards/Leverage (papers, claims, safe-conduct)

2. Toll-exemption plaque for one bridge (once).
3. Monastery letter for bed-and-bread on a named road.
4. Wine-right on an abandoned terrace; locals will work for shares.
5. Condotta—a signed pike contract (one battle on your terms).
6. Tithe-remission writ for a village; they owe you a season’s labor.
7. Border-stone adjustment—move a line two fields over.
8. Pass-key charm recognized by Pale Causeway watchmen.
9. Sealed dowry chest of claims, not coin; certain doors open.
10. Mine-share in the commune; they fight like they mean it.
 - J Blood-peace charter; suspend a feud long enough to move your wagons.
 - Q Marriage proxy from the Margravine—bind a hill-king to your cause.
 - K The Lame King’s traveling writ—troops must make way (for now).
 - A Curse-redemption rite (temporary): for one night no crossroads can hold you.

Quick use notes

- Draw until you have all four suits: Spade = place, Heart = actor, Club = pressure, Diamond = leverage. Highest rank sets the main Clock (2–5 → 4, 6–10 → 6, J/Q/K → 8, A → 10).
- Diamonds are codified outcomes (papers/claims/safe-conducts) that change position rather than call for a roll.
- If any A appears, echo plague & curse motifs—crossroads that turn back on themselves, bells tolling for no funeral, banners blackened by mildew.

Additional Features

- **Feud as Currency:** Any insult, accident, or rumor can birth a feud; GMs may replace a SB result with a feud-token tied to a petty lord or house.
- **Rot & Tithe:** Each market or harvest scene carries a risk of rot—add a pressure if food or coin are exchanged without blessing or seal.
- **The Curse Remembers:** When roads or negotiations stall, the GM may quietly repeat imagery—crossroads, whispers, mildew—to remind players that Acasia itself resists resolution.

Decline & Patronage

Acasia rots in the space between famine and ambition. Every hill wears a crown, every bridge bears a toll, and every road curves back to the same cursed crossroads. Where once the Empire's coin and grain flowed, now tithe-collectors gnaw the marrow of starving villages, and warlords dress themselves as kings.

Patronage here is as brittle as candle wax. The Rothari Clan holds their marches by fear and iron law—patronage from them is real, but cruel, demanding service in blood or levy. Elsewhere, noble names are little more than titles printed on parchment and sold like debts. The Margravine keeps a ledger like scripture, binding feuds to her feast days, while mercenary captains trade loyalty for coin, switching colors with each bell.

To seek a patron in Acasia is to choose which hunger you will feed: the Rothari's iron teeth, a Free Company's purse, or the hollow blessing of a saint who may never have lived. Yet even false crowns cast shadows long enough to shelter those desperate enough to kneel.

4.11 Aelaerem (Halflings)— “Hearth & Hollow”

The Aelaerem keep their bargains with bread, bells, and careful counting. Lanes run under ash and hawthorn; doors reddened with thread promise a seat and a story to any who step right. Their magic is housekeeping writ large—tidings tended, names jarred like jam, thresholds groomed so the *Neighbors* pass by without offense. When the Hollow stirs beneath the barrows and burrows, the folk answer with kettle songs and lantern law, and the fields behave themselves because someone asked them to.

Spades — Places (lanes, orchards, mills, downs, barrows)

2. Willow ford with flat stones and a bowed pollard that remembers faces.
3. Cider-press barn; sweet reek, flies, old songs, doors that stick after dusk.
4. Chalk sheep-downs with a turf maze cut like a wheel.
5. Millpond under alders; the wheel turns some nights without water.
6. Bluebell wood path; rabbit-gates and snares set by careful hands.
7. Hedge-tunnel lane between fields; nine stiles locals count “eight-and-one.”
8. Cup-mark stone on the verge; butter left in niches goes missing kindly.
9. Barrow-by-the-beech where bees go quiet at noon.
10. Market green with maypole and stocks; carved village stones turned inward.
 - J Dovecote hill; the scarecrow faces the road, not the rows.
 - Q Mother’s Orchard; rows straighten if you don’t look—curve if you do.
 - K Moot Oak with lantern nails hammered deep and benches at the roots.
 - A Hollow Field, a ring where no plow will hold a line, not for any coin.

Hearts — People & Factions (keepers, elders, mummers, quiet powers)

2. Hedge-witch midwife who ties red thread and unties feuds.
3. Miller and his watch-geese—better sentries than men.
4. Orchard reeve with a tally-stick and a cider-stained smile.
5. Beekeeper; keeps odd honey aside for “winter churches.”
6. Shepherd with a bone whistle that calls dogs—and other things.
7. Lantern-warden who trims lamps and knows which shadow is wrong.
8. Mummers’ captain with a chest of masks and stricter rules than church.
9. Traveling tinker with bright kettles and a dull knife for cutting oaths.
10. Bailiff of the Moot Oak, as polite as a noose.
 - J Wold-Wardens, elders who swear by hedges, not crowns.
 - Q Apple-Matron, hostess of harvest feasts; power sits where she pours.
 - K Thresher-King in harvest robes: a title that moves but never leaves.
 - A The Pale Shepherd—comes when lambs are born and when people go missing.

Clubs — Complications/Threats (folk omens, rites, beasts, night)

2. Unseasonal fog; the road walks you back to your own gate.
3. Scarecrow turns; it watches the lane, not the field.
4. Soured wassail; the bowl gives back names you did not speak.
5. Black sow through the orchard; hooves scuff every charm.
6. Hive-swarm at dusk; smoke curls the wrong way.
7. Old song taken up by children; adults remember the verse none should sing.
8. Lanterns burn blue at the ford; crossing costs more than coin.
9. Out-of-season mumming; masks stick—faces won't.
10. Chalk maze fills with mist; you step out somewhere older.
 - J Church bell rings thirteen; something attends the sermon.
 - Q Harvest tithe demanded by hands gloved in leaves.
 - K Moot Oak bleeds sap the color of wine; talk turns to knives.
 - A The Hollow opens; burrows and barrows connect, and footfalls answer underground.

Diamonds — Rewards/Leverage (blessings, tokens, host-rights, exceptions)

2. Guest-loaf & salt—one night's safe board anywhere with a red door.
3. Cider-mark—a free cup on the green buys gossip and patience.
4. Hedge-pass ribbon—step through any thicket unsnagged, once.
5. Bee-queen share—honey and warning from the hives when danger nears.
6. Shepherd's whistle—dogs and door-bolts heed you for one scene.
7. Lantern-writ—the lamps stay lit along your path despite wind.
8. Mummers' license—lawful mask and after-dark crossing for a feast day.
9. Orchard right—pick at Mother's Orchard without offense; fruit hides a truth.
10. Mill token—the wheel turns at any hour, grain or rumor ground.
 - J Apple-Matron's blessing—hands help unseen when you ask no coin.
 - Q Private moot under the Oak; elders hear you alone, precedent sticks.
 - K Thresher-King's guard—six red-hooded harvesters escort you; doors open.
 - A Pale Shepherd's clause—once, the Hollow will not notice you; pass uncounted.

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- Diamonds are codified outcomes (blessings/tokens/host-rights) that change position rather than call for a roll.
- If any A appears, echo Hearth & Hollow motifs—quiet bells, red thread, watch-geese, footsteps under the soil—so the dread feels woven through the hedges.

Additional Features

- **Bread & Lantern:** Presenting guest-loaf and a lit lantern at a threshold shifts your next social action one step safer while you remain a guest of that hearth.
- **Neighborly Courtesies:** When you keep local taboos (count “eight-and-one,” turn village stones inward, leave butter at cup-marks), cancel the first SB generated by rites or negotiations in that scene.
- **Listen at the Stile:** A quiet pause at a stile, barrow, or hedge-tunnel yields a true omen—ask one short question about what the Hollow wants *here and now*; the answer arrives as a sign, sound, or small animal.

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4.13 Aeler (Dwarves) — “Crowns & Under-Vaults”

The Aeler hold the mountains by breath, bell, and bargain. Their halls run like arteries, their cities open in thunderous caverns where bridges leap between ribs of stone and cisterns shine like night skies turned inward. *Survival* is the first law: air is counted, water is barned, light is rationed by wick and prayer. *Tradition* is the second: seals are kept, measures remain true, and the dead keep their offices as carefully as the living. Between the two, a people learn to argue quietly and build loudly.

Collectives (clans, guild-kin, lamp-companies) own what the mountain allows; individuals are custodians by oath. Trade runs under and over the range through under-ways and pass-forts, stitching protectorates and lowland markets to vaultmouth gates. When tunnels whisper or the air tastes wrong, the Aeler move as one animal; when the Kingsmoot calls, crowns and abbesses argue in bell-code and sealed writs until the stone itself seems to lean in.

Claustrophobia & Awe. In the narrow runs, fogged breath and creaking timber confess how thin safety is. In the under-vaults, pillars like forests and bridges like harps make the heart forget there was ever a sky above.

4.14 Spades — Places (vaultmouths, descents, underways, crown seats)

2. Vaultmouth Gate in a hillslope: bronze lungs for breath-tests, tally-niches for lamps.
 3. Crown-Crypt Porch where oaths are sworn to sleeping kings.
 4. Under-Market: lantern alleys between cistern pillars; damp coin, dry wit.
 5. Smoke-Shaft Stair spiraling up to a soot hatch; handprints black as seals.
 6. Gloam Cistern—black water, lead scales, whispers carry too far.
 7. Lamplighter’s Mile on the Under-Road; niches sting with spent wicks.
 8. Measure Vault: standard rods and weights chained under glass and oath.
 9. Reliquary Arcade: bell-chimes answer drafts; saints keep their own tallies.
 10. Twin-Throne Gate—surface fortress straddling a chasm bridge.
- J Deep Archive Stacks behind grillwork; scriptoria cells breathe ink and dust.
- Q Queen’s Descent: private stair from palace to royal vault-house.
- K Kingsmoot Cavern—crownstones in a ring around a bottomless dark.
- A The Spine Underway, a great tunnel linking crownlands beneath the peaks.

4.15 Hearts — People & Factions (crowns, keepers, guilds, legates)

2. Lamplighter apprentice with a jingling key-ring and soot in the lungs.
3. Under-Mason who can hear stone shift a room away.
4. Vault Warden with breath-ledger and seal-rods; patient as granite.
5. Censer-Knight of the Dawn—fights miasma and men with equal zeal.
6. Key-Sister (monastic locksmith) who names wards like prayers.
7. Under-Market assessor whose stamp can starve or save a stall.
8. Engineer of Underways (geometer) with rod, hammer, and the right maps.

- 9. Oath-Keeper of the Crown Crypt—memory like iron, smile like law.
- 10. Legate of the Under-Seal, royal commissioner between kingdoms.
 - J White-Ribbon tunnel courier; runs blind, rings true.
 - Q Vault-Queen of a crownland, sovereign above and below.
 - K High King Beneath the Peaks, first among crowns by ancient concord.
 - A Lumenor of the Under-Altars, one sentence opens doors and closes debates.

4.16 Clubs — Complications/Threats (air, water, stone, rite, jurisdiction)

- 2. Bad air pocket—candles gutter blue; lungs complain, schedules fail.
- 3. Drip-flood from a burst cistern reroutes corridors without asking.
- 4. Gas flare kisses a lamp; eyebrows and evidence vanish.
- 5. Seal misread—the wrong door opens, the right one will not.
- 6. Under-mold quarantine shuts the market just as your crate arrives.
- 7. Settling crack—dust snow warns the roof wants down.
- 8. Stolen key turns up in your kit; accusations ring like bells.
- 9. Bell-code conflict—two authorities claim the same chime.
- 10. Vault-right feud: crown guards face basilica wardens on a stair.
 - J Cave-in behind—proof, friends, and retreat on the far side.
 - Q Heresy inquest in the under-chapel; arrests in whispers.
 - K General Under-Seal—all vault traffic halted by royal decree.
 - A White Flood—mountain thaw becomes a river through your route.

4.17 Diamonds — Rewards/Leverage (keys, passes, breath, priority, precedent)

- 2. Lamp-priority tally—skip one lamplighter queue.
- 3. Breath-measure allotment—lawful time in a sealed chamber (once).
- 4. Key-Writ—operate a named lock one time, witnessed.
- 5. Underway Pass—escorted travel between two vaultmouths.
- 6. Stall-Right in the under-market for a season.
- 7. Engineer Shoring—a crew stabilizes your chosen corridor on your timetable.
- 8. Assay Mark—your coin/metal accepted sight unseen below.
- 9. Crypt Asylum—temporary sanctuary under crown law.
- 10. Vault Inventory License—remove a named cache under witness.
 - J Under-Guard Commission—command a vault detachment for a day.
 - Q Private Descent with the Vault-Queen or High King’s chancellor.
 - K High King’s Sealed Writ—doors open, mouths close across crownlands.
 - A The Under-Seal Clause—temporary exception to any lock, levy, or rite below.

Quick use notes

- Draw until you have all four suits: **Spade** = place, **Heart** = actor, **Club** = pressure, **Diamond** = leverage. Highest rank sets the main Clock (2–5→4, 6–10→6, J/Q/K→8, A→10).
- Treat **Diamonds** as codified outcomes (keys/passes/rights) that change position rather than call for a roll.
- If any **A** appears, echo stone & breath motifs—keys click, bells answer, and the mountain listens (and remembers).

Additional Features

- **Count the Air:** When a scene establishes scarce air, a character who actively paces their breathing (counted steps, measured rests) may shift *Position* one step safer on their next physical action in a confined space.
- **Bell-Code Courtesy:** If the party adopts local bell etiquette (asking a warden which chime applies and heeding it), gain +1 assist die on negotiations or passage requests within a vault or under-market.
- **Measure is Mercy:** Presenting a certified measure (rod, weight, sealed tally) calms a dispute: cancel the first SB generated by commerce or jurisdictional friction in the scene.

4.18 Aelinnel (Gnomes) — “Stone, Bough, and Bright Things”

Aelinnel clings to the Dolmis coast beneath the shadow of the Valewood, its halls threaded through granite and hawthorn, its roads counted by antler-posts and moonlit math. Here, promises have weight and numbers have manners. *Even* steps are safe, *odd* words are careful, and truths are traded like copper nails—bright, useful, slightly dangerous in the wrong pocket. The gnomish courts hold two ledgers for every bargain: one for what was said, one for what was meant. Both are binding.

Craft and courtesy govern traffic between fae courts and mortal keeps. Gnomish stone-singers tune bridges with a hum; forester-wardens hammer copper where iron would offend. In markets under living roofs, a sentence can be cut to fit a purse, and a memory can be wrapped for travel. Paths sometimes shorten themselves for those who keep good count, and lengthen for those who sneer at patterns.

Counting & Courtesy. In Aelinnel, number is etiquette. Sevens invite; nines trespass; twelves conclude. Tally your steps aloud on a strange stair, never swallow the last digit of a deal, and pay the road with a pebble of the right weight. Those who move to a different beat are not corrected—they are offered a parallel lane, a green-flagged causeway that meets the rest at a clean angle.

Courtesies of the Green Gate

- **Never bring iron** past a hawthorn arch unless it is gilded or named. Copper is polite, silver is opinionated.
- **Always return what points the way.** Way-cords, antler-posts, chalk. Borrow the path; do not keep it.
- **Speak debts in the daylight.** Promises made under lantern-boughs are heard by leaves as well as by law.

4.19 Spades — Places (stone spires, sea-rock, deep woods)

2. Tide-rift steps cut into black rock; limpets and old votive nails keep count for those who forget.
 3. Moonwell basin in a granite bowl; coins turn green in a week, names in a season.
 4. Dolmen stair up a ridge; each capstone rings a different interval if you tap it true.
 5. Charcoal coppice under witch-hazel; a neat ash-heap hides a door that opens on even knocks only.
 6. Basalt organ cliffs: sea-caves breathe like slow bellows; the wind prefers prime numbers.
 7. Stag Road—game-trail marked by antler-posts; hooves know it best, maps accept it grudgingly.
 8. Quartz spring where the sand shines like ground stars; drinkers tell the same story with better structure.
 9. Elf-causeway of pale flags through a marsh; visible at dawn and dusk and whenever someone is counting aloud.
 10. Root gallery under an oak hill; lanterns hang from living bark—two lit, one listening.
- J Barrow gallery with stone chimes; a cold draft from below plays scales no throat can sing.
- Q Thorn Court ring—hawthorns trained into arches; petals fall like knife-points and settle into proofs.
- K Hall of Aelinnel: a timber keep threaded between standing stones; floors level themselves for guests.

- A The Green Gate in a sea-arch; at certain tides it opens to a forest not on any map, and expects exact change.

4.20 Hearts — People & Factions (keepers, courts, craftsmen, hunters)

2. Goat-herd of the stone edges—measures danger in hoof-widths; never wrong twice.
3. Charcoal-burner clan who read draught and omen by smoke; their kilns hum in thirds.
4. Hedge-witch with a pocket of thorns and prices stated in *unlesses*.
5. Stone-singer (quarryman) whose hum finds a seam and a secret; walls relax when they pass.
6. Forester-warden with copper nails and a polite dislike of iron; paths obey their hammer.
7. Reed-net fisher who knows when the selkies listen; mends nets to lullabies in 5s and 8s.
8. Oath-carver who sets promises in quartz so they can be seen; breaks none, bends many.
9. Way-keeper of the Stag Road; never lost, often followed, sometimes found ahead.
10. Green-market broker trading truths for trinkets and back again; receipts in leaf-vein script.
 - J Green Knight—antler helm, mirror-bright blade, courtesy old as frost; keeps a tally of saved insults.
 - Q Lady of Thorns, sovereign of a hawthorn court; smiles like a snare and forgives in exact measures.
 - K Stone Prince of Aelinnel, mortal crown with fae debts properly indexed and current.
 - A Huntsman of the Moonlit Ride; his horn turns shortcuts into roads, and debts into destinations.

4.21 Clubs — Complications/Threats (glamour, geasa, weather, neighbors)

2. Glamour fog; time drifts, footfalls don't match, conversations arrive neatly folded.
3. Iron offense—someone brought the wrong nails to the right grove; paths take it personally.
4. Root-slide pulls a trail two ridges away while you blink; your footprints stay where they were.
5. Wrong tide at the sea-arch; boats rise where arithmetic says no and physics excuses itself.
6. Spoken geas catches on an unlucky word; the task names itself and refuses synonyms.
7. Green Market price: payment demanded in names and memories; change returned in riddles.
8. Stone-wight stirs in a barrow; echoes hate company and file complaints as drafts.
9. Lost day—the sun miscounts; your dawn arrives at supper and demands bread.
10. Thorn blight crawls across orchards; pruners bleed stories that grow where they drip.
 - J Stag horn sounds; everyone owes the chase—especially you, especially now.
 - Q Thorn Court tithe levied on the Hall; arrests wear flowers and quote etiquette.
 - K Muster of the Bough—forest banners rise; travel becomes trespass by default.
 - A Green Gate yawns at the wrong hour; roads rewire across your path with excellent logic.

4.22 Diamonds — Rewards/Leverage (charms, passes, host-rights, exceptions)

2. Hazel token—step through a hedge uncut, once; the scratch you did not get will *remember* you kindly.
 3. Salt license—carry and use ward-salt where it's discouraged; doors frown and open anyway.
 4. Dolmen carving-right—inscribe a name or claim on a speaking stone; arguments quiet while you carve.
 5. Guest-bough from the Thorn Court—one night's safe table among thorns; knives behave.
 6. Quarry allotment of clear quartz; subtle doors open to its bearer if asked in the right tense.
 7. Green Market voucher—buy a truth at face value (today only); tomorrow costs interest.
 8. Oath-bead; a spoken promise warms the bead when kept, chills when not, glows if misunderstood.
 9. Tide-path key—lawful crossing of a named sea-cave at neap; the cave will wait.
 10. Forest truce—hunt, cut, or travel through a warded copse without offense; the birds file no reports.
- J Green Knight escort from ridge to gate; watchers bow, paths part, insults lodge elsewhere.
- Q Private audience with the Lady of Thorns; a whisper exits as policy with petals attached.
- K Stone Prince's seal—levies defer, foresters guide, scribes stop arguing and fetch tea.
- A Wild Hunt clemency—ride under the horn for one night; no hound will take you, no debt will sleep.

Quick use notes

- Draw until all four suits appear: **Spade** = place, **Heart** = actor, **Club** = pressure, **Diamond** = leverage. Highest rank sets the main Clock (2–5→4, 6–10→6, J/Q/K→8, A→10).
- Treat **Diamonds** as codified outcomes (charms/passes/host-rights) that *change position* rather than call for a roll.
- If any **A** appears, echo moonlight-on-stone and tidy-logic motifs—antlers in shadow, petals that cut, a tide that breathes, and a shortcut that insists on proper counting.

Additional Features

- **Counting Etiquette:** Once per scene, any character who carefully counts (steps, breaths, beads, stitches) may shift *Position* one step safer for the next action that exploits pattern or timing.
- **Copper over Iron:** When the party visibly favors copper/brass tools over iron in fae-facing scenes, gain +1 assist die from locals (or avoid a -1 penalty) for acts of courtesy, passage, or petition.
- **Spoken Maths:** Reciting a simple sequence (2-3-5-8...) in tense moments steadies the scene: cancel the first SB generated by a navigation or negotiation misstep this encounter.

4.23 Black Banners — “Condotta & Crowns” Generator

Ecktorian treasuries bankroll a perpetual border-war they claim to be *containing*. In truth, the gold keeps the fire burning. The Black Banners are mercenary leagues—ex-Utaran legionaries, second-sons, debt-dodgers, and exiles—who sell steel to the highest bidder, today’s ally becoming tomorrow’s quarry. Between them move the Ykrul steppe-clans (swift, pragmatic, oath-canny) and the Vilikari hill tribes (crafty, patient, and proud). Ecktorian ministers call it “pressure management.” The companies call it a season.

Spades — Places (camps, battlefields, fortresses, war-roads)

2. Burned village turned field-hospital; flies, tinctures, and fever-prayers.
 3. Frozen ford; last month’s dead held under glass, standards trapped in the ice.
 4. Latrine row at dusk; mud, shame, whispered mutiny, and a sergeant who hears too well.
 5. Crater pasture from an alchemical barrage; in spring, glass flowers sprout like guilt.
 6. Supply road with twelve broken wagons; oxen nose the wreckage for salt.
 7. Half-raised siege tower in an abandoned camp; every rung creaks with grudges.
 8. Salt-cured cache behind the surgeon’s tent; the wrong kind of maggots move.
 9. Command tent where maps show borders that diplomacy has already erased.
 10. Watch-tower stacked from skulls and slate; the crows know the countersign.
- J Ancient march-keep held by a skeleton garrison of veterans; they remember when the banners were gold.
- Q The Bone Fields—where Ykrul elders parley among cairns and reckon oaths with the dead.
- K Marcher’s Fortress—three walls, two sieges’ scars, one gate that opens inward only.
- A The Singing Wastes—fallen weapons hum with the voices of their last wielders on a wind that tastes of iron.

Hearts — People & Factions (captains, cadets, clans, tribes)

2. Young cadet with a father’s sword and a mother’s debt.
 3. Veteran sergeant who counts scars like coins—and spends them on whiskey and mercy.
 4. Ecktorian banner-captain with griffon standard and a ledger of noble grudges.
 5. Condotta broker who changes colors when the wind turns—but always lands on his feet.
 6. Ykrul clan emissary who speaks in riddled proverbs and pays in copper and promises.
 7. Vilikari war-chief’s second son; honor burns brighter than his father’s patience.
 8. Surgeon who treats friend and foe alike; her ledger balances only in blood.
 9. Quartermaster who knows where every coin went and every man will fall.
 10. Tribune’s aide-de-camp with sealed orders that contradict the general’s intent.
- J The Black Colonel—legendary commander not seen in the line for months, yet his banner still rides.
- Q Ykrul Clan-Mother who weaves war-braids from the hair of oath-breakers.
- K Vilikari High Chief who trades mercenaries like game pieces and never tips the board.
- A The Bannerless One—commands loyalty without rank or flag; men follow because they *want* to.

Clubs — Complications/Threats (betrayals, weather, politics, war)

2. Payday delayed; supplies die before coin arrives.
 3. False orders: your target is now your ally—on paper.
 4. Blizzard pins two rival companies in the same cloister; vows and knives both come out.
 5. Ykrul offer better terms than Ecktoria; your contract becomes a liability.
 6. Condotta unit flips mid-battle; your “relief” hits your flank.
 7. Camp-fever blooms; the surgeon’s tent turns into a counting-house for the dead.
 8. Vilikari raiders cut your supply road; winter moves the schedule.
 9. Ecktorian honor code collides with mercenary pragmatism; the camp splits by doctrine.
 10. Tribune captured; the aide must choose: the rescue or the war.
- J The Black Colonel’s banner appears on the wrong field; confusion is a weapon.
- Q Clan-Mother calls a blood-feast; all contracts suspended until dawn’s judgment.
- K High Chief plays companies against each other; “winner” takes obligations, not spoils.
- A The Singing Wastes awaken; every fallen blade rises to seek its last hand.

Diamonds — Rewards/Leverage (contracts, claims, dispensations)

2. Emergency requisition—strip a fallen company for what you need (and their ghosts for what they’re owed).
 3. Dual contract—serve two masters with goals that cannot both be met.
 4. Honor dispensation—your acts are justified regardless of Ecktorian code (for now).
 5. Condotta rider’s pass—cross any camp perimeter once, unchallenged.
 6. Ykrul safe-conduct token—pass a named clan’s lands unmolested (until the moon changes).
 7. Vilikari war-mark—their scouts guide you through hostile hills, and remember the favor.
 8. Surgeon’s debt-note—medical care when no coin remains; the interest is names.
 9. Tribune’s cipher ring—decode orders that do not exist yet.
 10. Banner-captain’s seal—commandeer resources from junior companies (and their resentment).
- J Field promotion warrant—assume command of a shattered unit, inherit its clocks.
- Q Clan-Mother’s war-braid—her chosen will fight beside you this battle, then judge you after.
- K High Chief’s trading charter—buy or sell *anything* in any camp, no questions asked aloud.
- A The Bannerless Word—loyalty that outruns rank, law, and coin.

Quick Use Notes

- Draw until you have all four suits: Spade = place, Heart = actor, Club = pressure, Diamond = leverage. Highest rank sets the main Clock (2–5 → 4, 6–10 → 6, J/Q/K → 8, A → 10).
- Diamonds are codified outcomes (contracts/claims/dispensations) that shift position rather than call for a roll.
- If any Ace appears, echo war & winter motifs—ice that keeps the dead, weapons that remember, loyalty that needs no banner.

Additional Features

Payday & Supply Clocks Track two pressures common to the Black Banners: **Payday** (4-segment) and **Supply** (4-segment). When Payday fills, morale falters and the Keeper may peel away a squad or impose a desertion SB. When Supply fills, all risky maneuvers begin one step worse Position until the players secure fresh provisions or bargain a Diamond.

Allegiances in Flux At the start of a scene, roll 1d6 to see if loyalties shift:

1. Condotta broker flips colors mid-parley.
2. Ykrul emissary offers better terms; accept and mark Obligation, or refuse and tick Payday.
3. Vilikari scouts reveal a shortcut; gain +1 Effect but risk SB from hostile terrain.
4. Ecktorian clerk “corrects” your orders; obey for +1 Position, defy and gain a Diamond but earn a Black Mark.
5. Rival captain spreads falsified orders; unless revealed, counters are harder this scene.
6. The Bannerless One’s messengers arrive; accept their word to clear 1 Payday, but the Keeper gains 1 SB.

Honor vs. Pragmatism Place a two-step dial between *Honor* and *Pragmatism*.

- **Honor:** +1 Position in parley or oathbound actions; logistics costs rise faster.
- **Pragmatism:** +1 Effect in ambushes or sabotage; parley begins one step worse Position.

Center the dial by a symbolic act—repaying arrears, returning prisoners, or honoring a broken writ.

4.24 Dungeon Generator

Spades — Places (Chambers, Features, Architecture)

2. **Cracked Gallery** — Hairline faults veined with damp; grit ticks from the ceiling like a slow clock.
 3. **Sunken Vestibule** — Waist-deep water glazed with oil rainbows; cold leeches the knees, something brushes past.
 4. **Vaulted Refectory** — Tables laid for a meal gone to dust; goblets taste faintly of iron when breathed upon.
 5. **Spiral Stairwell** — Steps cupped by centuries; one cough ricochets down into a throat not your own.
 6. **Collapsed Observatory** — Stars stare through ribs of broken dome; wind brings ash that smears like soot.
 7. **Armory Alcove** — Weapon shadows longer than the racks; a glass-front case fogs from the inside.
 8. **Chained Sanctuary** — Prayer-niches and iron hooks; stone bruised where something strained to leave.
 9. **Mirror Hall** — Reflections lag by a heartbeat; one pane shows you older, another shows you missing.
 10. **Garden of Stone** — Statues mid-breath; a chisel-mark still weeps dust as if freshly struck.
- J **Throne of Echoes** — A single block worn satin-smooth; sit and your name returns in a stranger's verdict.
- Q **Vault of Whispers** — Books exhale when opened; vowels crawl up the spine and into the ear.
- K **Chamber of Seasons** — Air flips from pollen-sweet to knife-cold; breath ghosts, sweat beads, leaves skitter.
- A **The Heart Chamber** — Mortar smells like blood, light like fever; floor hums to your pulse then sets its own.

Hearts — Actors (Inhabitants, Factions, Entities)

2. **Forgotten Custodian** — Keys like teeth on a ring; polishes thresholds no one crosses.
 3. **Scholar-Prisoner** — Ink-stained nails, hollow cheeks; knows which lies the walls prefer.
 4. **Symbiotic Colony** — Many mouths, one hunger; bargains in warmth, hoards salt.
 5. **Cursed Noble** — Velvet rotted to lace; voice drags like chain, eyes beg for ending.
 6. **Mercenary Remnant** — Dried mud, wet fear; map carved into forearm with a dinner knife.
 7. **Bound Guardian** — Filigree of wards across stone skin; obeys the letter, hears the spirit.
 8. **Cult Initiate** — Pupil-widened zeal; speaks passwords like prayers, prayers like debts.
 9. **Refugee Family** — Boot-scrapes under cots; clutch charms that grow warm when danger nears.
 10. **Merchant of Curiosities** — Breath like cloves and rust; sells certainty bottled and slightly used.
- J **Ascended Vermin** — Crown of wire, court of nests; taxes crumbs, enforces with a thousand

eyes.

Q **Fallen Hero's Shade** — Armor of frost, sword of grievance; wants one last right choice.

K **Dungeon's Creator** — Architect's hands cracked with mortar; still moving rooms the way others move chess.

A **The Collective Consciousness** — Voices braided into one intention; your thoughts return carrying fingerprints.

Clubs — Pressures (Hazards, Threats, Complications)

2. **Shifting Walls** — Mortar pops like knuckles; corridors narrow behind you with polite insistence.

3. **Hungering Dark** — Wicks gutter blue; shadows lip the flame and swallow the heat first.

4. **Memory Fog** — Cool on the gums, sweet on the tongue; you “recall” a door that never was.

5. **Gravity Wells** — Knees turn to iron; dropped coins smack floor like thrown knives.

6. **Temporal Echoes** — Footfalls not yours keep pace; a conversation repeats with one word wrong.

7. **Corrosive Atmosphere** — Leather slimes, metal freckles; breathe shallow or taste copper.

8. **Phantom Locks** — Doors exist when watched sidelong; they prefer particular hands and hours.

9. **Borrowed Time** — Hair whitens at the tips; hunger leaps ahead of the clock.

10. **Infectious Transformation** — Fingertips grain to stone, pupils catch light like a cat's; urges shift.

J **Reality Anchor Points** — Candles burn sideways, water beads uphill; spells itch in the teeth.

Q **The Dungeon's Will** — Maps argue with themselves; paths rephrase your intentions.

K **Cascading Failure** — A cracked lintel sighs and the far cistern answers; systems talk in groans.

A **The Price of Passage** — Each shortcut salts your tongue with loss; the house keeps its ledger.

Diamonds — Leverages (Rewards, Tools, Advantages)

2. **Wayfinder Compass** — Needle twitches toward safety like a frightened animal; steadies if you hum.

3. **Key of Echoes** — Warms in the palm when a door remembers being opened.

4. **Lantern of Clarity** — Light outlines hollows in the world; truths show up as clean edges.

5. **Cloak of Passage** — Hem sips through stone or mist; leaves damp prints on the far side.

6. **Tome of Convenient Knowledge** — Pages grow new margins; ink creeps to answer the question you're afraid to ask.

7. **Ration of Sustenance** — Bread that tastes like last winter; settles the stomach, quiets the shakes.

8. **Focus Crystal** — Thrum matches your breath; thoughts align the way teeth fit.

9. **Token of Safe Return** — Thread around a wrist; tugs once when it's time to flee.

10. **Map that Grows** — Charcoal blooms corridors as you walk; tiny figures drift where things currently are.
- J **Shield of Temporary Immunity** — Hazards strike sparks and spend themselves like rain on slate.
- Q **Crown of Momentary Authority** — Creatures blink, recognize a crest they cannot name, and obey.
- K **Forge of Quick Repair** — Heat like a heartbeat; fractured gear exhales and remembers its shape.
- A **The Dungeon's Blessing** — A knack that lingers in the bones; doors like you now, as do certain hungers.

Quick use notes

- Seed with four cards: **Spade**=place, **Heart**=actor, **Club**=pressure, **Diamond**=leverage. Highest rank sets the main Clock (2–5→4, 6–10→6, J/Q/K→8, A→10).
- Diamonds are *position changers*: play for keys, truths, routes, and brief immunities—no test.
- If any **A** appears, give the site a pulse: the place notices you and answers later (a door relocated, a voice repeats your plan, the light returns redder).

Additional Features

- **Living Infrastructure**: Fluids, heat, dust, and sound move like blood—follow the drafts, the drips, the echoes to find organs: cisterns, chimneys, nerve-halls.
- **Scent Ledger**: Track smells (ozone, wet lime, tallow, old wine); they foretell hazards and factions before you see them.
- **Echo Etiquette**: Some rooms reward whispers and punish shouts; others demand a spoken price to cross. Listen first.

4.25 Ecktoria — “Marble & Fire” Generator

Once the heart of the Utaran Empire, Ecktoria has worn its laurels into chains. Three centuries of sack, fire, and slow decline have not stripped its marble forums nor its gold-sealed coin-houses—but each day, more of its wealth slips into the hands of mercenaries and factions. The Black Banners march on its purse, avenging old Ykrul wounds by proxy. Processions still crown its stairways, yet ash lines every step. The city burns not only with memory, but with ambition still unquenched.

Spades — Places (forums, arenas, roads, coin-houses)

2. Milk-stone steps where dawn petitions are pinned.
 3. Tally-ford ferryhouse; rope-drums thrum all day.
 4. Arena hypogeum—practice sand and whispers.
 5. Everflame basilica side-cloister; candle markets.
 6. “Shatterline” bazaar between quake-toppled columns.
 7. Coin-house counting floor under glass.
 8. Surveyors’ Mile-Zero obelisk; all roads measured here.
 9. Processional Way switchback—the Triumph stairs.
 10. Aqueduct arcades with a narrow guardwalk.
- J Ducal loggia above a packed square.
- Q Censor’s Hall with red-lacquered tablets.
- K The Grand Forum—statues tarped, echoes loud.
- A The Imperial Arena (Marble Bowl), gates chained—for now.

Hearts — People & Factions (glory, law, pageant)

2. Torchbearer child with ash-smudged hands.
 3. Ferrymaster who knows which banners pay late.
 4. Coin-house factor sealing credit with three ribbons.
 5. Lanista who owns fighters—and their secrets.
 6. Decumanus-master surveyor who “moves” stones.
 7. Procession marshal with permits and a whistle.
 8. Grain-prefect allotting loaves; knives in the margins.
 9. Censor’s clerk who “misfiles” careers.
 10. Veteran standard-bearer selling honor as a retainer.
- J Gladiatrix darling of the crowds; owes no one but the sand.
- Q Duchess-Regent behind a silk screen; speaks through cousins.
- K High Priest of the Everflame; smiles like law.
- A Grand Magistrate—guardian of forms, breaker of them when needed.

Clubs — Complications/Threats (edicts, crowds, fault-lines)

2. Procession blocks the only bridge till sundown.
3. Sudden edict: your sigil is now proscribed.
4. Grain barges late—bread riots hiss at the edges.

5. Arena riot spills into the streets; shutters slam.
6. Rival dukes levy the same ward; your recruits vanish.
7. Re-plat redraws a border; your deed becomes “disputed.”
8. Coin-house calls in notes; purse frozen at the worst moment.
9. Inquisitorial visit—relic authenticity questioned, penalties swift.
10. Aftershock rattles scaffolds; masonry and timetables fall.
 - J Counterfeit laurel—your win void unless you find the forger.
 - Q Church purge of “spectacles” cancels your main venue.
 - K Triumphal route rerouted to favor a rival; the crowd goes with it.
 - A Secret Red List—your patron’s name appears overnight.

Diamonds — Rewards/Leverage (papers, favor, precedence)

2. Bread chit for a ward—street patience for a week.
3. Procession permit—move sacred flame through a crowded quarter.
4. Arena purse—settles debts and hires mouths.
5. Survey writ—reset one boundary stone.
6. Ducal safe-conduct ribbon—four guards and a trumpet.
7. Coin-house line of credit—silent and immediate.
8. Magistrate’s postponement—buy a tenday against any suit.
9. Laurel-deed—crowd favor follows you into court.
10. Grain allotment ledger—name who eats this month.
 - J Minor title patent—style opens doors that bolts resist.
 - Q Basilica audience—one private hour with the High Priest.
 - K Censor’s indulgence—one banned thing becomes permitted (for you).
 - A Golden Edict—exception carved in marble; precedent travels.

Quick use notes

- Draw until you have all four suits: Spade = place, Heart = actor, Club = pressure, Diamond = leverage. Highest rank sets the main Clock (2–5 → 4, 6–10 → 6, J/Q/K → 8, A → 10).
- Diamonds are codified outcomes (papers/favor/precedence) that change position rather than call for a roll.
- If any A appears, echo marble & fire motifs—statues that watch, flames that judge, and law that remembers every name.

Additional Features

- **Imperial Ruins:** Every district bears half-collapsed arcades, serving as markets, courts, or shelters for mercenary companies.
- **Competing Factions:** Dukes, guilds, and priests stage processions that collide at bridges and squares, each claiming legitimacy.
- **Monuments as Weapons:** Statues, obelisks, and colonnades are not only symbols—they’re barricades, rallying points, and high ground when the city riots.

- **Everflame Orthodoxy:** The basilicas preach unity, but each sermon is a coded signal for a political camp. The High Priest plays balance while cultivating his own following.
- **Black Banner Contracts:** Foreign mercenaries fill the gaps left by a shrinking citizen levy, their loyalty secured only by steady coin.

Decline & Patronage

Ecktoria’s decline is not collapse, but transformation. Wealth bleeds into patronage webs: a senator’s indulgence, a censor’s indulgence, a noble’s purse. The city’s great houses keep mercenary captains on retainer, while priests sell ritual processions as public theater and private favor.

For the GM: Patronage should function as both opportunity and trap. Any gift (a purse, permit, or charter) binds the receiver to service, but patrons can die, fall from favor, or suddenly proscribe what they once allowed. To emphasize this:

- Tie rewards to visible symbols (seals, ribbons, laurel crowns) that can be stolen, forged, or voided.
- Let rival patrons issue conflicting “safe-conducts,” forcing players to choose whose favor matters more.
- Use processions, funerals, or trials as arenas for social contests, where patronage debts surface and shift allegiances.

Patronage in Ecktoria is not mere background—it is the engine of politics, coin, and survival.

4.26 Linn — “Skerries & Storm-Oaths” Generator

North of the Aberderrin Sea, where fjords split the coast and skerries break the tide, dwell the Linn. They are traders and raiders in equal breath, their longships crowding the whale-road and river mouths. They descend the Ylolka like an axe-blade and cut into southern shores, or slip through the Thin Strip where the Valewood dares not touch salt. Yet even these storm-oath people dread the Mistlands and the Valewood, whose fog and trees have no need of ships or harbors to claim their due.

Spades — Places (fjords, skerries, halls, mistland routes)

2. Kelp-skerry gut: a narrow channel where oars scrape weed and rock.
3. Tide-shed of longship houses; tar smoke and gulls for sentries.
4. Wave-gate reef just off a raiding beach; only locals know the cut.
5. Runestone causey across a tidal flat; names half lost to barnacle.
6. Herring-stairs drying racks above a cliff path; knives flicker like fish.
7. Winter hall: turf walls, smoke-eye roof, benches crowded with shields.
8. Mistlands reed-maze where channels braid and vanish.
9. Boomed harbor with iron rings set in whale-bone posts.
10. Aberderrin current rips past a headland; wreck timbers salt the kelp.
 J Dolmis waystation on a low isle; fresh water, old debts.
 Q Thing-holm—a flat islet ringed with stones for speaking and swearing.
 K High Jarl’s seat above a fjord, beacon tower glaring out to sea.
 A Whale-road horizon—open water where storms are born and names are made.

Hearts — People & Factions (jarls, oar-crews, keepers, law)

2. Net-wife who reads the sea like a ledger and the sky like a mood.
3. Steersman whose tiller-hand never shakes, even when the keel does.
4. Shipwright with pitch on his palms and a schedule in his teeth.
5. Oar-master who sets the beat that decides if home is today or never.
6. Mist-pilot (reed-runner) who ghosts boats through the marsh lanes.
7. Skald whose verses buy silence, start fights, and end them.
8. Shield-band of cousins: fine with coin, better with cattle.
9. Foster-son from a southern coast; speaks both laws and all the subtext.
10. Thing-speaker who can make a war into a lawsuit and a lawsuit into lunch.
 J Sea-queen’s hand—her envoy with a seal-bag and a sword-belt.
 Q Sea-Queen of the Linn, crown of hammered silver, eyes for weather and law.
 K High Jarl over the Strands, first among raids, last to boast.
 A Volva of the Mist, oath-reader whose nod can still the surf.

Clubs — Complications/Threats (weather, reefs, feud, pursuit)

2. Black squall drops out of a clear band; oars or prayers—pick one.
 3. Fogfall—sound travels, sight does not; friend and reef trade places.
 4. Chain up!—a boom lifts across a target harbor; schedules drown.
 5. Levy clash—Viterra’s river-wardens arrive with polite spears.
 6. Keel-rot rumor sends crews to the beach mid-voyage.
 7. Feud token laid on a board; your raid is now a wedding... or a funeral.
 8. Oath recalled—a verse you swore last winter matures today.
 9. Mistlands miscount: channels “move,” cargo disappears without witnesses.
 10. Aberderrin race—contrary currents split the flotilla; half are late, half are lost.
- J Southron fire-pots on a quay; night-run turns to day-light.
- Q Thing injunction—no sailing until a grievance is heard (hours? days?).
- K General muster: horns on every headland; all bays become spears.
- A Ground-sea (long, blind swell) rolls under you; steering lies.

Diamonds — Rewards/Leverage (rights, tokens, escorts, priority)

2. Harbor-green mark—dock without levy in a named strand (once).
 3. Oar-share—claim two benches on a fast longship for a season.
 4. Pilot’s token—a mist-runner guides you through the reed-maze.
 5. Wharf-right at a Dolmis waystation; your boats load first.
 6. Salvage claim on a reef stretch; flotsam is now “inventory.”
 7. Thing ruling—a verdict in your favor that travels with you.
 8. Raid-truce ribbon—immunity in a named bay for one market day.
 9. Foster-bond—be recognized as guest-kin by a jarl’s house.
 10. Herring allotment—priority barrels when the run hits.
- J Escort writ—eight shields and a wolf-banner from cape to cape.
- Q Private audience with the Sea-Queen; a whisper exits as policy.
- K High Jarl’s pennon—levies open booms and mouths when it flies.
- A Storm-oath clause—one temporary exception to any local sea-law, spoken and sealed.

Quick Use Notes

- Draw until you have all four suits: Spade = place, Heart = actor, Club = pressure, Diamond = leverage. Highest rank sets the main clock (2–5 → 4, 6–10 → 6, J/Q/K → 8, A → 10).
- Diamonds are codified outcomes (rights/tokens/escorts) that shift position rather than call for a roll.
- If any A appears, echo sea-omens—horns on wind, white horses on the swell, a verse unfinished until landfall.

Additional Features

- **Storm-Oaths:** Every raid or voyage is sealed by an oath to sea or storm. To break one is to invite the sea itself to judge you.
- **Skald's Burden:** A skald's verses are law, history, and curse. A poorly chosen rhyme can damn a crew as surely as a reef.
- **Mist-Dread:** The bravest Linns will not enter the Direwood's breath or the Valewood's shade. Even their Sea-Queen is said to pale at mention of the Ninth Bell of the Mistlands.

4.27 Mistlands — “Bells, Salt, and Breath” Generator

The Mistlands lie north of the Aelerian mountains, where the Aberderrin Sea laps against reed-fens and drowned shores. It is a Protectorate of the Aeler, but their iron passes only hold the southern roads—the land itself belongs to fog and bells. Every levee hums with ward-notes, every ferry takes salt as tithe, and every shadow is measured against the Direwood’s endless breath. The people here live by the weight of salt, the echo of bells, and the hope that their names will not be spoken by the mists.

Spades — Places (fens, levees, bell-lines, shoreworks)

2. Reed-fen causey with chalked ward-runes on every milestone.
 3. Bell-Line levee—iron posts, eight bells per span; one bracket is empty.
 4. Ghost-ferry slip where the rope crosses black water; fares paid in salt.
 5. Pall Watch-tower on piles above the mire; mirrors face west to the Direwood.
 6. Mist-chapel on stilted planks; votive lanterns gutter under damp rafters.
 7. Dead-cut canal (old imperial ditch) now patrolled by eel boats and law.
 8. Drowned-copse shore; root-tangles clutch the tide like old hands.
 9. Fogmill ridge—wind vanes vanish into cloud; gears hiss like prayers.
 10. Salt-pan terraces patched with peat; ward-salt dries under nets.
- J Protectorate Fort-Stair of stacked timber and stone, flags swallowed by mist.
 Q Witchlight Bridge over a black runnel; the ninth plank is “counted” but unseen.
 K High-Mist Pass through the Aelerians; cairns ringed in iron nails.
 A Weeping Gate—western palisade facing the Direwood, bells wired to the bones of trees.

Hearts — People & Factions (wardens, ferrymen, Aeler rule, neighbors)

2. Reed-cutter with peat-black hands and a precise opinion on fog.
 3. Salt-monk who blesses pans and keeps the ward-measure honest.
 4. Bell-warden whose ringbook decides which notes keep which ghosts.
 5. Oath-ferryman collecting fares in salt and names; remembers both.
 6. Lantern acolyte of the Light who trims wicks and arguments.
 7. Linn mist-pilot who can ghost a longship through reed-lace—if paid.
 8. Protectorate clerk (Aeler) with oilskin ledgers and a narrow smile.
 9. Shroud-diver who harvests tokens from drowned fields before dawn.
 10. Direwood refugee with a cold breath and colder stories.
- J Fog-knight of the Pall—cavalry that rides levee crowns by bellcode.
 Q Legate of the Mists (Aeler governor), equal parts mercy and decree.
 K Lord Warden of the Fens, local strong hand sworn to the Legate’s seal.
 A Mist-Seer who bargains breath for answers; candles shorten when she speaks.

Clubs — Complications/Threats (undead, weather, law, neighbors)

2. Ground-mist lifts off the fen and eats tracks by the yard.
3. Witchlights try to count you; step wrong and the bridge forgets you.
4. Ward-salt short—pans go green; bells ring, nothing answers.
5. Wrong bell—a cracked note opens a door the Legate can't close.
6. Linn raid slips the reed-maze; hearths douse, horns travel.
7. Direwood moan at dusk; the Weeping Gate ropes go taut by themselves.
8. Valewood wind crosses the Aberderrin—voices sweet, landmarks false.
9. Bell-line failure on the levee; a wraith steps across like it owns the road.
10. Marsh-quake—sod heaves, a dyke slumps; proofs and bodies sink together.
 - J Protectorate interdiction—all ferries sealed “until review.”
 - Q Rite-purge: inspectors call local customs heresy; tempers at a boil.
 - K General alarm—the Pall horns sound; every lantern becomes law.
 - A Tide-mist rolls from the Aberderrin; spirits ride the white and won't be named.

Diamonds — Rewards/Leverage (passes, seals, tokens, priority)

2. Ward-salt allotment—pure measure enough to draw a safe circle (once).
3. Ferry token—cross a named black runnel regardless of curfew.
4. Bell-key—unlock and set one bell on the Line to your note.
5. Lantern writ—lawful travel at night along a levee crown with escort.
6. Exorcist's seal—a stamped clause that downgrades “haunt” to “nuisance.”
7. Fog-beacon codeleaf—today's mirror and horn sequences.
8. Protectorate mark—priority rations and rope from Fort-Stair stores.
9. Wraith-indemnity—legal immunity for actions taken under apparition threat.
10. Bone-field license—salvage rights at a drowned hamlet (with witnesses).
 - J Refuge-right—move a named household through the Gate unchallenged.
 - Q Private audience with the Legate; one whisper exits as policy.
 - K Warden's commission—raise levee guards; local doors open, purses too.
 - A Pall Indulgence—temporary exception to ward law, spoken and sealed by bell.

Quick Use Notes

- Draw until all four suits appear: Spade = place, Heart = actor, Club = pressure, Diamond = leverage. Highest rank sets the main clock (2–5 → 4, 6–10 → 6, J/Q/K → 8, A → 10).
- Diamonds are codified outcomes (passes/seals/tokens) that change position rather than call for a roll.
- If any A appears, echo breath and boundary—bells answering each other across water, salt that won't quite dry, voices that return a heartbeat late.

Additional Features

- **Breath-Toll:** Many claim the mist remembers every breath taken in its shadow. Travelers sometimes hold their breath crossing bridges, fearing the mist will count them wrong.
- **Salt as Promise:** Every handful of salt is more than warding—it is a promise. To spill salt on a ferry plank or levee stone is to swear safety, and to break it invites the Direwood’s claim.
- **The Ninth Bell:** Legends say there was once a ninth bell on the Line. Its note is not written in the ringbooks, and no warden will speak of it. Some nights, though, it rings—and gates open where none should be.

4.28 Silkstrand — “City of Bridges & Dyewater” Generator

Silkstrand is a city strung across canals and arches, a place where every bridge is a ledger line and every current carries rumor. The dyes that stain its waters never wash out, and neither do the bargains struck in shadow. Merchants rise and fall with the Exchange, bravos carve reputations on the planks of Three-Queens Bridge, and curses cling to the very cloth that leaves the looms. The Matron rules from her palazzo stairs with velvet and iron, but the city itself belongs to silk and tide.

Spades — Places (bridges, canals, mills, counting floors)

2. Mulberry garths and wormhouses outside the North Gate—steam, sweet rot.
3. Filature hall (cocoon-boil) where whispers travel faster than steam.
4. Redwater Dyeworks along the stain-canal; brick stained forever.
5. Spindle Tower with creaking windlass-lifts and posted rates.
6. Three-Queens Bridge stacked with market stalls; cells under the arches.
7. Salt Gate customs quay—rope booms, chalk tallies, tired eyes.
8. Silk Exchange floor, chalk circles and clappers for opening bids.
9. Ropewalk sheds, arrow-straight; bruisers hired by the yard.
10. Old Imperial Arsenal, a Free Company’s barracks now.
 - J The Archivolt—arcaded street of notaries, seals, and quiet knives.
 - Q Basilica of Saint Azerin (Weaver-saint); confraternity rooms hum with vows.
 - K Palazzo della Matrona (ruling seat) with a private river stairs.
 - A Flood-Stairs—bronze flood marks, bell rope ready when the Strand runs wild.

Hearts — People & Factions (guilds, factors, crowns, crews)

2. Bobbin-runner child—feet sure on parapets, rumors in pocket.
3. Mulberry steward counting leaves; desperate for pickers.
4. Foreign factor seeking a warehouse and a friend at customs.
5. Dyers’ Guildmistress—hands stained, permits tighter than purse strings.
6. Bridge bailiff who rents stalls and sells gossip by the breath.
7. Archivolt notary; “fixes” missing recitals—for a donation.
8. Watch captain on condotta to three lords; passwords change with the wind.
9. Spinner-matron of the wormhouses; temper like hot copper.
10. Exchange caller whose clap can still a thousand voices.
 - J Night-boat smuggler “Ravel,” owner of a silent oar and louder favors.
 - Q The Matron of Silkstrand—patient, velvet, iron.
 - K The Lame King’s envoy in velvet boots; claims certain alleys “protected.”
 - A The Saint of Broken Warps (if real): sees curses braided in cloth.

Clubs — Complications/Threats (flood, interdict, riot, curse)

2. Flood siren; gates lowering—move your crates or kiss them goodbye.

3. Quarantine flag at Redwater; dyers’ row sealed, your cargo implicated.
 4. Loom strike over “bad cocoons”; streets fill with idle frames.
 5. Counterfeit seals discovered at the Archivolt; all contracts frozen.
 6. Bridge riot—dropped stall blocks both lanes; tempers boil faster than vats.
 7. Condottieri flip colors; watchwords change, escorts vanish.
 8. Blackwood panic—witch-posts hammered on quay doors overnight.
 9. Silk-fungus blight; wormhouses burn and refugees flood the piazze.
 10. Salt-tax doubled at the Salt Gate; boats stack three deep.
- J Duel booked on Three-Queens Bridge; you’re named as seconds.
- Q Exchange corner—rivals hoard raw thread; prices go vertical.
- K Procession of Saint Azerin closes half the wards; ignore at peril.
- A The Curse wakes in the canals: no route reaches the address you seek.

Diamonds — Rewards/Leverage (permits, seats, escorts, charters)

2. Bridge token—one peak-hour cart crossing free.
 3. Dye-permit chit; process a “questionable” color this week.
 4. Warehouse seal from the Matron’s office; rivals legally shut out.
 5. Exchange floor pass (day) to trade without a sponsor.
 6. Watergate priority—skip one flood closure when it matters.
 7. Notarial indulgence—retrofit the missing recital; past deals stand.
 8. Wormhouse allotment—claim a share of next hatch.
 9. Ropewalk line of credit—hire crews before you have coin.
 10. Arsenal armory key—one night’s issue for your retinue.
- J Condotta rider—city watch escorts you through any ward, once.
- Q Private audience in the Palazzo; a whisper becomes policy.
- K Tax-farm share on Three-Queens stalls for a season.
- A The Matron’s Golden Thread—temporary charter to set tolls on a named canal.

Quick Use Notes

- Draw 4 cards to seed: Spade=place, Heart=actor, Club=pressure, Diamond=leverage. Highest rank sets the main clock (2–5→4, 6–10→6, J/Q/K→8, A→10).
- Treat Diamonds as codified outcomes (rights/papers/permits) that shift position rather than require tests.
- If any A appears, echo silk & water motifs—threads that bind, currents that remember, and bargains that stain the canal beds.

Additional Features

- **Duel Etiquette:** Duels fought on the bridges draw crowds as eager for wagers as for blood. Refusing a challenge stains a name worse than losing.

- **Dyewater Omens:** The canals run strange colors at dawn; locals claim red foretells riots, blue brings calm, and black means curses awakened.
- **The Matron's Seal:** Any contract bearing her seal is law in Silkstrand—but the Matron is known to rescind seals without warning, leaving debts and enemies tangled like frayed thread.

4.29 Theona — “Three Greens, No Ninth” Generator

The isles of Theona rise green and jagged from the Dolmis, their basalt cliffs wrapped in mists and moorland song. Nominally a duchy sworn to Viterra, in truth the Three Greens heed no crown but their own moots, no law but their taboos. The greatest of these is the silence of Nine: no bell tolls a ninth, no bridge counts that span, no oath dares its syllable. It is said that those who break the ban invite the Green Host, and that debts of nine can never be paid in coin.

Spades — Places (ringforts, wells, cliffs, causeways)

2. Basalt tide-stairs cut into a cove; everyone steps past the “missing” rung.
3. Saint’s Well under a hawthorn hung with ribbons and secrets.
4. Fog-wick tower burning peat; the bell plays eight notes, never nine.
5. Black Bog causeway—white stones like teeth; will-lights test your stride.
6. Cliff ringfort over kelp-nets; storm-ladders creak like hymns.
7. Barrow field with standing stones; birds hush at noon.
8. Sea-cave harp: tide-ropes sing under the headland; echoes bargain.
9. Uncounted Bridge, a nine-arch causeway locals tally “eight-and-one.”
10. Ogham grove—carved pillars arranged around an absent ninth post.
 J Coracle harbor jammed in a notch; upturned boats roof the sheds.
 Q Green Moot Hill (the Three Greens’ court): benches of turf, salt wind judges.
 K High Hall of Theona on whale-rib beams; storm banners sleep.
 A Lookout of Three Greens—one cliff where all three isles stand in a single gaze.

Hearts — People & Factions (moots, keepers, courts, neighbors)

2. Peat-cutter with a steady barrow and steadier gossip.
3. Well-keeper who ties ribbons and unknots feuds.
4. Kelp-netter who reads rip lines like ledgers.
5. Harp-satirist; a few bars can end a career or a war.
6. Wick-warden who tends fog-lamps and counts in eights.
7. Taboo-witness (geas-keeper) who knows which words ruin deals.
8. Island abbot with a saint’s bell and a tolerant smile.
9. Green Neighbor—a polite emissary from under the hill, wearing borrowed boots.
10. Coracle-captain of an eight-boat flotilla, swift as rumor.
 J Bride-peacemaker who walks between bloodlines with a silver knife.
 Q Matron of Wells, queen-mother in truth if not in name.
 K Three-Isles King, elected by moots, whale-bone throne and weathered eyes.
 A Lady Beneath the Hawthorn, the unseen queen who bargains in dreams.

Clubs — Complications/Threats (fog, feud, taboo, sea)

2. Ground-mist erases tracks; horns travel, edges do not.

3. Bog-lights lure a teamster off the causeway; recovery costs time and pride.
4. Spoken geas: no ninth word in parley—or the deal curdles.
5. Salt-rot—the smokehouse fails; fish spoil, tempers rise.
6. Processions collide: saint-day vs hawthorn taboo; shutters slam.
7. Wave-count: the Eighth swells, the Nameless follows—boats tremble.
8. Ringfort wakes; a bone-judge is “consulted,” and now you’re named.
9. The Ninth Law invoked—something vital cannot be counted, measured, or named.
10. Net-surge in the harbor stairs; kelp wraps ankles and alibis.
 - J Bride-theft at the Moot—peace flips to feud; you’re caught mid-ritual.
 - Q Exile returns with mainland papers; elders arrested “for progress.”
 - K Green Host rides: hooves like drums, cattle scatter, sentries sleep.
 - A Great Fog—routes loop, bells lie, every promise takes the long way.

Diamonds — Rewards/Leverage (blessings, tokens, rights, priority)

2. Well-blessing—named ford crosses you safely, once.
3. Moot token—an eight-knotted cord; skip any local queue.
4. Harbor-green—painted mark that exempts your boat from the next levy.
5. Hawthorn pass—immunity from a single local taboo (for one scene).
6. Bell-right—lawful ring at a fog-wick summons watchers.
7. Coracle share—crew and oars pledged for one crossing.
8. Ogham ruling—a monk’s reading that settles a dispute in your favor.
9. Unnumbered Right—ignore the Ninth prohibition for one action (costs a favor later).
10. Salt-cure license—process scarce fish despite ration edicts.
 - J Bride-peace charter—two feuding houses sheath knives for a season.
 - Q Private moot with the Matron and the King; whispers become policy.
 - K Whale-road escort—eight-oar guards across a Dolmis reach.
 - A The Green Favor—one uncanny exception to custom, spoken beneath the hawthorn.

Quick Use Notes

- Draw until all four suits appear: Spade = place, Heart = actor, Club = pressure, Diamond = leverage. Highest rank sets the main Clock (2–5→4, 6–10→6, J/Q/K→8, A→10).
- Diamonds are codified outcomes (blessings/tokens/rights) that shift position rather than call for a roll.
- The “No Ninth” custom: whenever a 9 appears in your seed, add an omission to the scene (a missing step, an unsaid name, an unseen guest). If the 9 is a Diamond, you may break the taboo once—but someone will come to collect later.
- If any A appears, echo green & count motifs—hawthorn that whispers, bells that miscount, and promises that take the long way home.

Additional Features

- **The Silent Count:** Players and GMs are encouraged to omit a detail (a name, a step, a tally) when the Ninth appears, echoing Theona’s taboo.
- **Green Host’s Omen:** Any dream-sequence or omen may be framed as a ride of the Green Host—hoofbeats across the sky, wind through the moors, or sea-spray that tastes of salt and blood.
- **Bride-Peace Feasts:** Weddings, truces, and funerals all blur in Theona; sharing a feast can end a feud for a season—or doom a guest if the ninth cup is poured.

4.30 Thepyrgos — “City of a Thousand Stairs” Generator

Thepyrgos is both realm and city, a former province whose capital rises in tiers of towers, terraces, and endless stairs above the Dolmis shore. Once an Utar bastion, now a nation unto itself, it is famed for its universities, libraries, and debating synods, where precedent and philosophy weigh as much as pikes or coin. Every stone stair carries the echo of old campaigns and civic quarrels, every bell carries law across the wind. Here, authority climbs as much as it rules: archons elected by the city’s wards, synods decreeing rites and edicts, guilds policing ropes, cranes, and chains. In Thepyrgos, height is hierarchy, sound is sovereignty, and law is etched into every rung.

Spades — Places (towers, stairs, sea-walls, cisterns)

2. Pilgrim’s Stair zig-zagging a sea-cliff to a wicket gate.
3. Tower Quarter (Pyrgoi)—family keeps stitched by ladders and bridges.
4. Chain-Harbor Barbican; capstans ready to raise the boom.
5. Blue Cistern under the forum; cool echo, strict tally.
6. Ropeyard Terrace—cranes walk cargo up the slope by treadwheel.
7. Storm-Wall Arcades; wind shrieks through arched galleries.
8. Beacon Crown—ring of watchtowers signaling along the Dolmis.
9. Library of Keys—archive vaults; shelves locked by rung and rite.
10. Siege Foundry Court with a test ramp and scarred stones.
 - J Monastery of the Ladder perched on a needle of rock.
 - Q Synod Hall—gold-glass mosaics, judgment audible at a whisper.
 - K Archon’s Citadel on the acropolis; mirror tiles glare like noon.
 - A Sky-Bridge joining twin cliff towers over the inner harbor.

Hearts — People & Factions (archons, synod, guilds, watchers)

2. Bell-runner child whose feet know every stair by heart.
3. Master of Ropes (guild head); palms like oak, voice like a whistle.
4. Icon-smith with a portable shrine and a temper about pigment.
5. Wall Strategos who drills levies on the test ramp.
6. Chain-keeper of the harbor boom; hates “surprises” at dusk.
7. Oath-examiner (sworn notary) who weighs words like iron.
8. Archive Sister with a key to the “forbidden rung.”
9. Salt-fish Syndic—warehouse queen of the quays.
10. Nomophylax (law-scholar) whose citations close mouths.
 - J Palikar Captain of tower guards; ladder-quick and letter-shy.
 - Q Matriarch of the Ladder (synod primate) calm as stone.
 - K The Archon of Thepyrgos, elected, entrenched, and counting bells.
 - A The Lighthouse-Patriarch, reclusive seer said to steer beacons in storms.

Clubs — Complications/Threats (edicts, quakes, chains, wind)

2. Tremor—hairline cracks race down a stair; crowds freeze.

3. Iconoclast riot in the Tower Quarter; pigments and teeth fly.
 4. Chain jam at the barbican; capstan pins shear at the worst time.
 5. Black northerly pins cranes; cargo hangs between tiers.
 6. Cistern taint—sour water; inspectors padlock spouts.
 7. Synod summons: a chant or badge is suddenly proscribed.
 8. Rope guild interdict—no lifts until a grievance is heard.
 9. Siege drill panic—practice horns mistaken for the real thing.
 10. Smugglers’ ladder discovered; a whole stair is sealed.
- J Ropeyard fire—sparks leap uphill faster than boots.
- Q Exarch’s claim from inland: “Thepyrgos is under my protection.” Arrests follow.
- K General watch—all towers manned; levies seize carts “for the walls.”
- A Seaquake seiche surges through the harbor; chain, quays, and timetables snap.

Diamonds — Rewards/Leverage (keys, rites, papers, priority)

2. Stair token—pass a barricaded stair without delay (once).
 3. Harbor pass—the boom lowers for your vessel on command.
 4. Cistern draw-right for a named ward during scarcity.
 5. Crane allotment—one guaranteed lift on the Ropeyard Terrace.
 6. Icon license to display or carry a disputed image without penalty.
 7. Archive hour in the Library of Keys—one shelf opened to you.
 8. Bellmark—lawful right to ring a tower bell (summons a watch).
 9. Watchlight code leaf—today’s beacon and mirror signals.
 10. Synod indulgence—one proscribed chant or rite permitted (for you).
- J Pronoia grant—temporary farm/tax of a terrace hamlet.
- Q Private audience before the Matriarch and Synod clerks.
- K Archon’s guarded writ—palikars escort you between towers.
- A Golden Key—authority to open or seal any city gate once.

Quick use notes

- Draw until you have all four suits: Spade = place, Heart = actor, Club = pressure, Diamond = leverage. Highest rank sets the main clock (2–5 → 4, 6–10 → 6, J/Q/K → 8, A → 10).
- Diamonds are codified outcomes (keys/rights/passes) that change position rather than call for a roll.
- If any A appears, echo height & sound motifs—bells that carry, wind that remembers, and stairs that echo with purpose.

Additional Features

Bell-Law Bells are more than signals: they are law made sound. Once per session, invoking a bellmark or tower bell can summon watch, levy, or decree. But false rings stain reputation; the Synod may call inquiry.

Stair-Rights Every stair is owned, owed, or leased. Players carrying the right token may bypass barricades or tolls; without it, disputes escalate quickly. The wrong stair climbed without leave can spark riot or duel.

Synod Edicts The Synod's voice reshapes daily life. Once per session, a Synod decree may grant or strip rights: a chant forbidden, a symbol proscribed, a stair sealed. Such rulings create both leverage and risk in equal measure.

4.31 Ubral — “The Stone Between Spears” Generator

Ubral is a land of upland mists, stone cairns, and clan oaths held tighter than iron. Caught between the Aelerian mountains and the lowland courts of Viterra, its hills are scarred by old raids and crowned by watch-fires that speak faster than any rider. Here, law is written not in charters but in cattle, wergild, and songs; here, a guest’s word can buy more than a sword, but one broken vow can spark a feud lasting generations. Dwarves of Khaz-Vurim guard their mountain steps with tolls and grim patience, while clans hold their moots in hollows where voices echo long after speakers fall silent. Ubral is the stone between spears: a land of pride, passage, and peril.

Spades — Places (tors, cairns, hill-forts, passes)

2. Sheepwalk Ledge—a goat path with room for one honest lie at a time.
3. Warden’s Cairn on a windy tor; signal-fire basket and a dry cache.
4. Wergild Ford—flat stones, deep pools, and a table rock for counting silver.
5. Droppers’ Bridge—stone span rigged to fall; pins already loosened.
6. Scree-Ladder climbing to a notch; red rags mark the safe steps.
7. Moot Hollow—ring of standing stones; voices carry and won’t quite stop.
8. Reiver’s Gate between two boulders; cart-ruts vanish into heather.
9. Khaz-Vurim Steps—dwarf-cut switchbacks with iron mile studs.
10. Grey Tor Hill-fort—earthen rampart, timber crown, smoky cook pits.
 - J Black Broom Bog with stepping-logs; the wrong one drinks you.
 - Q Bride’s Causey—raised road to a valley kirk; ribbons hang like warnings.
 - K Three-Fires Ridge—watchposts see Viterra and Vhasia both.
 - A The Pass of Ashes—when snow closes here, the upland becomes an island.

Hearts — People & Factions (clans, dwarves, reivers, law)

2. Hearth-aunt who holds the guest-cup and the house’s temper.
3. Hill guide with a thorn-staff and ten quiet shortcuts.
4. Feud-broker who knows the weight of a life in cattle and coin.
5. Reiver band—light on tack, heavy on nerve, laughing in the rain.
6. Watch-fire warden whose braziers speak faster than riders.
7. Wergild counter—keeps tallies, ends grudges, starts others.
8. Dwarf road-warden of Khaz-Vurim; toll first, friendship later.
9. Oath-singer whose verses bind hands and open gates.
10. Lowland factor buying iron blooms and selling trouble.
 - J Bride-carrier (peaceweaver) who walks between bloodlines with a knife and a smile.
 - Q Lady of the Tor—clan-chief in cloak and mail; her nod is winter or spring.
 - K Council of Cairns—greybeards and granite wills; they do not hurry.
 - A Stone-Speaker of Vurim—dwarf envoy whose word moves roads and rates.

Clubs — Complications/Threats (mist, feud, toll, weather)

2. Upland mist—you can hear horns but not edges.

3. Feud rekindled—a cousin spits on guest-law; knives wake up.
 4. Bridge dropped—your pursuers fall... and your route with them.
 5. Black-rent demand—“privateering on land”; pay or be “escorted.”
 6. Wergild breach—silver short by a head; tempers long by a spear.
 7. Snow-squall seals the notch; tents turn to coffins if you dally.
 8. Dwarf toll hike at the Steps; papers right, purses wrong.
 9. Cattle scatter—bells ringing downslope; your cover story with them.
 10. Watch-fire false alarm—beacons run ridge to ridge; levies seize the road.
- J Bride-theft turns a wedding into a war-party; you’re between both.
- Q Royal incursion from a neighbor; “lawful” arrests in the uplands.
- K Clan muster—horns call men from steading to spear; all traffic stops.
- A Hill-fall—rain liquefies a slope; trail, proof, and bodies slide together.

Diamonds — Rewards/Leverage (oaths, rights, tokens, priority)

2. Guest-right token—one hearth owes you food, bed, and steel at dawn.
 3. Guide’s braid—lawful passage on named sheepwalks (once).
 4. Ford-tithe remission—cross Wergild Ford free for a season.
 5. Feud-peace charter—two clans sheath blades until next harvest.
 6. Bloom allotment—claim on a week’s iron from a hill bloomery.
 7. Watch-code sheet—today’s beacon order from Three-Fires Ridge.
 8. Vurim pass-ring—dwarf road priority for one train of carts.
 9. Bride-price escrow—you hold the purse; both sides must humor you.
 10. Hill-fort shelter writ—Grey Tor opens its gates during storm or pursuit.
- J Oath-release bracelet—one binding vow ends cleanly, witnessed.
- Q Council audience—the Cairns hear you out alone; precedent sticks.
- K Road-ward commission—collect tolls on a stretch of pass (for now).
- A Stone-Speaker’s clause—temporary exception to dwarf toll or law, spoken and sealed.

Quick use notes

- Draw until you have all four suits: Spade = place, Heart = actor, Club = pressure, Diamond = leverage. Highest rank sets the main Clock (2–5→4, 6–10→6, J/Q/K→8, A→10).
- Diamonds

4.32 Valewood — “Empire Under Leaves” Generator

The Valewood is older than kingdoms, older than the maps that skirt its borders. Beneath its canopy lie the bones of a Lethai empire whose name is forgotten, its towers swallowed by vine and root, its star-roads cracked and phasing between worlds. The air here hums with half-remembered songs of magic, and the ruins bleed their mysteries into root and stream. Fae courts linger in clearings that shift with moonlight, beast-kin patrol moss-choked cairns, and echoes of imperial shades still march patrols on vanished streets. To walk the Valewood is to risk being claimed by it: as guest, prey, heir—or trespasser.

Spades — Places (phasing ruins, star-roads, living stone)

2. Star-road shard—pale flagstones that hum when trod in sequence.
 3. Rooted amphitheatre; moss-seats remember speeches not yet given.
 4. Moon-cistern reflecting a sky that isn’t tonight’s.
 5. Glyphed bridge across a dry stream; glyphs glow when lies pass.
 6. Glassleaf gallery—boughs grown into panes, dust like constellations.
 7. Hollow aqueduct—water runs uphill if the song is right.
 8. Calendar grove—standing-trees aligned to solstices; one trunk is stone.
 9. Unfound arcade—arches appear at dusk, vanish at dawn.
 10. City that Breathes—vine-choked streets shift on the hour.
- J Amber ziggurat caught mid-construction for a thousand years.
 Q Ivory observatory whose brass orrery still tracks two lost moons.
 K Throne-bower (imperial seat) grown of living alder and argent wire.
 A Valeheart Spire, the empire’s axle—stairs that end where they began.

Hearts — People & Factions (Lethai-ar, fae, beast-kin, empire echoes)

2. Pathweaver (Lethai-ar guide) who knots safe routes into cord.
 3. Fox-headed courier with a promise braided into his tail.
 4. Owl-sister whose pupils show yesterday; her hands show yours.
 5. Antler-masked hunter sworn to keep cities sleeping.
 6. Moss-scribe who writes deeds in lichen and reads stone like vellum.
 7. Lark-keeper; her caged bird sings warnings strangers can’t hear.
 8. Green Neighbor (fae courtier) wearing a borrowed smile and boots.
 9. Warden-coterie of beast-kin (badger, stag, lynx) with one law: no digging deep.
 10. Echo-legionary—imperial shade bound to a patrol that never ends.
- J Shardwright (ancient artisan) who can wake a star-road with a chisel.
 Q Hazel Queen of the Lethai-ar, sovereign in leaf and law.
 K Alder King of the Twilit Court, sovereign in shadow and debt.
 A The Huntsman Between, antlers of moonlight; shortcuts owe him.

Clubs — Complications/Threats (glamour, ward-traps, imperial residue)

2. Sweet wind nudges landmarks a hedge’s width—enough to matter.

3. Path reverses—your footprints vote to go elsewhere.
4. Ward-trap flares—ancient security treats you as yesterday’s invader.
5. Oath-magnet—spoken promises stick and start to reshape plans.
6. Geas catches on a careless word; the task names itself.
7. City phase—streets rotate; your exit becomes a balcony.
8. Name-theft—something learns your true name’s edges; tests begin.
9. Ring claim—a circle names you host; feeding guests becomes law.
10. Mirror rain—leaf-drips replay choices you didn’t make.
 - J Redcaps abroad—hats wet, boots quick, courtesies thin.
 - Q Court tithe levied: truth, song, or a memory you’d miss.
 - K Muster of Boughs—green banners rise; travel becomes trespass.
 - A Empire wakes—a district aligns; doors open, guardians open farther.

Diamonds — Rewards/Leverage (charms, keys, truce-boughs, old rights)

2. Way-cord—knot points to the true next turn (once).
3. Dew-mirror—see a thing as it is, not as sung, for one scene.
4. Hazel token—lawful crossing of a warded hedge without snag.
5. Honey-right—eat and speak safely at any bee-stone ring.
6. Name-bead—a kept promise warms; a broken one chills and glows.
7. Wind-veil sprig—mute the sweet wind’s lies for a short walk.
8. City-key shard—wake one gate or stair in a phasing ruin.
9. Green truce-bough—hunt, cut, or camp without offense in a named copse.
10. Oathsap ampoule—seal a pact even echoes respect.
 - J Shardwright’s favor—repair or light a length of star-road.
 - Q Audience at Hazel Hall—one whisper exits as policy.
 - K Alder Writ—levies defer, wardens guide, scribes stop arguing.
 - A Valeheart Clause—temporary exception to any local rule, spoken in leaves.

Quick Use Notes

- Draw until you have all four suits: Spade = place, Heart = actor, Club = pressure, Diamond = leverage. Highest rank sets the main Clock (2–5 → 4, 6–10 → 6, J/Q/K → 8, A → 10).
- Diamonds = codified outcomes (keys/rights/passes) that change position rather than call for a roll.
- Empire Echo: when a J/Q/K is the highest rank in your seed, add one visible relic-logic (floating stairs, singing locks, patrol-shades).
- Aces: any A means the wood actively rearranges paths or wakes structures; echo that change later so the place feels alive.
- If any A appears, echo leaf & light motifs—paths that remember, leaves that whisper, and light that moves like water.

Additional Features

Forest Claims Any oath, bargain, or gift exchanged in the Valewood binds with more weight. Once per session, a spoken promise becomes magically enforceable: breaking it creates 1d4 SB and echoes through later scenes.

Ruins Awaken If you linger at an ancient site, roll or draw to see which imperial mechanism stirs. It may grant guidance (a lighted star-road, a memory shown) or danger (patrol shades, collapsing glyphs).

Court Interference Encounters with fae or beast-kin are never neutral. Once per session, the GM may convert a Diamond into a demand for hospitality, tribute, or alliance—a shift that alters the tone of the entire expedition.

4.33 Vhasia — “The Fractured Sun” Generator

Vhasia is a realm of broken coronations and split loyalties. The once-unified Sun-court shattered like its heraldic sunburst, leaving rival dukes, abbesses, and parlements to claim the light. Everywhere, signs of fracture: chipped sun-discs on milestones, worn tabards bearing half a crown, coins minted in rival cities with different suns. In Vhasia, legitimacy is as fragile as a mirror, and every oath risks breaking along the fault lines of politics, faith, and fortune.

Spades — Places (châteaux, cathedrals, forests, fairs, roads)

2. Wayside shrine where pilgrims tack petitions to a scorched sun-disc; each parchment curls in different winds.
 3. Vine-terraced clos above a millstream; watchmen nap, their halberds traded for bottles.
 4. Bastide market square, neat as a canray board, where merchants pay homage to different “hours” of the Sun.
 5. Royal Forest ride—antler posts mark laws no king remembers, yet poachers still hang.
 6. Pont-du-Tithe: toll-bridge flanked by chapels and crossbows, its chains blessed by rival bishops.
 7. Great Fairground outside a chartered town; counting sheds ring like bells, rumors louder still.
 8. Salt pans and wind-pumps on the estuary; gulls own the law, and smugglers the night.
 9. Siege-scarred château: hoardings patched, cistern low, banners cut into ragged suns.
 10. Cathedral works-yard; cranes creak, stones fly, scaffolds bristle with rival stonemasons’ marks.
- J Parlement Hall hung with faded tapestries, sunbursts spliced and re-stitched by claimants.
- Q Queen’s Causeway across a river fen—a mile-long oath paved in quarried stone, half-sunk each spring.
- K The Sun Palace at Lence: shuttered mirrors, brambled gardens, and courtiers playing at kingship.
- A The King’s High Road, mile-stones chipped of crowns; yet every army still marches it.

Hearts — People & Factions (lords, courts, companies, cloister)

2. Road warden with a dented badge and an honest horn, ignored by both crowns.
 3. Vintner-guild syndic who counts saints’ days as credit terms and vintages as treaties.
 4. Abbess-chatelaine: rules a fortress-convent with iron accounts and sharper scripture.
 5. Routier captain, scarred and mercenary, who prefers ransoms to loyalty.
 6. Constable of a duchy, splendid armor, empty coffers, and pride swollen as a banner.
 7. Parlement clerk who drowns foes in procedure, or fishes them out in exchange for fealty.
 8. Salt-farmer (gabelle lessee) with cudgels, writs, and a river-chart no crown has.
 9. Trouvère whose scandalous lay about the last Sun-king brings knives to tavern doors.
 10. Marshal in exile—the Sun-court’s hammer, now wielded by whoever pays in silver.
- J Heretic “perfect” preaching peace while tucking hidden daggers into parchment margins.
- Q Queen-Mother in a riverside keep; she weaves alliances as if they were dowries.
- K The Two Crowns—rival dukes, each “crowned” in rival cathedrals, neither whole.

A The Last Dauphin, a rumor with a birthmark; armies march for whispers alone.

Clubs — Complications/Threats (chevauchée, law, church, weather)

2. Chevauchée: raiders burn loyalty oaths as well as barns; smoke curls like scripture.
 3. Interdict falls on a county; bells silenced, trade stalls, heretics prosper.
 4. Forest law invoked—venison becomes treason, poachers hang on antler posts.
 5. River in spate; ferries chained, bridges drowned, and pilgrims stranded mid-prayer.
 6. Coin debasement—three mints, three suns, no trust; soldiers demand silver alone.
 7. Parlement divided; siege laid on parchment before walls.
 8. Free-company mutiny unless arrears are paid—in blood or coin.
 9. Relic dispute—two abbeys claim the same saint’s bones; mobs answer with stones.
 10. Harvest blight; bread locked behind pikes, bakers guarded as lords.
- J Tournament “accident” hides assassination; your favor is now evidence.
 Q Royalist restoration—sunburst badges painted overnight on doors and graves.
 K Feudal levy called; lords demand levies in days, not months, with three days’ bread.
 A Winter campaign—roads to mud, hooves to ice, armies to ruin.

Diamonds — Rewards/Leverage (charters, patents, rights)

2. Safe-conduct sealed by a duke or abbey; honored only once, on one road.
 3. Burgess charter for a market ward; walls, watch, and revenue at your call.
 4. Bridge farm: tolls at Pont-du-Tithe for a season, if you can hold it.
 5. Paréage charter: shared rule with a monastery—half justice, half rent, no peace.
 6. Wardship over a minor heir; lands obey you “for now.”
 7. Gabelle lease—salt-tax rights; lucrative, hated, and dangerous.
 8. Letters patent to raise a free-company under your banner.
 9. Remission of feudal dues for a village; they’ll march when called.
 10. Low-justice grant (stocks, fines, gallows) in a troublesome hamlet.
- J Confiscation writ against a royalist estate—if you can seize it first.
 Q Private audience with the Queen-Mother; her whisper becomes policy.
 K Sunburst Warrant of the fallen court—most still bow if it’s shown boldly.
 A General Pardon (temporary): rebels absolved if they bend the knee.

Quick Use Notes

- Draw 4 to seed: Spade = place, Heart = actor, Club = pressure, Diamond = leverage. Highest rank sets the main Clock (2–5 → 4, 6–10 → 6, J/Q/K → 8, A → 10).
- Diamonds = codified outcomes (rights/papers/charters) that alter position without rolling.
- If any Ace appears, echo the fractured sun motif—light that splinters, oaths that crack like glass.

Additional Features

Fractured Seals When you brandish a writ, badge, or charter tied to a claimant of the Sun-court, you may step **Position** up one step for the scene's next interaction at a gate, court, or checkpoint. Each use advances a **Legitimacy (4)** clock linked to that claimant; when it fills, rivals challenge your authority on sight.

Parlement Games If a scene touches petitions, guild disputes, or feudal appeals, the first **Diamond** played becomes a *policy lever*: treat it as two Diamonds toward swaying a decision or rewriting a local custom. Afterward, start or advance a **Whispered Precedent** clock; when it resolves, backlash spreads as other courts cite your case against you.

Gabelle Knife-Edge At bridges, fairs, and salt depots, you can convert **Diamonds** tied to tolls, leases, or safe-conducts into immediate passage or tariff relief for your company (no roll). Each conversion ticks a **Resentment (4)** clock for that locale; when it completes, expect boycotts, ambush rumors, or a sudden audit by rival officials.

4.34 Vilikari — “Laurels & Longhouses” Generator

The Vilikari are the agrarian peoples straddling the frontiers of and , tillers and treaty-makers who balance survival between empire, steppe, and sea. In a three-way war with the and the Black Banners, they live by the cleverness of their diplomacy, the leverage of their markets, and the shifting weight of oaths. Their halls are longhouses raised over ruined forums; their laws carved on both oak and marble; their loyalties braided like the braids of their war-maidens’ hair.

Spades — Places (march towns, villa-forts, old roads)

2. Longhouse Quarter tucked into an old forum; hearth-smoke under broken eaves.
3. Milefort XVII—earth bank, stone gate; faded eagle over fresh knotwork.
4. Stone Ford with plank-palings and a customs table at knee-height.
5. Villa Granary Barracks—tile roof, spear racks where olives once slept.
6. Twin Court: mallus ring beneath an oak, basilica bench across the lane.
7. Blackwood Road—milestones re-carved in runes and Latin both.
8. Frontier Staple Market where Ykrul horses meet Vilikari iron.
9. Burial Field: ship-ridge mounds beside tiled mausolea, both garlanded.
10. Repaired Imperial Bridge—arch of stone, Vilikari trestle stitched on.
- J Hill-Palace Amphitheater—lord’s hall raised in the old arena’s curve.
- Q New Raivon (march capital): grid-streets colliding with wandering lanes.
- K Dux’s Palace—purple awnings, wolf-hides, law tablets on the wall.
- A Foedus Stone at the crossroads: every treaty carved, every hand weighed.

Hearts — People & Factions (federates, mixed courts, diaspora)

2. Hearth-Mother with the guest-cup and the wergild chest key.
3. Shield-Brother of a comitatus; oaths braided into his hair.
4. March Notary (Utar-trained) who writes three scripts without blinking.
5. Horse-Reeve who rations pasture between plows and warbands.
6. Ykrul Envoy riding under safe-conduct; speaks debts in proverbs.
7. Old Legionary turned drill-master for Vilikari levies.
8. Ecktorian Factor of Vilikari blood; coins flow where her ledger points.
9. Kahfagian Pilot with a lantern-law chit and a clan tattoo.
10. Acasian Marcher-Lord—iron-nail crown, Vilikari law in his pocket.
- J War-Maiden whose oath-braid names the dead and the owed.
- Q Queen of the Marches—consort-regent; smiles like precedent.
- K Federate King (Rex-Dux)—sworn to imperial forms, sung by his own.
- A Elder of Elders—thing-council speaker whose nod can unmake a clan.

Clubs — Complications/Threats (two laws, two fronts, old grudges)

2. Annona late—grain stipend misses the comitatus; tempers quicken.
3. Jurisdiction tangle: mallus verdict vs basilica writ—whose seal bites?

4. Winter raid rumor from a Ykrul boyar; levies panic the plowlands.
 5. Bridge levy doubled for road-works; caravans balk, fists rise.
 6. Succession feud—wolf-brother claim vs purple-charter heir.
 7. Foedus recall from the prefecture: resettlement “requested,” homes bristle.
 8. Coin debasement talk; pay demanded in salt, hides, hostages.
 9. Grave offense—burial field disturbed; omens ride with the news.
 10. Port clash: lantern-law vs street-law; confiscations bloom.
- J Warband flips colors mid-pay; hostage protocol snaps shut.
- Q Restoration preacher stirs crowds against the “barb king in purple.”
- K General levy—march closed; markets freeze into spears.
- A Spring melt eats the Wolf Road; proofs, plans, and armies bog.

Diamonds — Rewards/Leverage (charters, rights, escorts, precedence)

2. Foedus Renewal Seal—settlement and stipends confirmed for a season.
 3. Mallus Bench-Right—hold court under an oak and be obeyed.
 4. Stipend Arrears paid in salt and grain; portable, persuasive.
 5. Roman-Name Patent—citizenship-style privilege; doors open, bows deepen.
 6. Staple Stall-Right—customs favor on a frontier market line.
 7. Hostage Treaty—exchange fosters; grudges trade for leverage.
 8. Remount Allotment—fresh horses from royal paddocks, no questions.
 9. Wergild Table recognized by both codes; vengeance priced and paid.
 10. Bridge Farm (imperial) for a season—funds and friends accrue.
- J Purple-Border Warrant—wear the stripe; officials defer on sight.
- Q Private Audience with the Queen of the Marches; whisper becomes policy.
- K Dux Commission—command a mixed unit with pay authority.
- A Great Law Day—proclaim a new concord; one temporary exception to old law stands.

Additional Features

Two-Law Balance Whenever a *jurisdictional conflict* arises (mallus vs basilica, wolf vs eagle), players may step Position up by citing the *Foedus Stone* or an older precedent—but every use adds a tick to the **Two-Law (4)** clock. When it fills, one side demands exclusive authority.

Frontier Diplomacy If a *Heart* card involves a foreign envoy, federate, or mixed-blood courtier, treat the first **Diamond** played in the scene as doubled leverage. Once per session, a deal struck this way reverberates—advance or start a **Border Tension** front.

March Markets At any *Staple Market*, *Ford*, or *Bridge*, Diamonds tied to rights or escorts may be cashed as currency in lieu of coin, one-for-one. Doing so creates a **Ledger Debt** that the GM may call in later through factions or raiders.

Quick Use Notes

- Draw until all four suits appear: Spade = place, Heart = actor, Club = pressure, Diamond = leverage. Highest rank sets the main Clock (2–5→4, 6–10→6, J/Q/K→8, A→10).
- Diamonds are codified outcomes (charters/rights/escorts) that shift position rather than call for a roll.
- If any Ace appears, echo law & bond motifs—oaths that bind, stones that witness, and treaties that remember every hand.

4.35 Viterra — “The Hedge-Law Realm” Generator

Viterra is a kingdom bound less by steel than by precedent, its borders traced in hedgerows, dikes, and river-rights. The newly crowned Queen rules from Valora, not by inherited peace but by hard campaigns won and rivals broken. Yet the old duchies still remember their moots, their reeves, their rights; and every parish stone and ferry post holds the seed of dispute. Here, law is both shield and spear, and the weight of a charter may outweigh the blade of a sword.

Spades — Places (fens, dales, beacons, courts, Dolmis shore)

2. Fen causeway stile with a toll-rod and eel carts queueing; each reeve claims the right to collect.
3. Hedgerow muster-green in the Dales; bows strung under apple trees, charters signed in cider cups.
4. Beacon hill above the Highlands; its fire-grate still warm from last winter’s levy call.
5. Belworth ferry-stairs with ledgers gone damp and three keeps arguing the tolls.
6. Old iron-bloom quarry turned drill yard; hammer echoes carry, but the forge-reeve still holds tally.
7. Parish-stone maze where three maps disagree; the hedge-priest’s vote decides who pays.
8. Fairport tideworks at the Dolmis mouth; customs writs in three languages flutter like pennons.
9. Valora’s Law Quarter—archives, oath-rooms, the Hall of Dawning where precedent is birthed in ink.
10. Tarlington counting fields beside the muster ground; wagons load, but the ledgers mis-sum.
 J River dike crown: ring of turf and timber, brotherhood bells warn of flood—and spies.
 Q The Queen’s Progress encampment—canvas palisade, banners stiff, and whispering old courtiers.
 K Hall of Dawning tilt-yard at first light; Dawn-knights drill clean, their loyalties written in contracts.
 A Queen’s Highway milestone above Dolmis road; three sheriffs post their seals over hers.

Hearts — People & Factions (reeves, guilds, knights, crown)

2. Fen reeve with a tally-rod; speaks for dike guilds and remembers every flood-year’s debts.
3. River-carter syndic who moves grain faster than rumor and knows which writs matter.
4. Parish surveyor with three maps and one opinion; his hedge-walks settle more disputes than courts.
5. Quartermaster of the Dawn—ledgers sharper than her tongue, logistics before lances.
6. Dales levy serjeant—bow calm, cider breath, memory keen for every loophole.
7. Two-altars cleric-pair: Light circuit-preacher vs. Everflame canon lawyer; their debates decide tithe law.
8. Fairport shipwright with Dolmis cousins; his skiff carries more secrets than cargo.
9. Fenwood comptroller conjures wagons with a signature, silence with a seal.
10. Queen’s Justiciar—law on the road, polite as a noose, bearing three kings’ judgments.
 J Border routier-captain who reads ledgers as well as ambushes and serves two crowns.

- Q The Warrior Queen of Viterra—crown on helm, sword at her side, patient sums behind her gaze.
- K The Crown in Council—Fenwood dukes, guild envoys, and abbots, each weighing grain against glory.
- A Tarling-blood rumor: a lost sigil surfaces; old loyalties twitch like hounds on a scent.

Clubs — Complications/Threats (water, law, border-lace, weather)

2. Dike breach in black-rain; the wrong reeve claims credit while wagons drown.
 3. Feast-day clash: Light vs. Everflame processions collide; shutters slam, writs fly.
 4. Quiet tolls sprout on the Queen’s Highway; escorts sniff traps, sheriffs argue rights.
 5. Counting-house audit freezes your cargo; Queen’s seal vs. old writs.
 6. Border-lace snarl—three courts arrest the same hay-cart; whose hay is it?
 7. Isle moot refusal: Theona withholds levy, quays choke on rumor.
 8. Delta spat: Fairport vs. Marcott customs; barges stack three deep, merchants pick sides.
 9. Routier arrears: a free-company flips unless someone pays; your name’s on their ledger.
 10. Salt pinch—import spikes, bakers barricade, Queen’s promise tastes like thin gruel.
- J Dawn recall—your escort pulled to a flood-struck parish; your writ argues with the river.
- Q Aberielist intrigue: royalist seals in the wrong hands; the Queen’s patience thins.
- K Levy call-up: dalesmen mustered, your wagons seized “for the realm.”
- A Dolmis gale train: winds slam the coast, timetables drown, writs tear in spray.

Diamonds — Rewards/Leverage (writs, charters, priority, labor)

2. Ferry priority at Belworth crossing (once); the horn answers, though perhaps the wrong ferry.
 3. Dike-work allotment: brotherhood labor granted if three clerks can be convinced.
 4. Market-day license in Valora’s square; guild nod still needed.
 5. Dawn escort letter (four lances at dawn); loyalty waxes and wanes with pay.
 6. River-carter line charter; guaranteed haul on the grain artery—weather permitting.
 7. Parish-map correction; hedge moves, borders shift, lawsuits bloom.
 8. Fairport customs seal for Dolmis cargo; honored today, disputed tomorrow.
 9. County Thing ruling; sharp local bite, but appeals run swifter than oaths.
 10. Salt allotment from a winter depot; Queen’s writ opens, old hands still count sacks.
- J Wardship of a minor fen-keep; men-at-arms “for now,” but the tutor has plans.
- Q Private audience with the Queen; her questions strike like thrusts.
- K Fenwood ducal warrant to enforce customs; old power bows, new power watches.
- A Coronation writ: amnesty and remission for those who kneel—old debts still owed.

Additional Features

Hedge-Law Momentum When a valid *writ*, *charter*, or *warrant* is presented in its proper parish, step **Position** up one category on social/logistical actions in that locale for the scene. The first time a contradiction arises, start a **Border-Lace (4)** clock; advance it each time competing papers are invoked.

Beacon & Bell Chain If two adjacent *beacons* or *brotherhood bells* are under your influence, you may convert one **Club** draw into a travel delay for *others* while your party proceeds with improved **Effect** for movement/logistics. The signal draws scrutiny; the GM may bank 1 SB tied to local authority.

River-Right Window At a ferry, tidework, or customs stair, you may play any **Diamond** tied to crossings or seals to open a short *window of lawful passage*: one convoy passes uninspected, or one cargo clears at priority. The window closes immediately if a storm, audit, or levy card is revealed.

Quick Use Notes

- Draw 4: Spade = place, Heart = actor, Club = complication, Diamond = leverage. Highest rank sets Clock length.
- Diamonds = legal outcomes (writs, charters, warrants) that shift position, not dice.
- If any Ace appears, echo hedge-law: boundaries blur, charters contradict, precedent splinters.

4.36 The Ways Between — “Spiritways & Veilways” Generator

Between Death and Dreams lies a country of crossings. Roads remember promises; milestones remember names you never spoke. The Ways Between do not measure miles—they measure choices. Walk softly, pay what the path asks, and mind which version of you arrives.

Spades — Places (paths, crossings, thresholds, waystations)

2. Mist-shrouded ford where the water runs uphill; footsteps echo backwards.
3. Bone-lit corridor where shadows walk the walls but never touch the floor.
4. Threshold arch that shows your reflection as someone you might have been.
5. Spiral path that ascends but always returns to the same stone marker.
6. Bridge of whispered promises; cross with a vow and it remembers your debt.
7. Crossroads where all four paths lead to the same destination, but different tomorrows.
8. Stone circle that marks where a village used to be; the houses are now constellations.
9. Tunnel through solid memory; you hear the thoughts of those who passed here.
10. Staircase carved from a single fossil; each step is an eye that watches your ascent.
- J Waystation where the keeper trades in unfinished conversations.
- Q Junction where paths physically collide; you must choose which reality to follow.
- K The Long Mile—road that stretches differently for each traveler.
- A The Thirteenth Milestone—where the path reveals its true destination.

Hearts — Travelers & Guides (wayfarers, spirits, dream-walkers)

2. Lost pilgrim who thinks they’re going home but has forgotten where home is.
3. Toll-taker who accepts payment in memories you didn’t know you had.
4. Wayward spirit guide: directions technically correct, morally questionable.
5. Dream-merchant with a sack of nightmares and one perfect dream for sale.
6. Child-ghost who knows shortcuts but charges in riddles.
7. Wounded traveler bleeding metaphor; pain grows thorns along the path.
8. Merchant selling maps to places that don’t exist yet.
9. Guide-dog of shadow and starlight; follows those who walk with purpose.
10. Pilgrim moving backwards through time; their steps erase what just happened.
- J Ferryman of souls who also carries the luggage of the living.
- Q The Road’s Own Child—born where two paths crossed, raised by waymarks.
- K Keeper of the Dead-roads—ensures proper passage for those who shouldn’t be walking.
- A The Wayfinder—exists only in the moment a choice is made.

Clubs — Complications/Threats (veil-thin places, dream-bleed, wayward paths)

2. The path loops back to show your funeral preparations.
3. Reality thins—you can see the dreams of sleeping travelers.

4. Waymark points wrong; trust leads to places that never were.
5. Dream-bleed: your waking memories become someone else's nightmares.
6. Toll demanded in a currency you didn't know you carried.
7. Path splits; each version remembers you differently.
8. Gravity shifts to emotional weight—burdens grow physically heavy.
9. Time-sickness—you arrive before you left; paradox shadows follow.
10. The road remembers your lies and demands truth-payment.
 - J Crossroads judgment—the path you choose judges the ones you didn't.
 - Q Memory-thief at the rest stop; pays in counterfeit recollections.
 - K The Path That Should Not Be—opens only for those already lost.
 - A Convergence Point—all travelers arrive together, none recall how.

Diamonds — Rewards/Leverage (true names, safe passages, waywisdom)

2. Waymark that always points toward your next important choice.
3. Token of passage—the road recognizes you as one who belongs.
4. Dream-catcher that filters nightmares from your rest.
5. Truth-compass: points to what you most need to know, not what you want.
6. Memory-anchor that keeps you from losing yourself in deeper paths.
7. Safe-haven waystone—one guaranteed rest stop without complication.
8. Guide-light that burns the color of your truest intention.
9. Path-shortener—cuts distance by cutting through metaphor, not space.
10. Debt-clearing—the road forgives one obligation you thought you owed.
 - J Crossroads boon—choose among three paths, each exactly where you need.
 - Q Way-wisdom—understand the language of paths and signs for one journey.
 - K Passage of Grace—walk safely through any dangerous crossing for one night.
 - A The Road's Own Name—call the path by its true name and command its nature.

Additional Features

Dream-Logic Navigation Any Ace introduces a metaphysical requirement (sacrifice, taboo, exchange) that must be satisfied to pass. Name it at the table; the road will enforce it.

Reflection Points Face cards show alternate selves or unlived choices. Treat these reflections as temporary NPCs or scene tags that can help, hinder, or tempt.

Memory Currency Diamonds may be traded for knowledge or safe passage as if they were memories. Describe the memory paid; the path (or a keeper) pays in kind.

Special Rules for The Ways Between

- **Dream-Logic Navigation:** Any Ace adds a metaphysical requirement (sacrifice, taboo, or transformation) that must be fulfilled to pass.

- **Memory Currency:** Diamonds can be traded for information about other travelers or previous paths taken.
- **Time-Drift:** Any 2-4 indicates the path moves through time as well as space; arrival may be before departure.
- **Reflection Points:** Any face card means the path shows reflections of alternate choices or possible selves.

Quick Use Notes

- Draw until you have all four suits: **Spade** = path feature, **Heart** = fellow traveler, **Club** = wayward complication, **Diamond** = the path’s gift.
- Highest rank sets the main clock (2→5→4, 6→10→6, J/Q/K→8, A→10).
- Diamonds are codified outcomes (blessings/rights) that change position rather than call for a test.
- If any Ace appears, echo dream-road motifs throughout the session: reflections that lie, paths that judge, destinations that choose the traveler.
- The Ways Between take you where you *need* to go, not always where you *want* to go.

Integration Options for The Ways Between

High-Level Spell: Wayfarer’s Passage

Cost: 20 XP, 1/campaign

Requirements: Wits 5, Arcana 4, Spirit 3+

Effect: Step directly onto the Ways Between, traveling instantly between any two locations you have personally visited. No roll required.

Epic Hook — The Path Remembers: Each use creates a permanent metaphysical tether between the locations. The GM starts/advances a 6-segment **Wayward Connections** Front. Scenes involving either location may be influenced by events at the other.

Deck Hooks: Treat any Valewood/Theona 9s drawn in travel scenes as Way-signs. Spending a local guide (e.g., Waymark Token) can redirect an unwanted tether to a more useful location.

Prestige Background: Keeper of the Crossroads

Requires: Mediate three major conflicts at different crossroads; deep tie to wayward places.

Talent — Judge of Paths (8 XP): Once/session at any crossroads or junction, read the true nature of all available paths. Ask three questions about where each leads and what price must be paid. On a miss, GM banks +2 SB as path-dissonance.

Perk (choose 1, once/session):

- Redirect one path’s complication to a different traveler.
- Grant Safe Passage to one group through your crossroads this scene.
- Speak the True Names of all paths meeting at this junction.

Scene Keys: Major Crossroads, Dream-Threshold, Convergence Point

Hooks (GM on SB spend in keyed scenes):

- A path you redirected curses your judgment; future navigation rolls at -1 DV.
- The crossroads itself becomes a character, demanding a sacrifice for continued service.

- Another Keeper challenges your authority; paths begin to shift allegiances.

Invite: "The roads remember your name."

Mid-Tier Talent: Dream-Road Walker

Cost: 7 XP

Requirements: Spirit 3+, any travel-related skill at level 2+

Effect: Once/session, when lost or blocked, step briefly onto the Ways Between. Roll Spirit + relevant travel skill. On success, find a shortcut that bypasses the current obstacle and grants DV -1 to the next travel action. On failure, GM banks +1 SB as path-disorientation.

Backlash: The shortcut leads through someone else's unfinished business—you arrive carrying a minor obligation or taboo.

Cultural Talent: Child of the Crossroads

Cost: 5 XP (counts as racial talent)

Requirements: Born at a crossroads or major junction; raised by travelers

Effect: You instinctively know the emotional weight of any path. Gain +1 die to all navigation rolls and can always sense the direction of the "truest" path available, even if it's not the shortest.

Downside: Major crossroads and junctions always generate 1 SB when you're present, as other travelers are drawn to your natural wayfinding ability.

Ritual Magic: Calling the Long Road

Art: Umbramancy/Veil (DV 3)

Effect: Summon a temporary path onto the Ways Between, allowing one allied group to bypass a major obstacle. The path lasts one scene but requires a guide who knows the way.

Backlash: 1-2 SB path is unstable, causing disorientation; 3-4 SB the path leads through dangerous metaphor; 5+ SB the path becomes permanent and starts attracting unwanted traffic.

Asset Integration: Roadwarden's Charter

Type: Major Off-Screen Asset (12 XP)

Effect: Official authority over a section of the Ways Between. Once per session, ensure safe passage for allies through your territory. Off-Screen: Resolve one major travel complication automatically, but generate 1 SB for crew as path-politics catch up.

Maintenance: Must periodically patrol your section and mediate disputes between paths.

Magic Item: Compass of True Directions

Effect: Points toward the path that serves your deepest need rather than your stated destination. Once per session, ignore the first SB generated by a travel complication.

Curse: Cannot be lied to about destinations—the compass grows heavier with each deception until the truth is spoken.

Follower Integration: Wayward Guide**Cap:** 4**Specialty:** Navigation through metaphysical territories**Effect:** Adds +2 assist dice to any travel roll involving non-physical navigation (dream-paths, metaphorical journeys, time-drift corridors).**Risk:** 2+ SB spent on travel actions may cause the guide to become lost in the deeper paths, requiring a rescue mission.

4.37 The Wilds — “Roads, Ruins, and Weather” Generator

Between towns and treaties lies the patience of the land. Old roads remember armies; cairns remember names no book keeps. In the Wilds, law thins to trail-marks and favors, and the weather keeps its own counsel. Walk soft, read the wind, and bargain with whatever still listens.

Spades — Places (flex to any biome)

2. Crossing point (ford/ice-span/stepping logs/dune saddle/reef shelf).
3. Lookout knoll (tor/cliff/dune/ridge) with a wind-carved marker.
4. Old road trace—cairns and switchbacks half-eaten by terrain.
5. Shelter hollow—overhang/cave/root-cellar; soot says “used lately.”
6. Water source—spring/seep/fog net/snow pan, guarded by thorns or stone.
7. Windbreak—rock ribs/lee of pines/reedwall berm.
8. Ruined outpost—watchstack/wayside shrine/marker pile.
9. Bad ground—sinkhole/bog crust/crevasse/loess slump.
10. Gate gully—a pinch point between bluffs, dunes, or ice hummocks.
 - J Boundary row—totems/standing stones/prayer flags bent by weather.
 - Q Abandoned worksite—mine/quarry/logging camp/salt pan.
 - K Signal height—old fire-pit or mirror stand; smoke stains linger.
 - A Trail nexus—migratory/pack/contraband paths knot here.

Hearts — People & Factions (who you meet out here)

2. Forager child (goat-herd/berry-picker) with truer maps than yours.
3. Guide with three routes and one price (changes daily).
4. Warden patrol—local badges, local laws, local patience.
5. Caravan crew—drovers/porters/yam post hands trading speed for coin.
6. Pilgrims bound for a tucked-away shrine or stone.
7. Poachers & trappers who know every snare and shortcut.
8. Hermit-healer with dogs/geese and opinions about weather.
9. Prospectors (salt/amber/iron/fungus) chasing rumors and glint.
10. Roving war-band—reavers or “escorts,” depending on your purse.
 - J Monster-hunter/rite-keeper wearing yesterday’s trophies.
 - Q Quartermaster on inspection—ledgers first, hospitality second.
 - K Claimant chief—papers and spears to match.
 - A The Stranger—spirit-touched nomad/emissary; rules bend near them.

Clubs — Complications/Threats (re-skin by terrain)

2. Weather turn—heat snap/cold snap/fog/dust; plans sag.
3. Doubleback—tracks loop; your navigator swears the land moved.

4. Prowlers shadow—wolves/jackals/ghouls/seals/ravens by night.
5. Route blocked—deadfall/rockfall/dune shift/ice heave.
6. Quarantine sign—camp fever; wardens sniff your packs.
7. Territorial beast—charge, stampede, or swarm; your choice is wrong.
8. Elemental front—grassfire/peat-burn/canopy flare/blowing spindrift.
9. Paper vs spear—jurisdiction fight in the wilds stalls your day.
10. Supply pinch—water/fuel/feed low; pick what starves.
 - J Pursuit—hunters/avengers follow; signs say “close.”
 - Q Bad omen—will-lights, taboo day, saint bells silent; locals refuse.
 - K General alarm—levy/muster/evacuation; all tracks become checkpoints.
 - A Catastrophe—flood/whiteout/sandstorm/lahar; clocks jump.

Diamonds — Rewards/Leverage (position changers)

2. Cache token—key to a hidden food/fuel stash (once).
3. Right-of-way pass—recognized marker for a named trail or crossing.
4. Warden’s favor—escort letter; “they’re with us.”
5. Weather window—good forecast and a narrow gate to use it.
6. Water/fuel deed—lawful draw at a scarce source.
7. Route song / map scrap—navigation advantage that actually works.
8. Remount/boat hire—fresh legs or hulls waiting at a post.
9. Truce cord—taboo exemption at a site (one scene).
10. Toll waiver—ferry/bridge/reef gate honors this chit.
 - J Rescue debt—locals owe you (or you them); trade it for labor or intel.
 - Q Private audience—keeper/shrine-warden/spirit of place hears you alone.
 - K Road-warden commission—temporary authority over a stretch of wilds.
 - A Earth’s Exception—one temporary rule-bend (cross during storm, pass uncounted, beasts ignore you).

Additional Features

Trail Rights Some paths are older than borders. Displaying the right token (knot, bead, bark-sigil) turns strangers into neighbors for one camp’s length; break the custom and the road forgets you.

Weather-Lore Winds carry messages: resin-scent before lightning, a hush before spindrift, birdsong that stops at once. Read them aloud at the table to bias Position before a roll.

Road Spirits Shrines at cairns and waystones prefer small courtesies: water poured, a pebble placed, a name spoken. Keep them and the land is kinder; slight them and the land remembers.

Quick use notes

- Seed with 4 cards (ensure all four suits): Spade = place, Heart = actor, Club = pressure, Diamond = leverage. Highest rank sets the main clock (2–5→4, 6–10→6, J/Q/K→8, A→10).
- Diamonds are codified outcomes—rights, passes, windows—that change position rather than call for a test.
- If an A appears, add a lingering omen of the land (a smell on the wind, a sound that carries too far, tracks that shift) you can echo in later scenes.

Fast reskin palette

Forest

swap dunes→deadfall, spindrift→canopy flare, prowlers→boar/wolves; water = spring/stream.

Desert

swap bog→salt pan, fog→dust, shelter = overhang/wadi; water = seep/fog net.

Tundra/Ice

swap dune shift→ice heave, fire→spindrift, boats→sleds; prowlers = bears/wolves.

Coast/Isles

crossings = reef shelves, prowlers = seals/raiders, alarms = harbor booms; fuel = driftwood.

Swamp/Fen

crossings = corduroy/log causeways, bad ground = peat crust, prowlers = gators/leeches.

Highlands

crossings = cols and scree traverses, alarms = beacon chains, prowlers = cats/eagles.

4.38 Ykrul — “Wolf Standards, Winter Camps” Generator

The Ykrul ride the endless steppe where horizon meets sky and law rides in saddlebags. Hosts gather by the thousand, yet break into fragments at a word; one night you share their fires, the next they test your bonds. Their banners are wolves’ teeth, their treaties braided strings, their memory longer than the rivers that cross their roads.

Spades — Places (steppe roads, winter rings, fords, cairns)

2. **Wolf Road milepost** of stacked stones; wind whines through eye-holes.
 3. **Remount station**—a low corral with stamped snow and tether-posts.
 4. **Birch windbreak** above black-earth tracks; old offerings in the bark.
 5. **Salt pan** crusted white; hoof-prints like stars.
 6. **Reed ford** where river braids; poles mark yesterday’s safe line.
 7. **Trading palisade** (way-post) with wolf-skull pennons.
 8. **Winter camp ring**—felt tents in a horseshoe facing the wind.
 9. **Kurgan field**—low barrows; horse-bones bead the grass.
 10. **Watch kopje**—lonely tor with a signal fire-scar.
- J **Pontoon crossing**—laced hides creak; current speaks fast.
- Q **Council hollow** where standards are planted; ground tamped like a drum.
- K **Khagan’s way-station**—broad ger on a timber platform; guards in silence.
- A **Sky Steppe**—open, wind like a voice; tracks keep pace beside you.

Hearts — People & Factions (hosts, envoys, riders, courts)

2. **Herd-scout** with three ponies and six opinions.
 3. **Camp-mother** who chooses where fires live; hospitality is law.
 4. **Banner youth** minding the wolves’ tooth standard.
 5. **Salt-broker** who weighs promises like grain.
 6. **Remount keeper** (string-master) with a book of brands.
 7. **Bone-singer** who knows the kurgans’ proper names.
 8. **Road-judge** (tümen scribe) who carries seals and listens long.
 9. **Noyan envoy**—silver paiza, iron smile.
 10. **Winter Host captain** whose tent-wall is a map.
- J **Falcon courier** with leather gauntlets and answers sooner than asked.
- Q **Khatun of the Ring**—keeper of camp-law and hostage strings.
- K **Khagan’s nephew/niece** sent to bind foedus with a look.
- A **Sky-Speaker**—shaman of storms; shortcuts owe them.

Clubs — Complications/Threats (law, weather, feud, logistics)

2. **White squall**—dry snow, lost horizons.
3. **Rasputitsa**—road becomes porridge; wheels are lies.
4. **Remount sickness**—cough in the string; swaps get awkward.
5. **Salt shortage**—meat spoils; tempers thin.

- 6. **Hostage protocol** invoked; someone must sit the tent.
- 7. **Feud spark**—a name spoken wrong reopens an old cut.
- 8. **Grassfire** runs with the wind faster than horses.
- 9. **Foedus recall**—treaty terms re-read; your papers disagree.
- 10. **River break-up**—ice goes; ferries don't.
- J **Raid shadow**—another banner follows at a patient distance.
- Q **Kurultai summons**—camps converge; travel becomes politics.
- K **Muster of the Wolf**—levy raised; every road a checkpoint.
- A **Sky omen**—three suns or none; routes rewrite themselves.

Diamonds — Rewards/Leverage (passes, remounts, truces, audiences)

- 2. **Camp token**—one night's lawful fire and fodder.
- 3. **Salt allotment**—draw from a named store without quarrel.
- 4. **Ford-right**—cross a named braid at lawful depth.
- 5. **Remount chit**—swap two tired mounts for fresh.
- 6. **Escort braid**—two riders see you through a bad stretch.
- 7. **Safe-hostage**—place or take a token-kin for truce.
- 8. **Paiza tablet**—priority on the Wolf Road and at posts.
- 9. **Foedus seal**—treaty clause that trumps a petty order.
- 10. **Market-green**—trade under banner; weapons sheathed.
- J **Standard protection**—travel under a wolf-tooth; raiders defer.
- Q **Audience at the Ring**—the Khatun hears you alone; precedent sticks.
- K **Khagan's writ**—doors open, mouths close across the steppe.
- A **Sky's Exception**—once, the weather ignores you (storm, whiteout, dust).

Additional Features

Hostage Strings Every oath on the steppe is secured with a **hostage string**—a token kin, retainer, or sworn ally left in the other camp. If a deal is broken, the hostage's fate becomes the story's next beat.

Steppe Law Travelers in Ykrul lands are bound by **steppe law**: hospitality lasts three nights, insults last three generations. The Keeper may demand 1 SB when either law is broken.

Sky Omens When the sky shows strange signs—mock-suns, green fire, thunder without storm—the steppe itself seems to speak. Players may once per scene treat an omen as a Diamond, shifting position without a roll.

4.39 Zakov — “Salt & Serpent” Generator

Zakov is the pirate-city of the Dolmis coast, where tides trade secrets and knives settle debts. Its streets are piers, its courts are taverns, and its rulers are whoever the Syndicates fear most this season. The Salt Prince claims the throne, but the real power ebbs and flows with the tide—and the tide remembers everything.

Spades — Places (harbors, bolt-holes, black markets, smuggling routes)

2. Salt-cracked wharf where the tide brings back what the law forgets.
3. Bone-yard beach—wrecks and corpses tangled in kelp and rope.
4. Smuggler’s Gate—an alley behind the Fish Market, always unlocked.
5. The Shallows—reef-ridden cut only the locals dare.
6. Dregs Quarter—shanties on stilts, boats tied to doorframes.
7. The Iron Pier—gangplank to the *Red Wake*, a corsair flagship.
8. Crow’s Roost—a tavern built into the hull of a beached galleon.
9. Black Bazaar—tents under tarps, goods that scream if you listen.
10. Salt Marsh Maze—only the lost know the way through.
- J The Sunken Quarter—half the city is underwater at high tide.
- Q The Crimson Docks—where contracts are signed in blood.
- K The Anchorhead—a floating fortress of the Pirate Syndicate.
- A The Serpent’s Spine—a reef pass that leads to the city’s secret heart.

Hearts — People & Factions (syndicates, corsairs, fences, informants)

2. Dock-rat pickpocket with a map tattoo and no fear.
3. Fence who deals in stolen names and secondhand loyalties.
4. Tavern-keeper who remembers every face—and sells the list.
5. Corsair lieutenant with a letter of marque signed in blood.
6. Dock-master who “loses” ships that owe the Syndicate.
7. Smuggler captain with a false manifest and a quicker blade.
8. Poison-tongue broker who trades secrets like coin.
9. Exiled admiral now running a black-market shipyard.
10. Pirate Queen of the Shallows—rules with charm and cutlass.
- J The Silent Syndicate—no names, just favors and faces.
- Q The Kraken’s Tongue—an oracle who speaks in riddles and tides.
- K The Salt Prince—nominal ruler of Zakov, real power in the shadows.
- A The Drowned Admiral—legend says they still give orders from the deep.

Clubs — Complications/Threats (betrayals, storms, syndicate feuds, cursed cargo)

2. Tide turns early—your ship is now ashore on the wrong side.
3. Rival syndicate burns a warehouse—your goods inside.
4. Cursed cargo—something in the hold is *watching*.

5. Storm warning—ships flee, prices soar, lawmen vanish.
6. Double-cross—you're holding a fake shipment and real enemies.
7. The Salt Prince's Levy—every ship pays a tithe or gets sunk.
8. Plague ship—quarantine flags ignored, sickness spreads.
9. Blood feud erupts between two pirate crews—collateral damage.
10. The Kraken rises—reefs shift, ships vanish, sailors scream.
 - J A contract is voided—your protection means nothing now.
 - Q The Syndicate splits—Zakov becomes a warzone overnight.
 - K Naval blockade—no ships in or out without a fight.
 - A The tide forgets to return—half the city is cut off, drowning in secrets.

Diamonds — Rewards/Leverage (passes, contracts, stolen goods, safe harbors)

2. Smuggler's token—pass one checkpoint unseen.
3. Forged manifest—your cargo is now “clean.”
4. Safe berth in the Bone-yard—no questions, no law.
5. Corsair's charter—raid with impunity for one moon.
6. Salt Prince's writ—levies can't touch you (yet).
7. Black-market ledger—names, debts, and where they sleep.
8. Salvage rights on a named wreck—first claim, no questions.
9. Stolen lighthouse key—redirect ships where you will.
10. Syndicate debt-marker—you're owed a favor.
 - J Pirate Queen's blessing—safe passage through the Shallows.
 - Q Kraken's favor—tides part for your ship, once.
 - K Salt Prince's coin—bribe any official, silence any witness.
 - A The Serpent's Mark—the reef itself will guide you home.

Additional Features

Tide Clock Scenes in Zakov run on a four-segment **Tide Clock**. Each advance shifts Position: *Low tide* reveals hidden wrecks and bolt-holes, *Flood tide* drowns streets and seals doors. When the Clock turns, the Keeper may demand 1 SB tied to rising or falling waters.

Syndicate Debt Every deal in Zakov leaves a mark. Track a single **Debt** value (0–3). At 3, the Syndicate calls it in: betrayal, levy, or unwanted escort. Players can clear 1 Debt by paying a Diamond or sacrificing a useful contact.

Whispers of the Deep Rumors carry teeth. When characters openly boast, bargain, or betray in Zakov, roll 1d6: 1–3: Whispers spread, increasing SB generation this scene. 4–6: Whispers favor the PCs, lowering suspicion until the tide turns again.

Quick Use Notes

- Draw until you have all four suits: Spade = place, Heart = actor, Club = pressure, Diamond = leverage. Highest rank sets the main Clock (2–5 → 4, 6–10 → 6, J/Q/K → 8, A → 10).
- Diamonds are codified outcomes (passes/contracts/rights) that change position rather than call for a roll.
- If any A appears, echo salt & serpent motifs—tides that remember, reefs that shift, and the deep that listens.

Chapter 5

Resource Management

5.1 Introduction to Resource Management

Resource Management in **Fate's Edge** focuses on tracking the tangible and intangible assets that enable character actions while creating narrative tension. Rather than micromanaging every item, the system uses abstract clocks and conditions that trigger when dramatically appropriate. This keeps the focus on story consequences rather than bookkeeping.

5.2 Supply Clock

The *Supply Clock* is a shared condition for the entire party, representing food, water, ammunition, and basic gear. It tracks the group's overall readiness for extended endeavors.

5.2.1 Supply States

***Full Supply* (0 segments filled)**

The party is well-equipped and prepared. No penalties or complications.

***Low Supply* (2 segments filled)**

Minor narrative complications occur: bland food, damaged arrows, thinning waterskins, or worn gear.

***Dangerously Low* (3 segments filled)**

Each character gains **Fatigue 1** due to exhaustion and deprivation.

***Out of Supply* (4 segments filled)**

Severe penalties apply; characters face starvation, dehydration, and failing gear with significant mechanical consequences.

5.2.2 Filling the Supply Clock

The Supply Clock advances under the following circumstances:

- Harsh travel conditions or lost pack animals (GM fiat).
- GM spends **2+ Story Beats (SB)** to represent resource depletion.
- The party chooses to travel light for speed or stealth advantages.
- Failed foraging or resource-gathering attempts.

5.2.3 Emptying the Supply Clock

The Supply Clock can be reduced through:

- Reaching civilization or safe haven resets to **Full Supply**.
- Successful foraging/hunting: group *Survival* check (DV 2) clears 1 segment.
- Downtime spent in relative safety removes 1 segment.
- Purchasing or trading for supplies in settlements.

5.3 Fatigue

Fatigue represents physical exhaustion, hunger, emotional strain, and spiritual depletion. It accumulates through extended effort, deprivation, or magical backlash.

5.3.1 Fatigue Effects

1 *Fatigue*

Minor drain. On your next significant roll, re-roll *one* success (player's choice).

2 *Fatigue*

Worn down. On each significant roll, re-roll one success.

3 *Fatigue*

Failing fast. On each significant roll, re-roll *two* successes.

4 *Fatigue*

Collapse/KO/spiritual break. You fall out of the scene until treated or rescued.

5.3.2 Clearing Fatigue

- A night's rest with adequate Supply removes 1 level of Fatigue.
- You cannot clear Fatigue if the party's Supply clock is *Dangerously Low* or *Out of Supply*.
- Magical healing or special abilities may provide additional Fatigue recovery.
- Extended downtime (3+ days) in safety clears all Fatigue.

5.4 Gear Condition

Gear in **Fate's Edge** does not have hit points or detailed durability tracking. Instead, equipment suffers consequences only when drama demands it.

5.4.1 Compromised Items

- Compromised status is introduced via SB spends or narrative consequence.
- A **Compromised** item gives –1 die on relevant rolls until repaired.
- Multiple Compromised items affecting the *same* action do not stack penalties.

5.4.2 Breaking Point

If a Compromised item suffers another significant setback, it breaks entirely and becomes unusable.

5.4.3 Repair Options

Field Repair

Temporary fix; requires *Craft* or *Survival* check (DV 2) to remove the penalty for one scene.

Proper Repair

Permanent restoration; requires proper tools, materials, and significant downtime.

Magical Repair

Certain spells or rituals can instantly restore gear, but may carry Obligation or Backlash costs.

5.5 Asset and Follower Management

5.5.1 Followers (On-Screen Resources)

Cost

Cap² XP to acquire.

Assist Dice

When applicable, the follower adds help dice equal to min(Cap, helper's relevant Skill), capped at +3 dice total from all sources. *Exception: Exceptional Coordination* Talent allows one follower to provide +4 assist dice.

Capability

Ranges from 1–5 (5 is exceptional).

Upkeep

Each Downtime period, pay XP equal to Cap *or* spend a Scene tending the relationship.

Risk

If the GM spends 2+ SB on an action you take with assistance, they may endanger, injure, or separate the follower instead of you if fictionally appropriate.

Off-Screen Capability

Once per downtime, a Cap 5 follower can solve one significant problem but generates 1 SB for the party; the GM must describe how their action creates consequences.

5.6 Upkeep (Expanded)

Upkeep is the story of attention. Followers and assets thrive when seen and sour when ignored. This section expands the SRD rule with narrative intent, concrete examples, edge cases, and GM guidance.

5.6.1 Design Intent

- **Choice with Teeth.** Players choose *time* or *XP*. Either way, the fiction moves: quick delegation vs. hands-on scenes.
- **Visible Drift.** Missing upkeep degrades things predictably: WARY→SEIZED, NEGLECTED→COMPROMISED.
- **Story First.** Every payment should say something about the relationship or the tool.

5.6.2 Asset Upkeep

Frequency. Once per Downtime period.

Option A — Efficient (Higher XP, Less Time). Pay Upkeep XP = $\max(1, \frac{\text{XP Acquisition Cost}}{3})$. Minimal effort in-fiction (a retainer handles it; you check in by letter).

Option B — Intensive (Lower XP, More Time). Pay 1 XP. Spend a *dedicated Downtime action* personally tending the follower/asset.

Failure. If unpaid this Downtime:

- *Follower:* Becomes **Wary** (or **Seized** if already Wary).
- *Asset:* Becomes **Neglected** (or **Compromised** if already Neglected).

5.6.3 What the Conditions Look Like

Wary (Follower).

They hesitate, ask for guarantees, or interpret orders narrowly. *Mechanical nudge:* first social/test involving them is –1 position *or* costs 1 extra Stress.

Seized (Follower).

Someone else sets terms (rival, guild, family) or they withdraw until appeased. *Nudge:* cannot assist this Downtime; to re-engage, pay 1 Boon *or* clear via a narrative scene that addresses their grievance.

Neglected (Asset).

It underperforms; parts go missing; paperwork piles. *Nudge:* –1 effect on its next use *or* an *Alarmed Attention* clock +1/2.

Compromised (Asset).

Faults propagate; someone has leverage; the tool is noisy or unsafe. *Nudge:* first use this session automatically creates 1 **SB** (formerly CP) *or* requires a costly fix scene.

5.6.4 Examples by Type

	Type	Efficient Upkeep (pay XP, quick)	Intensive Upkeep (1 XP + action)
Followers.	Scribe	Send coin and a sealed brief with instructions.	Host a lesson; co-author a pamphlet that sharpens their craft.
	Scout	Dispatch a courier with a new map and stipend.	Walk the route together; overhaul signals and caches.
	Acolyte (Patron-bound)	Arrange a blessing via intermediaries.	Lead them in a minor rite; narrate the teaching moment.
	Mercenary	Wire hazard pay with a short commendation.	Drill formation; settle a dispute; toast the unit.
	Informant	Drop a dead-letter and payment.	Meet face-to-face; share protection protocol.

	Type	Efficient Upkeep (pay XP, quick)	Intensive Upkeep (1 XP + action)
Assets.	Workshop	Pay the foreman; authorize routine parts.	Personally recalibrate; craft a sample piece.
	Safehouse	Hire a caretaker; basic supplies delivered.	Repair locks/windows; rewrite the cover story with neighbors.
	Library	Fund copying; buy indices.	Catalogue a shelf; cross-ref a case; bind a damaged tome.
	Boat	Pay moorage and minimal maintenance.	Scrape hull; patch sails; sail a proving run.
	Sigil Network (Invoker)	Replace two worn plates.	Etch a new master glyph; clear 1 wear mid-scene next session.

5.6.5 Edge Cases & Rulings

- **Multiple Resources.** Each follower/asset checks upkeep separately. A single Intensive action can cover a *cohesive group* if fiction supports it (e.g., one drill for a squad).
- **Remote Care.** If you narrate convincing remote oversight (sending a trusted lieutenant), count as Efficient.
- **Patron-Tinted Upkeep.** Tie upkeep scenes to a Patron’s theme for small boons (advantage on the next related roll) without changing costs.
- **Stacking Misses.** Missing upkeep across *two* consecutive Downtime periods moves WARY→SEIZED or NEGLECTED→COMPROMISED; a third consecutive miss risks loss (follower quits; asset condemned) at GM discretion.

5.6.6 Optional Modules

Ledger Credits. Track fractional prep: three Efficient payments can be banked to waive one Intensive action later.

Union Rules. Some factions demand Intensive upkeep; Efficient counts as half (two Efficient = one Intensive).

Patron Favor Swap. Spend a **Boon** to treat missed upkeep as paid for one follower/asset if the scene honors the Patron.

5.6.7 GM Guidance

- **Making it a Scene.** Intensive upkeep should reveal something (new contact, flaw, rumor).
- **Foreshadowing Degradation.** Before applying SEIZED/COMPROMISED, show warning signs the players can act on.
- **Naming the Toll.** If a **Patron’s Largess** (wrath) applies, state the narrative reason and the extra toll (e.g., an added SB, a temporary lockout, or a vow demanded).

Quick Reference

Once per Downtime. Pay Efficient ($XP = \max(1, \frac{acq}{3})$) or Intensive (1 XP + action).
Missed: Follower → WARY→SEIZED; Asset → NEGLECTED→COMPROMISED. Tie scenes to your Patron for flavor, not discounts.

5.6.8 Follower Assist Rules

- Assist dice come from the helper’s capabilities, not the leader’s.
- Total Assist on any roll (from any sources) is hard-capped at **+3**. *Exception: Exceptional Coordination* may allow **+4** from a single follower.
- Only one follower may assist a given action at a time.
- Followers cannot assist actions beyond their narrative scope or capabilities.

5.6.9 Loyalty & Bonds (Optional Rules)

- Track a simple Loyalty tag per follower: *Wary* / *Steady* / *Devoted*.
- *Devoted* followers can once per arc convert one GM Complication targeting them into a lesser setback.
- *Wary* followers cost +1 XP to maintain during Downtime.
- Loyalty can change based on how the PC treats the follower and shared experiences.

5.6.10 Stress, Harm, & Loss (GM Tools)

Pin

The follower is separated/boxed out of the current action.

Wound

The follower is Injured: until treated off-screen, their effective Cap counts as 1 lower.

Burn

Mark the follower as *Neglected* immediately.

Seize

Escalate to *Compromised* status.

PC Choice Lever

The GM should offer the player a meaningful choice about follower risk.

5.6.11 Off-Screen Assets

Minor Asset (4 XP)

Safehouse, small charter, local business.

Standard Asset (8 XP)

Noble title, guild section, spy ring, significant property.

Major Asset (12 XP)

City license, regional network, major institution influence.

Artifact Asset (16+ XP)

Unique items or positions with campaign-level significance.

5.6.12 Asset Activations

- **Off-Screen Activation:** At campaign start or during Downtime, activate an off-screen asset by spending **1 Boon** or **2 XP**.
- **Off-Screen Effects:** Use each Asset’s listed off-screen effect once per session for free.
- **On-Screen Activation:** To reshape the current scene, spend **1 Boon**.
- **Plausibility Test:** The Asset must have appropriate scope and reach for the intended effect.

5.6.13 Asset Condition Tracks

Maintained

Full capability; no penalties. The asset is in good standing and fully functional.

Neglected

–1 die when used (assist or leverage). Narratively: slower response, sullen staff, short-staffed operations.

Compromised

Unavailable for use. Narratively: captured, burned, seized, defected, or otherwise incapacitated.

5.6.14 Maintenance and Repair

- After a story arc or 2–3 sessions of heavy use, the GM may flag the resource as *at risk*.
- To keep an asset *Maintained*, the player must either:
 - * Spend Downtime repairing/servicing it, or
 - * Pay XP immediately (representing replacement parts, masterwork upkeep).
- If neglected, the asset becomes *Neglected* (–1 die) and may eventually become permanently lost.
- Superior and Artifact assets do not require normal upkeep; if *Compromised* through complications, only narrative quests can repair them.

5.7 Bond-Driven Resource Generation

When a player takes a significant action to aid an ally with whom they share a bond, and explicitly references that bond in an *Intricate* description, they may mark that bond to gain **1 Boon** *after* the action resolves.

5.7.1 Requirements

Requirements for Bond-Driven Boon Generation:

- **Mutual Bond:** Player shares a defined bond with the ally they’re aiding.
- **Intricate Description:** Player describes how the bond motivates their action using rich, multi-sensory details.
- **Significant Aid:** Meaningful assistance beyond basic dice bonuses.
- **Fiction First:** The bond genuinely drives the choice to help, not added retroactively.

5.7.2 Examples

Valid Examples:

- “Remembering how they saved me from the falling rubble in Aeler, I throw myself in front of the crossbow bolt meant for them!”
- “Thinking of our shared vow to protect the innocent, I use my last healing potion to stabilize them instead of saving it for myself.”
- “Drawing on our years fighting side-by-side in the Border Wars, I rally the other mercenaries to keep fighting alongside them when morale fails.”

5.7.3 Limitations

Restrictions on Bond-Driven Generation:

- Once per bond per session.
- Must involve meaningful sacrifice or risk.
- GM approval required for what constitutes “significant action.”
- Cannot be used for basic assistance rolls or minor favors.
- The Boon is awarded *after* the action resolves, not before.

5.8 Over-Stack Rule

The Over-Stack rule prevents excessive accumulation of advantages from trivial sources while rewarding meaningful preparation.

5.8.1 Structural Advantages

Structural advantages include:

- Active buffs or beneficial tags affecting the party.
- Favorable venue or environmental factors.
- Unused *Follower Initiative* for the scene.
- On-screen Asset activation providing immediate benefits.
- Opponent disadvantaged by fiction (surprised, trapped, etc.).
- Ritual preparation that applies to the current situation.

5.8.2 Over-Stack Trigger

- If the party enters a scene with ≥ 3 structural advantages, apply Over-Stack once for that scene.
- The GM chooses either:
 - * Start one named obstacle or challenge at **+1 DV**, or
 - * The GM banks **+1 SB** for the first Deck Twist in the scene.
- This represents narrative pushback when characters have overwhelming advantages.
- Over-Stack applies only once per scene, regardless of how many advantages accumulate.

Chapter 6

Character Advancement

6.1 Introduction to Advancement

Character advancement in **Fate's Edge** reflects meaningful growth in capability and standing. XP is awarded for table-facing accomplishments, hard choices, and dramatic friction that defines your story. Advancement should always reinforce narrative identity: what drives, obligations, and affinities are shaping the character?

6.2 Starting Character Builds

6.2.1 Standard Starting XP

Players begin with **30 XP** to allocate during initial character creation. This represents a balanced baseline for competent starting characters.

6.2.2 Enhanced Starting Options

Players may exceed the standard 30 XP build through narrative engagement:

- **Bonds:** Up to two player-defined mutual bonds may be taken for +2 XP total (+1 XP each).
- **Complications:** Up to two initial complications may be accepted for +4 XP total (+2 XP each).

This allows for a maximum starting build of **34 XP**. Players are encouraged to aim for 30 XP and use bonds/complications to enhance characterization rather than pure mechanical optimization.

6.2.3 Initial Complications Reminder

For each initial complication taken at character creation:

- Start each scene with +1 banked SB per character with initial complications.
- These complications remain until cleared through play or character development.

6.3 Player Archetypes

Not every group plays the same way. These archetypes describe how players typically spend XP and seek spotlight.

6.3.1 The Solo

Definition

Invests XP primarily in Attributes and Skills. Minimal followers, minimal holdings. All power is on the character sheet.

Typical XP Spread

70–90% Self; 0–10% On-screen help; 0–20% Off-screen assets.

Strengths

Consistent scene impact; few moving parts; resilient to follower loss.

Risks

Limited fiction reach between sessions; can stall when problems demand logistics or networks.

Starting Focus

Attributes 2–3, Skills 1–2, minimal assets.

6.3.2 The Mixed Player

Definition

Splits XP between self-growth and one or two meaningful assets (a small follower or a reliable holding).

Typical XP Spread

50–65% Self; 15–25% On-screen help; 15–25% Off-screen assets.

Strengths

Versatile: credible in scenes and has a lever for special problems.

Risks

Upkeep pressure; helper can be targeted when the GM spends 2+ Story Beats.

Starting Focus

Balanced approach with one minor asset or low-cap follower.

6.3.3 The Mastermind

Definition

Prioritizes followers/cadres/familiars and off-screen networks. The character sheet is the hub of a larger apparatus.

Typical XP Spread

25–40% Self; 35–55% On-screen help; 20–40% Off-screen assets.

Strengths

Scene control via assistance; strategic reach between sessions; strong heist/social-planning play.

Risks

Dependency on assist lanes; followers can be endangered on 2+ SB spends; upkeep pressure.

Starting Focus

Significant investment in followers or major assets from the beginning.

6.4 XP Costs and Advancement**6.4.1 Core Character Improvements****Attributes**

Cost = new rating \times 3 XP. Requires downtime equal to new rating in days.

Skills

Cost = new level \times 2 XP. Requires downtime equal to new level in days.

On-Screen Followers

Cost = Cap² XP. Requires 1–3 days downtime to recruit and brief.

6.4.2 Off-Screen Assets**Minor Asset**

4 XP; requires 1 day downtime to establish.

Standard Asset

8 XP; requires 1 week downtime to establish.

Major Asset

12 XP; requires 1 month downtime to establish.

Artifact Asset

16+ XP; requires significant campaign effort to acquire.

6.4.3 Talent Costs**Minor Talents**

2 XP — Small narrative tricks, situational bonuses.

Major Talents

4 XP — Strong abilities, permanent +1 effects in niches.

Prestige Abilities

6+ XP — Campaign-defining effects, rare and powerful.

6.5 Tiers of Reputation

Though there are no character levels, total XP spent creates soft “tiers” that shape how the world responds to characters:

Tier I – Rookie

(0–40 XP): Local reputation; prestige abilities locked.

Tier II – Seasoned

(41–90 XP): Regional notice; prestige abilities may unlock.

Tier III – Veteran

(91–150 XP): National influence; second follower slot suggested.

Tier IV – Paragon

(151–220 XP): Movers and shakers; rivals emerge to challenge.

Tier V – Mythic

(221+ XP): Legendary status; kingdoms and cults respond directly.

6.6 Prestige Abilities and Talents

Prestige abilities are narrative milestones unlocked through mastery or story events. They are priced at 6+ XP and include campaign-shaping effects.

6.6.1 General Talents**Battle Instincts**

(Cost: 6 XP): Once per scene, re-roll a failed defense roll.

Silver Tongue

(Cost: 4 XP): Gain +1 die when persuading or deceiving through speech.

Iron Stomach

(Cost: 3 XP): Immune to mundane poisons and spoiled food; halve complications from toxic sources.

Exceptional Coordination

(Cost: 8 XP): One follower can provide +4 assist dice (exception to the +3 cap).

6.6.2 Cultural and Ancestral Talents**Humans****Versatile**

(3 XP): Once per session, swap one Skill die for another you lack.

Guild Ties

(7 XP; Requires Presence 2+): Call in favors from a guild or order once per session.

Banner-Bearer

(15 XP; Requires Presence 4+, Resolve 3): Inspire an allied unit; once per battle, erase 2 complications for the group.

Dwarves (Aeler)**Stone-Sense**

(5 XP; Dwarf only): Detect flaws in stone; +1 die to underground *Lore* or *Survival* checks involving stonework.

Spirit Shield

(8 XP; Requires Spirit 3+): Commune with ancestors; once per session, block 1 complication for an ally.

Forge-Patriarch

(18 XP; Requires Body 4+, Lore 3): Found a forge-citadel; gain loyal smiths and engineers (Cap 5 followers).

Wood Elves**Backlash Soothing**

(5 XP; Wood Elf only): Once per session, cancel 1 Backlash die in natural terrain.

Ranger's Step

(9 XP; Requires Wits 3+, Stealth 2): Move unseen in forests; treat terrain penalties as one step lower.

Wild Speaker

(18 XP; Requires Spirit 5+, Survival 3): Speak to beasts and trees; once per session, command local wildlife as allies.

High Elves**Lorekeeper**

(4 XP; High Elf only): Recall obscure history or magic without rolling once per session.

Weave Anchor

(8 XP; Requires Wits 3+, Arcana 3): Reduce magical Backlash by 1 when casting Intricate spells.

Echo-Walker's Step

(20 XP; High Elf only; Requires Wits 5, Arcana 4): Step briefly into the Ways Between; once per arc, turn a complication into a boon.

Ykrul**Blood Frenzy**

(4 XP; Requires Body 2+): When reduced to half health, gain +1 die on melee rolls.

Blood Memory

(7 XP; Requires Body 3+): After battle, gain 1 temporary Skill die reflecting a foe's tactics in the next scene.

Warglord

(18 XP; Requires Body 5, Sway 3): Rally scattered warbands; once per campaign, unify tribes under one banner.

6.6.3 High-Tier Prestige Abilities**Echo-Walker's Step**

(High Elf; Cost: 20 XP; Requires Wits 5, Arcana 4): Once per arc, observe a perfect echo of a past event at your location. GM immediately banks +2 SB; scenes touching that memory carry an omen. Grants DV -1 on one action that uses the revealed truth.

Warglord

(Ykrul; Cost: 18 XP; Requires Body 5, Sway 3): Once per campaign, unify scattered warbands into a single host for a season. Start a Logistics clock and a Grudge clock; either one filling fractures the host.

Spirit-Shield

(Aeler; Cost: 15 XP; Requires Spirit 4, Resolve 3): Once per session, erase up to 3 SB from an ally's current roll; you immediately mark Fatigue +1 and the GM banks +1 SB as backlash.

6.7 Starting Build Examples

6.7.1 Solo Build (30–32 XP)

- Body 3 (9 XP), Wits 2 (6 XP), Spirit 2 (6 XP).
- Skills: Combat 2 (4 XP), Stealth 1 (2 XP), Survival 1 (2 XP).
- Minor Talent: Iron Stomach (3 XP).
- **Total:** 32 XP (requires 1 bond or minor complication).

6.7.2 Mixed Build (32 XP)

- Attributes: Body 2 (6 XP), Wits 2 (6 XP), Spirit 2 (6 XP).
- Skills: Sway 2 (4 XP), Lore 1 (2 XP).
- Minor Asset: Safehouse (4 XP).
- Cap 2 Follower (4 XP).
- **Total:** 32 XP.

6.7.3 Mastermind Build (34 XP)

- Attributes: Body 2 (6 XP), Wits 3 (9 XP), Spirit 2 (6 XP).
- Skills: Sway 2 (4 XP).
- Cap 3 Follower (9 XP).
- **Total:** 34 XP (requires 2 bonds or complications).

6.8 Advancement Guidance

- Advancement should always reinforce narrative identity and character goals.
- Consider how new abilities fit the character’s story and relationships.
- Balance immediate power with long-term narrative potential.
- Work with the GM to ensure advancements make sense in the campaign context.

Chapter 7

Magic System

7.1 Design Philosophy

Magic in **Fate's Edge** is a dangerous negotiation with the fabric of reality. It is powerful and flexible—yet every attempt to shape it carries risk. Each die showing **1** generates **Story Beats (SB)**, which are prompts for twists and complications. The fiction leads; math follows.

7.2 The Four Paths of Magic

7.2.1 Casting (Freeform Magic)

Freeform casting represents raw, improvisational magic.

Requirement

Caster's Gift Talent (2 XP).

Mechanics

Two-step *Weave & Cast* colored by the Eight Elements; fiction-first targets and scope.

Risk

Each 1 generates SB; DV scales with scope; backlash is expressed by Element (or its opposite).

Limits

Heavy control effects (e.g., [WARD], [BANISH], [UNWARD]) require a printed source (Talent, *Rite* text, or Spell result).

GM Guidance

- **Show, then Nudge.** Lead with the fiction (smoke, fissures, whispers), then apply the smallest mechanical nudge that preserves drama.
- **Escalate with Consent.** Offer players the choice to escalate Minor to Major by taking +1 (SB) now to seize something they want.
- **One Bite per Cast.** Apply at most one backlash per cast/action unless a move explicitly stacks. Keep it punchy, not punitive.
- **Clocks with Names.** Name clocks (*Spreading Fire*, *Inevitable Outcome*) so they feed the fiction and remind the table what's at stake.

Backlash Cheatsheet (margin-ready)

Minor = wobble, Major = lurch. Types: Position/Eff, Clock +1/2 or +1, Condition, Cost. Offer Major by (SB)+1. Earth/Fate binds; Fire/Life burns/grows; Air/Luck scatters/ flips; Water/Obishaal pulls/opens.

Place a mini version of Table 7.5 on character sheets.

7.2.2 Rites Users (Runekeepers)

Runekeepers bind themselves to structured *Rites* from a single Patron.

Requirement

Thiasos (Familiar) (2 XP) *and* **Codex** (4 XP). Runekeepers are restricted to **one** Patron.

Mechanics

Invoke a known *Rite* as **1 action**; on completion, mark **+1 Obligation** to that Patron. *Push It* once/scene for amplified effect (**+1 Obligation**).

Patron's Gift (Imbuement)

With Thiasos, once/scene as **1 action** imbue a held item for the scene with **+1 Melee** and **+1 Thematic** (a fixed Skill set by the Patron; see Table in §??). *Push It* to extend one additional scene (**+1 Obligation**). A Codex is *not* required for the Gift.

7.3 Rites Difficulty Value (Expanded)**Core Rule**

The Difficulty Value (DV) to cast a Rite is:

$$DV = \max(\text{Obligation Cost} - \text{Spirit}, \text{Tier})$$

Obligation Cost:

The Rite's listed cost in Obligation segments. This reflects the Patron's toll for the magic.

Spirit:

The caster's Spirit attribute. Each point reduces the effective weight of the Obligation, representing inner resilience and willpower.

Tier:

The Rite's intrinsic difficulty based on scope or potency. DV can never fall below this floor.

Design Philosophy

This formula balances three forces:

- **Debt vs. Strength:** Powerful Rites impose heavier Obligation, but high Spirit offsets that burden.
- **Narrative Tier Floor:** Even the simplest ritual of summoning or warding retains a minimum DV based on its Tier, ensuring gravity and consistency.
- **Scaling:** As characters grow, Spirit makes weaker Rites feel easier, while greater costs still challenge them.

Worked Examples

- *Novice Example:* A Tier 1 Rite with Obligation Cost 2, cast by a Spirit 1 character: $DV = \max(2 - 1, 1) = 1$. The character feels only a slight strain, their Spirit covering most of the toll.
- *Mid-Level Example:* A Tier 2 Rite with Obligation Cost 4, cast by a Spirit 2 character: $DV = \max(4 - 2, 2) = 2$. The Rite taxes them, but their Spirit prevents the burden from becoming overwhelming.
- *Advanced Example:* A Tier 3 Rite with Obligation Cost 7, cast by a Spirit 3 character: $DV = \max(7 - 3, 3) = 4$. Here, Obligation dominates—the cost is heavy, and even strong Spirit cannot fully deflect it.

GM Guidance

- **Patron Themes:** Higher Obligation costs should reflect narrative weight, not just numbers. A Patron of decay may exact tolls in corruption, while a Patron of luck might demand reckless wagers.
- **Spirit as Fiction:** Encourage players to describe how their Spirit manifests—does it show as discipline, willpower, ritual focus, or raw charisma? Make the stat come alive in the fiction.
- **Scaling with Tier:** Remind players that no matter how trivial the fiction might feel, a Tier 2 or higher Rite is never “easy.” The floor maintains tension.

Optional Modules

- **Overflow DV:** If DV exceeds 5, consider applying minor narrative complications or Backlash risks on top of the roll, to show strain bleeding into the scene.
- **Patron Wrath Trigger:** A Patron may impose extra narrative tolls if the DV was reached primarily through Obligation rather than Tier—this shows over-dependence on their favor.

7.3.1 Invokers (Symbol Path)

Invokers use consecrated **Symbols** as ritual anchors to access a Patron’s *Rites* without a full bond.

Requirement

Patron’s Symbol (4 XP) per Patron; one Symbol per Patron. No Thiasos or Codex required.

Ritual Invocation

Perform the *Rite* as a **ritual** (Significant Time, typically 10–30 minutes). Completion always marks **+1 Obligation**.

Crack the Seal

Resolve instantly as **1 action** by setting the Symbol to *Compromised* and marking **+2 Obligation** (**+3** if High-Power). The GM may immediately spend 1 on-theme SB. Restore in Downtime (test DV 3 or by fiction) or spend 1 XP.

Limits

Symbols must be openly displayed during the ritual; carrying **4+** Symbols causes **+1**

Obligation on the first ritual each scene; rival Symbol interference may worsen Position and add +1 Obligation.

Borrowed Grace

Type: Invoker Talent — *Lesser Imbuement*

Use

- **Cost:** 1 Boon, 1 action.
- **Effect (pick one on use):** +1 **Melee** or +1 **Thematic** (your table's thematic Skill).
- **Duration:** *Single action/attack* (instantaneous boost).
- **Requirement:** Wield/display the Patron's **Symbol**.
- **Obligation:** +1 **Obligation** to that Patron immediately (see §??).
- **Limits:** Cannot be extended, stacked, or *Pushed* for duration.

Fictional Framing

A quick, rule-bending channel through a Patron's *Symbol*—a sliver of grace, borrowed for a moment and paid for in debt.

Table Guidance (1-liners)

- **Combat:** Spike a strike vs. a tough foe; or steady a parry in a desperate bind.
- **Skill:** Nudge a pivotal social/ritual/track roll tied to the Patron's sphere.
- **Fallout:** Repeated use accrues **Obligation**; NPC faithful may notice "stolen" grace.

Balance Notes

- Weaker than full Imbuement: *one* action, no sustain, upfront Obligation.
- **Symbol dependency:** No Symbol, no channel (concealed or lost Symbol = no effect).

GM Hooks (quick picks)

- **Compel Debt:** A Patron agent arrives when Obligation crosses a tick.
- **Clash of Signs:** Using rival Symbols back-to-back risks minor **Backlash** (drop Position or +1 SB).
- **Spotlight Tell:** Brief visual tell (scent, sigil flare) marks the borrowing to observant NPCs.

7.3.2 Summoners (Pact-Whisperer)

Summoners call spirits quickly and manage them with a *Leash* track.

Talents & Access

- **Lesser Pactwright:** You may *Call* spirits of Cap 1.
- **Greater Pactwright:** You may also *Call* spirits of Cap 3.

Core Procedure

1. **Call (1 action):** A spirit manifests at *Near*. Choose a Spirit Template (by fiction).
2. **Bind (no extra roll):** Choose one: spend 1 **Boon** or mark 1 **Fatigue**.
3. **Leash:** Set *Leash* = **Cap** + 2 segments on the spirit.
4. **Tick Leash** whenever any of the following happen: the spirit takes harm; you command it against its nature; you *split focus* (you take another significant action while it acts on your order); a rival contests it; it rushes from *Close* to *Far* under pressure. Crossing a [WARD] uses the Outsider crossing rules ($DV = Cap$).
5. **Release:** When the Leash fills, the spirit acts to its nature *once*, then departs.

Economy & Limits

- **Boon Finesse:** Once per round, you may spend 1 **Boon** to clear 1 Leash tick on your current spirit (not after it has already filled).
- **Action Economy:** Issuing a meaningful command uses your action.
- **Concurrency:** Limit **one active spirit** at a time (you may *Call* again after departure).
- **Downtime** ends all summons unless an ability explicitly states otherwise.

7.4 The Nature of Magic

- **Volatile by design:** Each working pushes boundaries that resist being bent.
- **Risk embodied:** Each 1 on any magic roll generates SB the GM can spend for backlash or twists.
- **Narrative weight:** Every magical action alters the scene, even on a success.
- **Thematic consequence:** Backlash aligns with the invoked Element or its opposition.

7.5 The Eight Elements**7.5.1 Physical**

Earth Solidity, structure; shape/sense/move stone; backlash: rigidity/collapse.

Fire Energy, change; ignite/heat/purify; backlash: spread/scorch.

Air Motion, sound; push/pull/resonance; backlash: dispersal/whip.

Water Flow, repair; channel/cleanse/mend; backlash: flood/contaminate.

7.5.2 Metaphysical

Fate Causality, oaths, anti-magic; backlash: paradox/closure.

Life Vitality, growth, repair; backlash: overgrowth/fever.

Luck Chance, openings; backlash: side-coincidence/irony.

Death/Dreams (Obishaal) Thresholds, Ways Between; backlash: thin walls/nightmares.

7.6 Magical Arts

Define your *Art* (gesture/medium, two typical Elements, signature style). If the Art is clearly honored in fiction, gain **+1 die** on your **Cast** once/scene (counts toward +3 cap). Working hard against your Art can worsen Position or pre-load backlash on a Partial.

7.7 Casting Loop (Freeform)

Channel: Focus and draw Potential (e.g., Wits+Arcana); successes become shaping fuel; each 1 generates SB.

Weave: Next turn, shape the effect (e.g., Wits+Art); apply the Description Ladder (Basic/Detailed/Intricate) per core rules.

Backlash: GM spends SB thematically by Element; severity scales with SB and scope. Boons do not reduce SB unless a source says so.

7.8 Magic in Combat

Casting typically takes two actions (Channel + Weave). Runekeeper *Rites* resolve in one action (with Obligation risk). Invoker rituals are usually too slow for a fight—use *Crack the Seal* for instant results at high cost. [COUNTER] can interrupt any magical action in its window.

7.9 Path Comparison

Aspect	Caster (Freeform)	Runekeeper (Rites)	Invoker (Symbols)	Summoner
Access Cost	Caster's Gift (2 XP)	Thiasos + Codex (6 XP)	Symbol (4 XP per Patron)	Lesser/Greater Pactwright
Speed	Medium (2 actions)	Fast (1 action)	Slow (ritual) / Fast w/ Seal	Fast (Call =)
Risk Type	SB backlash (Elemental)	Obligation (Patron ledger)	Symbol compromise + Obligation	Leash fill + costs
Breadth	High (fiction-gated)	Medium (defined <i>Rites</i>)	Medium (breadth across Patrons)	Medium (plates/Cap)
Sustain	Fatigue/backsplash	Obligation; Push adds +1	Obligation; Symbol state gates	Leash ticks nesse

Table 7.1: Comparison of Magic Paths

7.10 Guardrails

- **Duration defaults:** Buffs \approx 3 beats; areas 1 beat. Sustaining costs 1 Fatigue/beat.

- **Stacking:** Same-source effects do not stack; take the best instance.
- **Assist cap:** +3 dice total from assists/buffs.
- **Over-Stack:** Active magic can count as structural advantages for Over-Stack.
- **Plausibility:** All effects must fit the fiction and established limits.

7.11 Of Patrons, Runes, and Invokers

“You wish to walk the road of power? Then listen well. The world is old, and older still are the voices beneath it. We call them *Patrons*, though they were never sworn to us. They are the tides that move unseen, the keepers of forgotten bargains, the sleepers beneath the stone and the stars. To call upon them is to dip a hand into a river that has carved mountains.”

The Patrons

Patrons are vast intelligences—not gods, though some worship them as such. They are embodiments of *concepts* and *forces* rather than sovereigns. Raéyn, mistress of the tides and the sea-routes. Khemesh, the crushing inevitability of the deep. Nidhoggr, the worm that dreams in the roots of time. Each offers power, but always with cost: fatigue, scars upon fate, or a slow unweaving of one’s own story.

To entreat a Patron is to risk being marked. Their Rites are gifts and snares both.

The Carrion-King (Decay, Renewal & Transformation)

Lore. The Carrion-King is the master of endings that become beginnings. He does not destroy, but transforms—turning death into new life, decay into opportunity, and endings into fresh starts. His followers are harvesters of potential, seeing in every fall the seeds of future growth.

Quote. “*What crumbles feeds what grows. What dies becomes the soil of tomorrow’s triumph.*”
— *The Carrion-King*

Rite of Consuming Rot (Low, 5 XP) *Instant; Touch; Yes (decay only).* **Materials:** Organic matter in early stages of decay.

Effect: Accelerate natural decay to weaken or destroy: +2 Effect to *Break/Sabotage* on organic materials (ropes, leather, wood). Gain 1 Boon if the decay creates an opportunity for you or allies.

Push It: Spread decay to similar materials in Close range; mark 1 SB (Clubs) as the rot becomes noticeable.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Harvested End (Low, 4 XP) *Scene; Touch; No.* **Materials:** The remains of a recently ended thing (burnt letter, wilted flower, shattered glass).

Effect: Extract value from endings: from a defeated enemy, gain +1 die to next action; from a failed plan, re-roll one 1 on your next roll; from a broken item, gain 1 SB to spend immediately.

Push It: Harvest additional value but mark Fatigue 1 from dwelling on endings.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Fertile Death (Standard, 8 XP) *Scene; Zone; No. Materials:* Ashes, compost, or the remains of anything that once lived.

Effect: Transform death into growth: create beneficial terrain (cover, concealment, or advantageous positioning) OR grant allies +1 die to healing/recovery rolls. Choose one effect per scene.

Push It: Both effects apply but attract unwanted attention (vermin, scavengers, or curious onlookers).

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Transformed Spirit (Standard, 7 XP) *Instant; Near; No. Materials:* A token from a deceased being (hair, nail, written name).

Effect: Channel the essence of what was: gain one skill die reflecting the deceased's expertise for one scene OR ask one question about their knowledge/abilities.

Push It: The spirit's influence lingers - gain permanent insight (+1 die specialty) but suffer occasional possession-like effects (GM discretion).

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Great Consumption (High, 13 XP) *Scene; Zone; No. Materials:* A significant amount of organic matter (corpse, fallen tree, collapsed building).

Effect: Transform a large area through decay and renewal: choose two - create difficult terrain that favors you, summon Cap 3 swarm of scavengers as temporary allies, or generate valuable reagents worth 2 XP.

Push It: All three effects occur but start a 6-segment **Ecosystem Disruption** clock that will cause problems later.

Requires: Familiar + Codex + Tier III (Invoke: 2 Boons).

Obligation: 7 segments.

Rite of the Eternal Cycle (High, 14 XP) *Extended; Touch; No. Materials:* The complete remains of something significant that has ended.

Effect: Complete a transformation cycle: destroy one major asset/enemy/obstacle and create something new of equal or greater value. GM and player collaborate to define the transformation.

Push It: The transformation is immediate and spectacular but creates a 6-segment **Cycle Debt** clock - the King will demand another significant ending soon.

Requires: Familiar + Codex + Tier III (Invoke: 2 Boons).

Obligation: 7 segments.

The Clockwork Monad (Iterative Evolution)

Lore. The Clockwork Monad is the divine architect who builds not just machines, but systems that improve with use. Where others see entropy, it sees optimization. Its followers are engineers, artificers, and system-builders who understand that true perfection comes not from flawless creation, but from flawless adaptation.

Quote. “Each gear teaches the next. Each failure builds tomorrow’s solution.” — *The Clockwork Monad*

Rite of Iterative Refinement (Low, 4 XP) *Instant; Self; Yes (Tinker/Craft/Device use only).* **Materials:** A tool or mechanical device you are actively using for the triggering roll.

Effect: Re-roll one die showing 1 or 6 on your current roll.

Push It: Re-roll up to two dice, but mark 1 segment on a **Strain Clock** [4] for the tool/device. If the Strain Clock fills, the item becomes [COMPROMISED].

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Note: This represents making micro-adjustments or adaptations on the fly to improve performance.

Rite of Mechanical Intuition (Low, 5 XP) *Scene; Self; No.* **Materials:** A moment of focused observation of a mechanism or engineered system.

Effect: Gain +1 die to one Wits + Tinker or Wits + Craft roll this scene to understand, repair, jury-rig, or optimize a mechanical or engineered system.

Push It: Also identify one hidden weakness, pressure point, or inefficiency in the observed system (Keeper’s choice), but mark Exposure +1.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Note: This represents the Monad’s insight granting deeper understanding of mechanical principles.

Rite of the Self-Improving Device (Standard, 8 XP) *Extended; Touch; No.* **Materials:** A mechanical device with space for additional components.

Effect: Install a learning mechanism in a device. Create a 6-segment **Improvement Clock**. Each time the device is successfully used for its primary function, advance the clock by 1. When filled, choose one permanent enhancement:

- **Efficiency Core:** The device gains +1 Effect when used.
- **Resilient Frame:** The device ignores the first instance of [COMPROMISED] or [DAMAGED] status.
- **Auxiliary Function:** The device gains one minor, related function (e.g., a lockpick gains a small light source, a winch has a built-in measuring tape).

Push It: The device gains its first enhancement immediately (choose one), but mark 2 segments on its Improvement Clock instantly.

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Note: This represents embedding iterative learning directly into the construct.

Rite of the Automated Sequence (Standard, 7 XP) *Scene; Zone (Near the mechanism); No.* **Materials:** A series of interconnected mechanical triggers (gears, levers, pulleys, weights).

Effect: Create an automated process that performs one specific, simple, physical task per round without direct control. Examples include: maintaining steady pressure, repeatedly striking an object, turning a winch, opening/closing a valve, ringing a bell, sorting items by size/weight (if pre-sorted chute exists). The mechanism occupies a Near space.

Push It: The automation can perform a slightly more complex task or two simple tasks in sequence, but requires a 4-segment **Maintenance Clock** that must be tended each scene or it seizes up (becomes non-functional until repaired, DV 3 Tinker).

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Note: This is a temporary, dedicated mechanical helper for repetitive physical tasks.

Rite of the Perfect Design (High, 13 XP) *Extended; Self; No. Materials:* Blueprints inscribed with Clockwork Monad's sigils.

Effect: Design and create a construct or dedicated system (counts as a Standard Asset) that gains +1 Effect each time it is successfully used for its intended primary purpose, up to a maximum of +3 Effect.

Push It: The construct is built to maximum efficiency immediately (+3 Effect), but it also accrues 1 segment on a **Stress Clock** [6]. If the Stress Clock fills, the construct suffers a critical, non-repairable failure (GM determines specifics, likely destruction or dangerous malfunction).

Requires: Familiar + Codex + Tier III (Invoke: 2 Boons).

Obligation: 7 segments.

Note: This represents creating a masterpiece of iterative engineering, pushing it to its theoretical limits.

Rite of the Infinite Workshop (High, 14 XP) *Extended; Zone; No. Materials:* A dedicated workshop or laboratory inscribed with the Monad's evolving equations.

Effect: Consecrate the zone. While within:

- All Crafting, Tinkering, and Wits-based engineering/problem-solving rolls gain +1 Effect.
- Once per scene, a failed Tinker or Craft roll may be re-attempted with +2 dice.

Push It: The zone's influence expands slightly beyond its physical boundaries (e.g., affects work done in an adjacent room) and allows one roll this scene related to invention or radical innovation to be treated as Intricate (re-roll all 1s), but mark 2 segments on an **Entropic Backlash Clock** [8] (GM spends SB from this clock to introduce minor, weird malfunctions or inefficiencies in other nearby non-Monad devices/constructs).

Requires: Familiar + Codex + Tier III (Invoke: 2 Boons).

Obligation: 7 segments.

Note: This is a locus of pure optimization and accelerated iterative development.

The Gallow's Bell (Justice & Judgment)

Lore. The Bell tolls not just for punishment, but for the restoration of balance. Its keepers are judges of the unseen court, ensuring that debts are paid and justice flows like water—sometimes gentle, sometimes as a flood. To call upon the Gallow's Bell is to swear to uphold the weight of consequence, for the Bell sees all reckonings and demands their fulfillment.

Quote. “*What is broken must be mended, what is owed must be paid. The Bell remembers all reckonings.*” — *The Gallow's Bell*

Rite of the Measured Debt (Low, 4 XP) *Scene; Near; No. Materials:* Scales balanced with tokens from both parties.

Effect: Establish a temporary truce or parley; both parties suffer -1 die if they break terms first. Gain +1 die to enforce fair dealing.

Push It: The debt becomes magically binding for the scene; breach forces 1 SB (Hearts) on

breaker.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Weighed Heart (Low, 5 XP) *Scene; Near; No.* **Materials:** A brass scale touched to target's chest.

Effect: Sense if target acts against their stated nature or recent oaths; gain +1 die to social rolls exploiting this knowledge.

Push It: Target must make a Resolve test (DV 3) or reveal one hidden motivation/conflict.
Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Balanced Scales (Standard, 8 XP) *Scene; Near; No.* **Materials:** Iron scales marked with sigils of justice.

Effect: Exchange a condition between two willing parties (Harm 1 for Fatigue 2, Debt for Favor, etc.). Both gain +1 die to actions requiring cooperation.

Push It: Force exchange on unwilling target with contested Wits + Command roll.
Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Judge's Eye (Standard, 7 XP) *Scene; Self; No.* **Materials:** A black hood worn for one minute.

Effect: Gain the ability to sense lies/deception within Near range; +2 dice to Insight rolls. Target lying must suffer -1 die or confess one truth.

Push It: See through all social deceptions for the scene, but mark Exposure +1.
Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Final Reckoning (High, 13 XP) *Scene; Zone; No.* **Materials:** A circle of iron bells, each inscribed with a name.

Effect: All present must speak their greatest debt or wrongdoing; those who lie suffer Harm 2. Truth-tellers gain +2 dice to social actions for scene.

Push It: The reckoning becomes magically enforced—liars automatically suffer consequences GM determines.

Requires: Familiar + Codex + Tier III (Invoke: 2 Boons).
Obligation: 7 segments.

Rite of the Great Adjudication (High, 14 XP) *Extended; Zone; No.* **Materials:** A ceremonial gavel and judge's bench marked with Bell sigils.

Effect: Establish a temporary court of justice; for next session, all social conflicts

Grimmir, the Old Man of the Forest (Instinct & Wild Memory)

"They say he taught the wolves to stalk, and the children of men to kindle fire. Listen close, and you may remember what your blood already knows."

Lore. In mist-thick woods and hollow caves, the stories whisper of **Grimmir**, the Old Man of the Forest. Neither wholly human nor wholly beast, he is the memory of the primal hunter—matted hair, claw-like nails, the antlers of a stag and the eyes of a wolf. He is not a god, but a reminder: that humankind was once feral, and the wild still claims its due. Those who call on him gain the instincts of predator and prey alike, yet risk losing their civil tongue for the growl and the howl.

Patron's Gift — Bestial Relic. Your sworn implement (club, bone spear, or totem mask) sprouts hair, fang, or horn.

- **Enchanted Weapon:** Counts as enchanted melee +1 **Melee**.
- **Thematic Skill:** You gain +1 to **Intimidation** or **Survival** when drawing on primal instinct.

Hunter's Snarl (Low, 4 XP) *Scene; Self; Yes.*

Materials: A scrap of bone or a beast's tooth.

Effect: Bare teeth, snarl, and draw on animal menace. Gain +1 die to Intimidation or resist fear this scene.

Push It: Enemies hesitate—first hostile act against you suffers –1 die.

Backlash (Fate): Your instincts flare—1 die on attempts at polite social interaction this scene.

Wolf-Step (Low, 4 XP) *Scene; Self; Yes.*

Materials: Dirt from a wolf's track or claw scratch.

Effect: Move with lupine cunning. Gain +1 die to Stealth or Athletics when flanking or stalking.

Push It: Also ignore one minor environmental penalty (brambles, roots).

Backlash (Body): Predatory gait aches your joints—minor Fatigue until you rest.

Horn of the Wild Hunt (Standard, 8 XP) *Scene; Near; Yes.*

Materials: A horn, conch, or hollowed bone.

Effect: Sound the primal call. Allies gain +1 die to their next attack or chase roll this scene. Enemies of lesser courage must resist or falter.

Push It: Also call a Cap 1 beast follower (a hound, crow, or stag) until the scene ends.

Backlash (Spirit): The horn echoes back; GM gains 1 SB to spend on attracting a rival predator.

Mark of Antlers (Standard, 8 XP) *Scene; Self or Touch; Yes.*

Materials: Ash or blood traced across the brow.

Effect: Sprout phantom antlers and command primal space. Gain +1 die to Command or resist physical shoves; foes treat you as larger.

Push It: For one exchange, enemies in Near range must test or suffer –1 die to strike you.

Backlash (Life): The mark lingers—1 die to Diplomacy checks until it fades.

Wild Communion (Major, 12 XP) *Scene; Region; Yes.*

Materials: Sit upon raw earth, surrounded by a circle of bones.

Effect: Commune with primal memory. Ask two questions about the movement of beasts, predators, or prey in the last day. Gain advantage on the next hunt, track, or ambush.

Push It: Ask a third question, or extend your communion to human hunters nearby.

Backlash (Dreams): You wake that night with wild hunger—GM may introduce an omen or Complication.

Shape of the Ancestor (Epic, 16 XP) *Scene; Self; Yes.*

Materials: Wear a mask of fur, antler, or bone.

Effect: Transform into a primal hybrid—fangs, claws, heavy pelt. For the scene:

- +1 Body
- Natural melee attack (enchanted, +1)
- +1 die to Athletics, Melee, or Survival

Push It: Extend to a second ally, marking them with blood or ash.

Backlash (Life/Death): When it fades, you suffer a minor Exhausted condition, and the Old Man whispers in dreams.

Ikasha, She Who Sleeps (Latent Potential & Shadow)

Lore. Ikasha is the hush between footfalls, the patience of dark water, the black-feathered watcher at every threshold. In stillness she gathers what might be, in crossroads she whispers of what may yet come. Ravens circle her, bearing secrets between worlds. Her followers learn to move unseen and speak unremembered, becoming shadows that slip between what is and what could be.

Blow out the candle. If the room listens back, ask softly. At the next crossroads, the raven waits—and the shadow remembers your passing.

Touch the Umbral Veil (Low, 4 XP) *Action; Self; Yes (Stealth).* **Materials:** A piece of black cloth.

Effect: Start *Controlled* on one Stealth roll or gain +1 effect to hide/move quietly.

Push It: Brief shadow-muffling (ignore one noisy tell), but leave a shadow-double that may echo you later at an ill moment—mark **1 SB (Diamonds)** as the shadow takes on its own agenda.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Crossroads Raven (Low, 5 XP) *Scene; Zone; No.* **Materials:** Scatter three black feathers or carve a crossroads sign.

Effect: Summon an omen-raven; grant **+1 die** to a navigation, pursuit, or diversion action or force an enemy to hesitate at a fateful moment.

Push It: The raven speaks one cryptic truth, but demands a secret in return—the raven’s insight costs you **1 SB (Hearts)** as it glimpses something you’d rather keep hidden.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Draw from the Umbral Reservoir (Standard, 8 XP) *Action; Self/Ally; No.* **Materials:** A vial of moonless-night water.

Effect: **+2 dice** to stealth, deception, or resolve or clear *Fatigue 1*.

Push It: Also gain one free escape attempt; next scene, you must help another cross a threshold or flee danger—shadow-debt calls for shadow-service.

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Secret Keeper’s Burden (Standard, 9 XP) *Instant; Touch; No.* **Materials:** A lock of hair or intimate token.

Effect: Compel a truthful answer to one direct question (deep secrets may allow a Resolve test to resist).

Push It: Learn the answer *and* a key hidden emotion; target learns one of your secrets in return, carried by a raven to them in dreams—mark **1 SB (Hearts)** as the secret exchange

creates unexpected complications.

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Become the Shadow at the Crossroads (High, 12 XP) *Scene; Self; No. Materials:* Stand in absolute darkness or at a deserted crossroads.

Effect: Intangible to mundane harm; pass through thresholds and small gaps; +2 dice to Stealth; auto-succeed one escape. Cannot manipulate normal objects.

Push It: Interact once with a bound or thresholded object (a door, a lock, a sealed letter), but you become partially corporeal and vulnerable for one beat. Ravens may mark you—shadow-form destabilizes, mark 1 SB (Spades) as reality asserts its claim.

Requires: Familiar + Codex + Tier III (Invoke: 2 Boons).

Obligation: 7 segments.

Inaea, Angel of the Spider (Webs & Fate)

Lore. Where Isoka sheds, Inaea binds—threads of debt, favor, and inevitability. She is the Weaver of Connections, the patron of those who see the invisible threads that tie fate to fate, person to person, promise to consequence. Her followers learn to manipulate these connections, drawing power from the web of relationships that binds all things.

Tie one knot for what you owe, two for what you're owed, and a third for what will answer both. But beware—the Weaver always collects her due.

Tie a Simple Knot (Low, 4 XP) *Action; Near; Yes (link once).* **Materials:** A single thread.

Effect: Declare two minor events linked; either force 1 SB (GM suit) on a foe when the first triggers *or* bank +1 die for a follow-on roll this scene.

Push It: The held +1 ignores one minor disruption; the web's tension tightens—mark 1 SB (Clubs) as the connection becomes more demanding.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Tangled Thread (Low, 5 XP) *Scene; Near; No. Materials:* Tug a web or net.

Effect: Invisible snare in a lane/door. First to cross suffers –1 die on next action.

Push It: Brief bind (one beat) enabling an ally setup; affects all who cross—the tangled threads ensnare indiscriminately, mark 1 SB (Spades) as allies may also be caught.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Weave the Strand of Inevitability (Standard, 8 XP) *Scene; Near; No. Materials:* Three colored threads woven.

Effect: Link two actors/actions: when A moves, B is exposed. Choose: force 1 SB on B next action *or* +2 dice to one prediction/setup keyed to the link.

Push It: Invert once (B cues A); the web's pattern shifts—mark 1 SB (Hearts) as the manipulation strains the natural order.

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Weaver's Glance (Standard, 7 XP) *Scene; Self; No. Materials:* Watch a spider finish one radial line.

Effect: Ask one precise question about in-scene ties; then gain **+1 effect** on one leverage/pressure action exploiting it.

Push It: Surface a hidden tie (Keeper reveals a quiet obligation/fear); mark *Exposure +1* as the web exposes your own entanglements.

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Bind the Bargain [OATH] (**High, 11 XP**) *Scene; Near; No.* **Materials:** Silk loop tied around two thumbs, then cut/knotted.

Effect: Bind up to two consenting parties to a clear term. Breach *forces 2 SB* on the breaker and leaves a subtle tell until amends.

Push It: Widen to a small circle (up to four); each party names a narrow loophole (Keeper approves). Exploiting it generates **1 SB (Diamonds)** as the web's complexity creates unforeseen resonances.

Requires: Familiar + Codex + Tier III (Invoke: 2 Boons).

Obligation: 7 segments.

Isoka, Angel of Serpents (Change & Shedding)

Lore. Isoka teaches that every self is temporary. Serpents shed their skin not in weakness but in renewal, leaving the brittle husk behind as proof that transformation is survival. Followers of Isoka learn to embrace disguise, deception, and metamorphosis, casting aside the past as easily as a garment.

Quote. “Do not mourn the skin you shed. It was never meant to last.” — *Isoka, Angel of Serpents*

Loosen the Old Skin (**Low, 4 XP**) *Scene; Self; Yes (resist only).* **Materials:** A discarded snakeskin or a loose thread.

Effect: +1 die to resist an ongoing *Condition* this scene *or* re-roll one **1** on an escape/evasion.

Push It: Also ignore one minor movement penalty; you leave behind a token of your old self that others can leverage.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Subtle Shift (**Low, 5 XP**) *Scene; Self; No (stable).* **Materials:** Palming a small object from one pocket to another.

Effect: Fluid demeanor: +1 die to **Deceive** to pass as a nearby class/profession *or* +1 Effect to blend into a new crowd/site.

Push It: Bypass one minor identity check; you must maintain the false role until scene end.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Shed the Former Self (**Standard, 8 XP**) *Scene; Self; No.* **Materials:** Full change of clothing and an adopted mannerism.

Effect: +2 dice to resist one named ongoing *Condition*; once/session declare a minor physical contingency retroactively.

Push It: Clear a *temporary, identity-based* Minor Condition; your former identity becomes active in the fiction.

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Forked Tongue (Standard, 7 XP) *Scene; Self; No.* **Materials:** A harmless lie told to a mirror.

Effect: Ambiguous persuasion: when you **Sway** or **Command**, a success may generate *Diamonds* (leverage) instead of SB.

Push It: One carefully worded lie this scene is accepted as truth; the displaced truth seeks return, complicating matters.

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Complete Metamorphosis (High, 12 XP) *Scene; Self; No.* **Materials:** A complete identity kit (garb, voice, tokens).

Effect: Full appearance/voice change; begin *Controlled* on **Deceive/Stealth**; once/scene declare a minor contingency retroactively.

Push It: Spoof scent/biometric for one check; your original identity partially unmoors and acts independently.

Requires: Familiar + Codex + Tier III (Invoke: 2 Boons).

Obligation: 7 segments.

Rite of the Cast-Off History (High, 13 XP) *Extended; Self; No.* **Materials:** Burning or defacing all mundane records of your old life.

Effect: On completion, common records/memories of that identity become unreliable. Trackers via that identity suffer -2 dice. (Does not foil magic or intimates.)

Push It: A plausible “death” is created for the old identity; one intimate senses deception.

Requires: Familiar + Codex + Tier III (Invoke: 2 Boons).

Obligation: 7 segments.

Khemesh, the Abyssal Maw (Depths, Inexorability, Eldritch Terror)

Lore. Khemesh is not merely a lord of the depths but the hunger beneath them, a pressure older than seas. Those who bargain with him are marked by the abyss—seen in the way shadows cling, in the whispers heard when no voice speaks, in the certainty that all things will sink.

In the trench without light, the Maw waits. Even silence drowns.

Whisper of the Trench (Low, 4 XP) *Instant; Near; No.*

Effect: Target hears impossible echoes and suffers **1 die** on their next action.

Push It: Echoes coil in your own skull—take **Fatigue 1**, but the target also loses their next minor action.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of Crushing Silence (Low, 5 XP) *Scene; Zone; No.*

Materials: A broken shell filled with ink-dark water.

Effect: Establish an oppressive silence; sound carries only as distorted whispers. Enemies in the zone gain **1 die** to coordination or morale-driven actions.

Push It: A single enemy’s voice is stolen entirely for the scene.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Pressure of the Maw (Standard, 7 XP) *Instant; Near; No.*

Materials: A length of rusted chain submerged in water.

Effect: Target is pinned by invisible crushing force: treat as [ENTANGLE] with **Great Effect** if underwater or confined.

Push It: Inflict **Fatigue 1** on the target in addition to the restraint.

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Abyssal Vision (Standard, 9 XP) *Scene; Self; No.*

Effect: You perceive the world as Khemesh does—fractured, alien, crushing. Gain **+2 dice** to Notice and Arcana, and may ask one “true nature” question about a foe or structure.

Cost: When the scene ends, you suffer **Exposure +1** as your perception warps.

Push It: Extend the vision to one ally, but both take **Fatigue 1**.

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

The Maw Opens (High, 12 XP) *Scene; Zone; No.*

Materials: A sealed vessel of abyssal water, broken open.

Effect: Reality in the zone folds inward like the crushing deep:

- Enemies act at **Desperate Position** by default.
- Each beat, the Keeper may force **1 SB** (Spades/Clubs favored).
- Structures, vessels, or wards fracture as if under immense weight.

Push It: For one beat, declare a single enemy “crushed” (severe harm/effect). You immediately suffer **Fatigue 2** and **+1 Obligation**.

Requires: Familiar + Codex + Tier III (Invoke: 2 Boons). Obligation: 8 segments.

Rivalry: Raéyn. Khemesh embodies the unknowable trench that swallows sailors; Raéyn embodies tides, travel, and the sea’s surface. Where Raéyn charts and protects, Khemesh unmoors and devours. In scenes of open sea, Raéyn gains the upper hand; in the abyssal dark, Khemesh dominates.

Livaea, the Crimson Courtier (Seduction & Social Binding)

Lore. In salons where wine flows like honey and words cut sharper than daggers, the Crimson Courtier holds court. She is the patron of those who would bind others not with webs, but with desire, obligation, and the sweet poison of whispered promises. Her followers are masters of the intimate covenant, the secret alliance, and the kiss that seals a fate. She teaches that the deepest wounds are those inflicted through trust, and the strongest chains are those forged from willing hands.

Quote. *“A word can wound deeper than a blade. A promise can chain stronger than iron. The Courtier knows which words to whisper—and which silences to sell.” — The Crimson Courtier*

Rite of the Velvet Whisper (Low, 4 XP) *Scene; Near; No.* **Materials:** A silk handkerchief or ribbon touched to lips.

Effect: Your next whispered words carry supernatural weight; +1 die to Sway when speaking privately to one target.

Push It: The target feels compelled to whisper back a secret of their own, but you mark Exposure +1 and the exchanged confidence creates **1 SB (Hearts)** as gossip spreads.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Intimate Covenant (Low, 5 XP) *Scene; Touch; No. Materials:* A shared cup of wine or exchange of personal tokens.

Effect: Create a temporary bond of trust; both parties gain +1 die when cooperating, and suffer -1 die when acting against each other this scene.

Push It: The bond becomes slightly magical - one party feels the other's emotional state, but you mark Fatigue 1 and the emotional intimacy leaves both parties vulnerable—mark **1 SB (Diamonds)** as psychic resonance lingers.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Binding Vow (Standard, 8 XP) *Scene; Near; No. Materials:* A ring or token held while speaking the vow.

Effect: Forge a magical agreement between willing parties; +1 Effect when working together, breach forces 1 SB (Hearts) on breaker.

Push It: The vow becomes supernaturally enforced - breaker suffers Harm 1 and cannot act against the agreement for one scene; the Court takes note of the binding—mark **1 SB (Clubs)** as social forces align around the vow.

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Court's Favor (Standard, 7 XP) *Scene; Self; No. Materials:* Perfumed oil or cosmetic applied before social interaction.

Effect: Gain +2 dice to social manipulation in refined settings; you appear perfectly attuned to the social environment.

Push It: Become the center of attention - all social actions in the scene focus on you, but you cannot leave unnoticed and attract unwanted admirers—mark **1 SB (Spades)** as social complications arise.

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Crimson Alliance (High, 13 XP) *Scene; Near; No. Materials:* A circle of red candles, each representing a participant.

Effect: Bind multiple parties in a web of mutual obligation; all participants gain +1 die when acting in group's interest, and suffer Harm 1 if they act against it.

Push It: The alliance becomes magically permanent - breaking it requires a ritual and advances a 6-segment "Broken Bonds" clock; the Court's attention intensifies—mark **2 SB (Hearts)** as social forces take notice.

Requires: Familiar + Codex + Tier III (Invoke: 2 Boons).

Obligation: 7 segments.

Rite of the Eternal Court (High, 14 XP) *Extended; Zone; No. Materials:* A throne or seat of honor consecrated with rare perfumes.

Effect: Establish yourself as the center of a social web; for the next session, all social interactions in your presence are influenced by your will (+1 Effect to your social actions, -1 die to those opposing you).

Push It: The court becomes supernaturally compelling - all who enter must test Resolve

(DV 3) or become devoted to you for the scene; the Court's influence expands—mark **2 SB (Diamonds)** as supernatural social pressure affects the wider area.

Requires: Familiar + Codex + Tier III (Invoke: 2 Boons).

Obligation: 7 segments.

Mab, Queen of Courts (Glamour & Bargain)

Lore. The blush of truth, the dagger of etiquette, the smile that writes debts in perfume. Mab rules where desire dresses itself as courtesy.

Bend, don't bow. Smile, don't promise.

Courtly Guise [VEIL] (Low, 4 XP) *Action; Self; Yes (social only).* **Materials:** Pin a sprig of green or silver thread.

Effect: Subtle glamour: **+1 die** to Persuade/Sway in refined settings; you appear as expected rank/guest.

Push It: Also mask one minor tell; the first piercing question in the scene generates **1 SB (Hearts)**.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Token of Favor (Low, 5 XP) *Scene; Near; No.* **Materials:** A ribbon or ring bestowed.

Effect: Grant an ally **+1 die** to one social action against onlookers who recognize your favor; you gain **+1 effect** to support.

Push It: The token also chills a heckler (one beat of hesitation), but you mark *Exposure +1*.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Mirror of Motives (Standard, 7 XP) *Action; Near; No.* **Materials:** A polished shard or compact mirror.

Effect: Ask one pointed question about an NPC's *immediate* social goal; Keeper answers truthfully or with a strong tell. Gain **+1 die** to exploit it this scene.

Push It: Also expose a concealed slight or insult that matters to them, creating **1 SB (Hearts)** on that target.

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

The Price Agreed [OATH] (Standard, 8 XP) *Scene; Near; No.* **Materials:** Exchange a token of equal apparent value.

Effect: Bind a petty bargain (favor-for-favor). Breach forces **1 SB (Hearts or Diamonds)** on the breaker and stains their reputation locally this arc.

Push It: Sweeten terms with a minor boon (**+1 die** once to the beneficiary), but you take **1 SB (Hearts)** if they later breach.

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Sovereign Glamour [VEIL][REVEAL] (High, 11 XP) *Scene; Zone; No.* **Materials:** A circle of green felt or silk.

Effect: Establish Court: allies in Zone gain **+1 die** to social actions; crude threats suffer **-1 die**. Once, peel one disguise/illusion in Zone.

Push It: Name a *Court Law* (e.g., no drawn steel): first violation *forces 2 SB* on the violator.

Requires: Familiar + Codex + Tier III (Invoke: 2 Boons).

Obligation: 6 segments.

Maelstraeus, the Merchant of Equities (Exchange & Balance)

Lore. The Merchant moves through markets seen and unseen, ensuring that all transactions carry weight and meaning. Those who trade in his name learn that every exchange has a price, but also a reward. He is the patron of merchants, diplomats, and anyone who seeks to balance the scales of fortune. His golden scales never lie, and his ledgers record not just coin, but the weight of every promise, every debt, every obligation owed to the cosmic order.

Quote. *“All things have value. All values can be traded. The Merchant sees the true price—and always collects his due.” — The Merchant of Equities*

Rite of the Fair Trade (Low, 4 XP) *Scene; Near; No. Materials:* A balance scale with equal weights.

Effect: Establish a neutral trading ground; all parties gain +1 die to negotiate in good faith.

Push It: Force one party to reveal their true bottom line or minimum acceptable terms; the scales' truth-compelling power marks **1 SB (Hearts)** as hidden agendas surface.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Merchant's Eye (Low, 5 XP) *Scene; Self; No. Materials:* A merchant's token or coin from a distant land.

Effect: Gain +2 dice to appraise goods, judge value, or spot market opportunities.

Push It: Also sense the emotional value an item holds for its owner, but mark Exposure +1 and the item's history clings to you—mark **1 SB (Diamonds)** as ghostly echoes of past transactions whisper secrets.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Balanced Exchange (Standard, 8 XP) *Scene; Near; No. Materials:* Two items of equivalent perceived value.

Effect: Facilitate a fair trade between parties; both gain +1 Effect on the exchange. If trade is unfair, the disadvantaged party gains +2 dice to resist.

Push It: Enforce the trade magically - parties cannot renege without suffering 1 SB (Hearts) and the cosmic balance demands correction—mark **1 SB (Clubs)** as the universe notes the intervention.

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Contract Seal (Standard, 7 XP) *Scene; Touch; No. Materials:* Official seal or stamp used on important documents.

Effect: Mark a document or agreement with authority; +1 die to Command when enforcing it, and -1 die for those who would break it.

Push It: The seal becomes temporarily magical - breach causes the document to burn and the liar to suffer Harm 1; the seal's power attracts **1 SB (Spades)** as legal authorities take notice.

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Great Market (High, 13 XP) *Scene; Zone; No.* **Materials:** A merchant's booth or trading post consecrated with salt and coin.

Effect: Create a zone of enhanced commerce; all trading, hiring, and negotiation gains +1 Effect. Allies may reroll one failed social roll per scene.

Push It: The market becomes supernaturally successful - attract attention from powerful figures, but also jealous competitors; mark **2 SB (Hearts/Clubs)** as both opportunity and rivalry flourish.

Requires: Familiar + Codex + Tier III (Invoke: 2 Boons).

Obligation: 7 segments.

Rite of the Cosmic Ledger (High, 14 XP) *Extended; Self; No.* **Materials:** A book that records all debts and credits across the campaign.

Effect: Access the cosmic balance sheet; once per session, convert any resource into any other (1 Boon to 1 Fatigue, 2 XP to 1 SB spent, etc.) at fair market rate.

Push It: Make an imbalanced trade that heavily favors you, but create a 6-segment "Karmic Debt" clock that will eventually demand payment; the ledger's attention intensifies—mark **2 SB (Diamonds)** as cosmic forces take notice of the manipulation.

Requires: Familiar + Codex + Tier III (Invoke: 2 Boons).

Obligation: 7 segments.

Mykkiel, Arbiter of the Writ (Judgment & Writ)

Lore. Mykkiel weighs speech against deed and seals verdicts in cold iron. He is the Keeper of Sacred Covenants, the patron of judges, scribes, and those who would build justice upon the foundation of written law. His followers learn that every word carries weight, every signature binds fate, and every judgment echoes through the halls of eternity.

Name the charge. Name the terms. Then sign where you'll bleed if you're wrong.

For the Word made manifest cannot be unsaid.

Stamp of Authority (Low, 4 XP) *Action; Near; Yes (doc/object).* **Materials:** Cold-iron seal or writ-tag.

Effect: Visible mark of authority. +1 die to *Command/Persuade* that asserts lawful order/claim.

Push It: Brief hush (one beat) among hecklers; mark *Exposure +1* as the seal's power draws attention from higher authorities.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of Proper Notice (Low, 5 XP) *Scene; Near; No.* **Materials:** Writ-string tied and snapped.

Effect: Name a *lawful venue* (dais, doorway, wagon). First hostile act there suffers -1 die.

Push It: Name a *protected act* (parley, surrender, testimony): +1 effect in the venue; breaking custom generates **1 SB (Hearts)** and marks you as oath-breaker before the sacred courts.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Writ of Compliance [COMMAND] (Standard, 8 XP) *Action; Near; No.* **Materials:** Red cord knotted while speaking the order.

Effect: Immediate command ("Stand down," "Drop it," "Open"). Target must comply now or suffer a Keeper-stated cost. DV by fiction; elites may test Resolve.

Push It: On compliance, impose -1 die on target's next aggressive act this scene; the writ's authority resonates—mark **1 SB (Spades)** as the command creates legal precedents.

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Speaking Seal (Standard, 7 XP) *Scene; Near; No.* **Materials:** Wax seal impressed over a name/sigil.

Effect: Sanctify a statement (truce, custody, claim). Contradicting it suffers -1 die; you gain $+1$ die to enforce it.

Push It: Once, ask who here intends breach; Keeper gives a strong clue or direct name—the seal's truth-compelling power marks **1 SB (Diamonds)** as divine attention falls upon the liar.

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Oath Irons [OATH] (High, 11 XP) *Scene; Near; No.* **Materials:** Two iron pins warmed in flame, touched to wrists, then quenched.

Effect: Bind two parties to a bounded term. Breach *forces 2 SB* and brands a faint iron-mark until amends.

Push It: Extend to a small circle (up to four); each chooses one narrow exception (Keeper approves). Exploiting it generates **1 SB (Diamonds)** as the sacred covenant's complexity invites divine scrutiny.

Requires: Familiar + Codex + Tier III (Invoke: 2 Boons).

Obligation: 7 segments.

Nidhoggr, the World-Worm (Dreaming Antiquity)

Lore. Beneath stone and sleep lies the slow memory of the world. Nidhoggr turns in aeons, dreaming of roads once walked and oaths once sworn.

Press your ear to the earth and wait. If it remembers you, it will answer.

Glimpse the Ancient's Shadow (Low, 4 XP) *Action; Self; No.*

Materials: Pinch of dust from a worked stone.

Effect: $+1$ die to actions that identify, date, or interpret *ancient* sites, scripts, or artifacts this scene; once this scene, ask one yes/no about the site's original purpose.

Push It: Add $+1$ Effect on one related roll, but suffer *Fatigue 1*.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Drink from the Dreaming Deep (Low, 5 XP) *Instant; Self; No.*

Materials: Mouthful of clean water poured over stone, swallowed with eyes closed.

Effect: Learn one hidden factual detail about the immediate locale's *past*. GM answers plainly or via a sensory echo.

Cost: Suffer *Fatigue 1* and mark *Exposure +1* as the dream clings.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Stone-Sleeper's Murmur (Standard, 7 XP) *Scene; Near (contact locus); No.*

Materials: Ear to bedrock, wall, or hewn pillar.

Effect: Once per beat while in contact, ask 1 question about a *past event* that physically touched this stone; answers are fragmentary but truthful (max 3 questions/scene).

Push It: One answer is delivered with precise sensory clarity, but generate 1 SB (suit by GM).

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Awakened Chronicle (Standard, 9 XP) *Ritual (Significant Time); Zone; No.*

Materials: Chalk spiral and four touchstones from the site.

Effect: The zone “replays” a notable past moment as ghostly echoes all can witness (no harm). Participants gain +2 dice on *one* Investigate/Recall about that event this scene.

Push It: Add a second moment from a different era, but mark +1 Obligation.

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Dive into the World-Worm’s Dream (High, 12 XP) *Scene; Self; No.*

Materials: Lie upon bare earth within a drawn circle of stones.

Effect: Ask up to **3** factual questions about the *distant past* or *buried truth* of this place, people, or item. Answers arrive as lucid dream signs.

Cost (choose one): Suffer *Fatigue 2 & Exposure +1* or gain +3 dice to one reality-warping cast this scene and generate 2 SB immediately.

Requires: Familiar + Codex + Tier III (Invoke: 2 Boons). Obligation: 7 segments.

Oath of Flame & Light (Dawn & Vows)

Lore. Light names, binds, and burns. The Oath favors sworn keepers—those who stand in the open and keep their word even when it costs.

Speak in the light. Keep it, or the light will keep *you*.

Patron’s Gift (Imbuement) — Paladin Flavor. With **Thiasos (Familiar)**, you may invoke the Gift (1 action, 1/scene) to sanctify a weapon or badge: it grants **+1 Melee** and **+1 Thematic (Command)** while your fiction honors a declared vow or protection. Push: extend one extra scene (+1 Obligation). (See §??.)

Kindle Vow (Low, 4 XP) *Action; Self/Ally; Yes.* **Materials:** Ampoule of consecrated spark.

Effect: Name a near-term pledge this scene (*hold the line, get them out*). Bearer gains **+1 die** to actions that keep it.

Push It: First betrayal or hesitation *forces 1 SB (Hearts)* on the bearer.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Lay on Hands [CLEANSE][HEAL] (Low, 5 XP) *Instant; Touch; No.* **Materials:** Palm over wound; vow whispered.

Effect: Remove one minor affliction or downgrade *Harm* by one step or clear *Fatigue 1*. DV by fiction for stubborn curses/poisons.

Push It: Also grant **+1 die** to the target’s next Resist this scene; you mark *Exposure +1*.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Sunlit Parley (Standard, 7 XP) *Scene; Near; No. Materials:* Vow-ring engraved with sunrise and true name.

Effect: Establish open terms: honest persuasion gains +1 **die**; deceit attempts suffer –1 **die** in this scene's parley.

Push It: Once, demand a public answer; evasion *forces 1 SB (Hearts)* on the evader.

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Purge the Shadow [REVEAL][DISPEL] (Standard, 9 XP) *Instant; Near; No. Materials:* Consecrated spark cracked to light.

Effect: Expose illusions/disguises and suppress one minor ongoing glamour/curse in Near (DV by fiction).

Push It: Also sear a lingering tell on the source; you can sense it once again this arc; mark 1 **SB (Diamonds)**.

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Radiant Smite [FOLLOW-UP] (Standard, 8 XP) *Action; Self; No. Materials:* Consecrated spark smeared on weapon or badge.

Effect: Consecrate your next strike this scene. On your next successful *melee* hit this scene:

- Upgrade the hit's **Effect** by one step (to Great if applicable), and
- Add +1 **Harm (Burn)** *or* force 1 **SB (Spades)** on the target's side if the blow is narrative rather than wounding.

Special. Versus Undead, Oath-breakers, or Outsiders: the blow also *sears the untrue*. Undead/Oath-breakers suffer –1 **die** on their next action; Outsiders gain +1 segment on Leash/Exit Tally (Hit only). If the attack *misses*, the smite charge lingers for one beat; after that it gutters, creating 1 **SB (Diamonds)** as attention swells.

Push It: The strike flares—on hit, emit a Close burst: hostile creatures in Close suffer –1 **die** for one beat *or* are driven back (worse Position by one step). Mark +1 **Obligation**.

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Covenant Blaze [OATH][FORTIFY] (High, 12 XP) *Scene; Zone; No. Materials:* A brazier lit with three names spoken.

Effect: Those who swear within gain a halo: +1 **die** to acts that keep the oath; attackers against a haloed subject suffer –1 **die** if the act would violate the sworn terms. Oath-breakers immediately *force 2 SB (Hearts/Spades)* and the halo scorches them (1 Harm, Burn).

Push It: The blaze also sanctifies the threshold (one beat of temporary [WARD] vs. oath-breakers entering).

Requires: Familiar + Codex + Tier III (Invoke: 2 Boons).

Obligation: 7 segments.

Raéyn, Mistress of the Sea (Tides, Change, Sea-Travel)

Lore. Raéyn is the restless sea and the promise of a changing tide. She favors those who read currents, bargain with weather, and carry news between shores.

Mark the tide, name your course, and trust the wave-road.

Tidemark's Favor (Low, 4 XP) *Scene; Self; No.*

Materials: A knotted length of salt-twine brushed with seawater.

Effect: Treat slick, swaying, or water-slicked footing as stable for you this scene. Gain **+1 die** on balance, boarding, or shipboard movement.

Push It: Extend to one ally in Close for one beat, but generate **1 SB** (Spades: shifting deck/hazards).

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Whisper of Currents (Low, 5 XP) *Instant; Near; No.*

Materials: A shell held to the ear while facing the wind.

Effect: Learn the *safest near-term route* across water or coastline (reefs, eddies, patrol patterns) or gain **+1 die** to navigation checks along coasts or rivers for this scene.

Push It: Also learn where the *fastest* route diverges, but mark **Exposure +1** (you leave a telltale wake).

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Changing Tide (Standard, 7 XP) *Scene; Zone (water-adjacent); No.*

Materials: A handful of pebbles cast in a crescent.

Effect: Bias water level and currents in the zone. Those moving *with* the tide gain **+1 die** to traverse/board/evade; those moving *against* it suffer **1 die**. Small craft test to hold position.

Push It: Create a brief surge or drawdown (one beat): open a ford *or* swamp a skiff on a Miss; mark **+1 Obligation**.

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Blessing of the Wave-Road (Standard, 9 XP) *Scene; Route (sea-to-sea); No.*

Materials: Two sea-glass markers dropped overboard at start and end points.

Effect: Consecrate a *wave-road* between two visible marks. Allies traveling along it gain **+2 dice** to traverse, evade, or carry at sea; designated pursuers suffer **1 die** to intercept on that leg. One active wave-road at a time.

Push It: For one beat, extend the route's favor to an adjacent leg (shoal, cove, channel); mark **+1 Obligation**.

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Storm-Queen's Hand (High, 12 XP) *Scene; Zone (sea/shore/sky above); No.*

Materials: A vial of rainwater gathered at *three crossings*.

Effect: Shape a bound storm-band over the zone. Choose **two** modes at cast; you may switch one mode once per scene:

- **Propulsion:** Favorable wind/sea; your vessel gains **+1 band** of movement per beat (or **+1 Effect** to maneuvers).
- **Concealment:** Veil of rain and spray; ranged targeting is impaired; **1 die** to hostile sighting/tracking.
- **Smite:** [AREA] wave or lightning lash once per beat as an action; treat as a strong hazard (GM sets Cap by fiction).

Push It: Add a third mode for one beat, then the storm “slips” and the GM immediately spends **1 SB** on collateral; mark **+1 Obligation**.

Requires: Familiar + Codex + Tier III (Invoke: 2 Boons). Obligation: 7 segments.

Rivalry: Khemesh. Raéyn's currents *counter* Khemesh's abyssal *pressure*. In scenes dominated by *open water and weather*, Raéyn rites that shift tides/currents gain favorable fiction against *Depth/Pressure* effects; in *deep or confined* waters, Khemesh's rites exert advantage. Adjudicate as Position/Effect shifts or modest DV nudges; SB remains the primary prompt.

The Sacred Geometry (Order & Pattern)

Lore. Beneath mess lies measure. The Geometry carves clean lines through chaos, demanding symmetry from a crooked world.

Chalk, string, and a prayer to ratios. When the circle closes, luck remembers its place.

Find the Pattern (Low, 5 XP) *Action; Self; Yes (investigation).* **Materials:** Compass and straightedge.

Effect: +1 die to decode patterns/codes/systems; re-roll one 1 on math/logic rolls.

Push It: Upgrade effect one step on a single roll; you become obsessively pattern-seeking (scene): -1 die to social rolls.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Ordered Step (Low, 4 XP) *Scene; Self; No.* **Materials:** Walk a perfect square.

Effect: Ignore difficult terrain penalties for walking; +1 die to actions requiring perfect calibration/balance.

Push It: Cross a fragile surface silently once, but must follow a geometrically perfect path for the scene.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Thread the Loom of Chance (Standard, 7 XP) *Action; Self; No.* **Materials:** Weighted dice or a balanced scale.

Effect: Re-roll up to **two dice** in your current pool.

Push It: Treat one zone tag as favorable for this action; accept an equal/opposite consequence later this scene (**1 SB**, Keeper suits).

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Golden Ratio (Standard, 7 XP) *Scene; Touch; No.* **Materials:** A string cut to the golden ratio.

Effect: Optimize one object \leq door-size. Choose: door resists breach (+1 effect to resist), weapon strikes truer (+1 die next attack), tool grants +1 effect on next use.

Push It: Affect a second connected object at half strength.

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rewrite the Fundamental Equation (High, 12 XP) *Scene; Zone; No.* **Materials:** Complex diagram at zone center.

Effect: Declare one physics/magic rule different in-zone (no instant kills; Keeper may veto scene-enders). Once/scene, downgrade a *Miss* to *Success & Cost*.

Push It: Affect an adjacent zone for one beat; create paradox: **2 SB**.

Requires: Familiar + Codex + Tier III (Invoke: 2 Boons).

Obligation: 7 segments.

The Sealed Gate (Boundaries & Closure)

Lore. You write borders into the world and prosecute trespass. Doors remember their true keepers; lines mean what you say they mean.

Patron's Gift (Imbuement). Once/scene as an action (cost: 1 Boon; requires **Thiasos**), touch an item to imbue it until scene end with **+1 Melee** and **+1 Tinker** (Thematic). *Push It:* extend for one extra scene by marking **+1 Obligation**. Same-patron Gifts don't stack; take the best. Dice bonuses respect the +3 cap.

Low Rites

Seal the Threshold (Low) *Duration: Scene; Range: Touch; Stacking: No.*

Materials: Brief sign across a door/line (chalk, wax, chain, sigil).

Effect: Mark a threshold. Crossing parties suffer worsened Position *or* a brief stumble on first entry (Keeper's choice by fiction).

Invoke: 1 action; mark **+1 Obligation**.

Push It: Treat the edge as difficult terrain or a snag (+1 Obligation).

Key's Rebuke (Low) *Duration: Instant; Range: Near; Stacking: No.*

Materials: A snapped ward-key gesture or clack of chain.

Effect: Flick a spectral hasp at a reaching hand/tool: stagger or disarm a target for one beat (fiction sets DV if contested).

Invoke: 1 action; mark **+1 Obligation**.

Push It: Also drop the object just beyond their reach (+1 Obligation).

Standard Rites

Circle of Denial [WARD] (Standard) *Duration: Scene; Range: Near; Stacking: No.*

Materials: Mark a ring/arc with sanctioned medium.

Effect: Outsiders crossing test $DV = Cap$. On Hit: cross and add $+DV$ segments to their Leash/Exit Tally; on Partial: cross and add $+1$; on Miss: fail to cross this beat.

Invoke: 1 action; mark **+1 Obligation**.

Push It: Fortify the circle (harder to bypass, clearer tells) (+1 Obligation).

Writ of Passage (Standard) *Duration: Scene; Range: Near; Stacking: No.*

Materials: Spoken naming of the route; scribed pass-mark.

Effect: Designate a path as permitted. Allies on that route gain improved flow (Position/Effect bump or ignore one level of difficult terrain).

Invoke: 1 action; mark **+1 Obligation**.

Push It: Extend to one extra ally *or* carry across one obstacle (+1 Obligation).

High Rite

Banishment Knot [BANISH] (High) *Duration: Instant; Range: Near; Stacking: No.*

Materials: Knot of cord/chain sealed with a gate-sigil.

Effect: Target a visible Outsider. Test $DV = Cap$. On Hit: add $+DV$ segments to Leash/Exit Tally; on Partial: add $+1$; if this fills, it acts to nature once, then departs.

Invoke: 1 action; mark **+1 Obligation** (some tables prefer $+2$ —set at campaign start).

Push It: Strip one tether/anchor if present ($+1$ Obligation).

Invoker Access (Symbol Path). With a **Sealed Gate Symbol** (4 XP), perform any Rite above as a *ritual* (Significant Time); completion always marks **+1 Obligation**. *Crack the Seal* to cast instantly: set the Symbol to *Compromised* and mark **+2 Obligation** ($+3$ if High-Power). The Keeper may spend 1 on-theme SB immediately. Restore a *Compromised* Symbol in Downtime via a fitting test (DV 3) or 1 XP.

Example Symbols (Sealed Gate). Lead sounder-weight engraved with abyssal curls; salt-etched iron chain link; sealed lockplate token.

The Traveler (Ways & Roads)

Lore. Crossroads remember every footfall. The Traveler minds the stories that move between places.

Put one foot in a promise, and the road will meet you halfway.

Road-Sense (Low, 4 XP) *Action; Self; Yes (navigation).* **Materials:** A road-nail or waystone pebble.

Effect: Unerringly pick the fastest *safe* route in Near/Far; **+1 die** to avoid ambushes and delays this leg/scene.

Push It: Also spot one hidden bypass; taking it creates **1 SB (Clubs)** elsewhere on the map. *Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).*

Traveler's Boon (Low, 5 XP) *Scene; Self/Ally; No.* **Materials:** Tie thread around a wrist.

Effect: Ignore one level of difficult terrain or bureaucracy for this scene; **+1 effect** to overland progress/escape checks.

Push It: Extend to one additional ally; mark **1 SB (Diamonds)** as the road exacts a toll (favors, papers, attention).

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Waymark [PASSAGE] (Standard, 7 XP) *Action; Near; No.* **Materials:** Chalk mark at eye level.

Effect: Declare a lane as permitted/easy: allies on that lane gain better flow (Position/Effect bump or ignore one obstacle).

Push It: The lane persists between scenes until disturbed; first enemy who exploits it *forces 1 SB (Spades)* on your party.

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Bridge the Mile [TRANSPORT] (Standard, 9 XP) *Instant; Near; No.* **Materials:** Two pinches of road-dust clapped together.

Effect: Relocate a willing target within Far along a visible or named route; arrivals are steady but noticed.

Push It: Carry one extra ally or a small bundle; arrivals are off-balance (worse Position for one beat).

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Crown of Crossings (High, 12 XP) *Scene; Zone; No.* **Materials:** A brass compass missing its needle.

Effect: You call the Road: allies gain +1 die to move/evade; pursuit suffers −1 die. Once, declare “the long way is short” to finish a travel clock segment for free.

Push It: Also seal a hostile route (like a temporary [WARD] against passage) for one beat; generates 2 SB (Clubs/Diamonds) in border complications.

Requires: Familiar + Codex + Tier III (Invoke: 2 Boons).

Obligation: 7 segments.

Varnek Karn, the Bone King (Necromantic Archives)

Lore. Bones remember. Varnek keeps their ledgers: last sights, last debts, last names. He is the Archivist of the Dead, the keeper of unfinished business and unresolved oaths. Those who serve him learn to speak with the silence of the grave and to find purpose in the purposeless wandering of lost souls.

Ask gently. The skull will answer in fragments; the ledger is never truly closed.

What is owed to the dead must be paid by the living.

Whisper to Restless Spirits (Low, 4 XP) *Action; Near; No.*

Materials: A pinch of grave-dust stirred into breath.

Effect: +1 die to investigate a recent death (within a day) *or* ask a single yes/no about the cause of death.

Push It: Learn one fleeting sensory shard (sound, scent, image), but mark *Exposure +1*.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Unfinished Ledger (Low, 5 XP) *Instant; Touch; No.*

Materials: A binding thread tied to remains or a personal relic.

Effect: Learn one *unfinished business* binding the spirit (name a task, debt, or oath). Acting on it grants +1 die once this scene to relevant rolls.

Push It: Also learn one *adversary* tied to that business; generate 1 SB (Hearts or Diamonds).

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Speaking Bones (Standard, 8 XP) *Scene; Touch; No.*

Materials: Oil the jaw, set the teeth with a sigil.

Effect: A corpse answers 2 questions about circumstances of death from its own perspective (fragmented, literal). Max 1 corpse/scene.

Push It: Ask a **third** question; the spirit’s memories fracture—mark 1 SB (Diamonds) as necromantic resonance disturbs the area.

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

The Remembering Host (Standard, 9 XP) *Scene; Near; No.*

Materials: A small reliquary and consecrated twine.

Effect: Animate a *seeker swarm* (count it as a **Standard Asset** with 4-segment integrity) to

scout, fetch, or tail. Not combat-capable; acts in beats per GM.

Push It: Grant one *special action* (block a doorway, retrieve a key) once, then the swarm unravels—the released spirits demand acknowledgment, mark **1 SB (Spades)** as spiritual debt.

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Court of Echoes (High, 12 XP) *Scene; Zone; No.*

Materials: Circle of bone-totems and a tolling chime.

Effect: Convene an *advisory court* of the dead (treat as a **Major Asset** clock [6]) that can: answer up to 3 complex questions, sway the fearful, or impose silence upon casual lies in the zone.

Push It: Command a single decisive act (e.g., frighten a mob, barge a door) then tick the court twice; the dead grow restless—mark **2 SB (Hearts)** as spectral tensions rise.

Requires: Familiar + Codex + Tier III (Invoke: 2 Boons). Obligation: 7 segments.

The Witness (Truth Revelation)

Lore. The Witness remembers what others bury. Every shadow cast and oath broken is a line in her unending ledger. She is the keeper of inconvenient truths, the patron of those who seek to expose lies or recover forgotten knowledge. Her followers learn that knowledge comes with a price—the weight of remembering what others would forget.

Quote. “*I will show you what you would rather forget. But first, you must forget what you think you know.*” — The Witness

Rite of the Lingering Glimpse (Low, 4 XP) *Instant; Near; Yes (Investigation/Notice only).* **Materials:** A trace of the thing to be remembered (hair, dust, a spoken name).

Effect: Gain +1 die to your roll to investigate or notice something directly related to the trace within the current scene.

Push It: Gain +2 dice instead, but mark 1 segment on a **Memory Strain Clock** [4]. If the clock fills, you gain Fatigue 1 and suffer -1 die on Investigation/Notice rolls until the end of the next scene due to mental exhaustion from forced recall.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Note: The Witness grants fleeting, focused insight drawn from the faintest echoes.

Rite of Piercing Scrutiny (Low, 5 XP) *Scene; Zone; No.* **Materials:** A circle drawn with chalk or string while focusing on the truth to be sought.

Effect: Within the zone, gain +1 die to rolls to detect deception (Insight vs. Deceit, spotting social tells) or to recall hidden knowledge (Lore/Investigate for memory). Social interactions within the zone begin one Position step worse for those attempting to deceive.

Push It: One target within the zone must make a Wits test (DV 3) or involuntarily reveal one pertinent lie or hidden fact they are currently concealing (Keeper determines relevance). Regardless of the test result, mark Exposure +1 for the target(s) in the zone.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Note: The Witness’s gaze makes falsehoods brittle and memories more accessible.

Rite of the Echoing Truth [OMEN] (Standard, 8 XP) *Instant; Near; No.* **Materials:** A reflective surface (mirror, still water, polished metal) used to focus on the target.

Effect: Target must make a Resolve test (DV 3) or suffer -1 die to rolls involving memory, deception, or resisting interrogation for the scene. If they fail, you may ask one specific, factual question about something they know, and they must answer truthfully or suffer 1 SB (Hearts) as the memory is forcibly drawn forth.

Push It: If the target fails their Resolve test, you may ask a second question, but the mental intrusion causes them Harm 1 (Stress/Mental).

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Note: The Witness drags reluctant truths into the light.

Rite of the Immutable Record [OATH] (Standard, 7 XP) *Scene; Near; No. Materials:* A document signed by all parties within the zone, or a spoken pact witnessed by the caster.

Effect: Bind the agreement. Any party who knowingly breaches it suffers 1 SB (Hearts) immediately and gains a persistent **Oathbreaker's Mark** Condition (-1 die on social rolls involving honor, trust, or oaths until amends are made or a significant act redeems them).

Push It: The bond becomes magically enforced for one specific, crucial clause: violation automatically inflicts Harm 1 (Stress) on the breaker in addition to the SB and Mark.

Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Note: The Witness ensures promises carry weight.

Rite of the Unveiled Heart [OMEN] (High, 12 XP) *Scene; Near; No. Materials:* A private setting where the target feels safe or is speaking freely.

Effect: The target suffers -2 dice to all attempts to conceal true emotions, intentions, or lies for the scene. Any successful social roll (Sway, Command, Deceit) made by the target generates 1 SB (Hearts) as the effort to maintain falsehoods under the Witness's gaze creates internal discord.

Push It: You may designate one specific, complex question about the target's motivations, fears, or hidden loyalties. If you successfully use Sway or Insight against them this scene, you automatically learn the answer to that question. The intense scrutiny marks 1 SB (Spades) for you as the Witness's attention lingers.

Requires: Familiar + Codex + Tier III (Invoke: 2 Boons).

Obligation: 6 segments.

Note: The Witness strips away the veils of the heart.

Rite of the Final Reckoning [OMEN] (High, 13 XP) *Scene; Zone; No. Materials:* A formally called gathering (court, council, family meeting) within the consecrated zone.

Effect: All present must speak their greatest debt, wrongdoing, or hidden truth related to the gathering's purpose. Those who lie or withhold suffer Harm 2 (Stress/Reputation). Truth-tellers gain +2 dice to social actions for the remainder of the scene within the zone.

Push It: The truth becomes inescapable - even indirect lies or evasions related to the core topic suffer the Harm 2 penalty. The absolute nature of the revelation creates 2 SB (Diamonds) as the disruption to fates and secrets resonates.

Requires: Familiar + Codex + Tier III (Invoke: 2 Boons).

Obligation: 7 segments.

Note: The Witness calls the ultimate accounting.

No True Acolyte Interpreting a patron’s will is often a dangerous prospect in and of itself. Many a Runkeeper has found themselves on the opposite end of machinations from others from the same patron.

The Runekeepers

If Patrons are the storm, the **Runekeepers** are those who etched the first shelter. They do not serve; they remember. Their charge is to keep record of Rites, bindings, and the old words that tether meaning to symbol. A Runekeeper may never call a Rite themselves, but without their quiet stewardship, Invokers would stumble blind into bargains best forgotten.

“Every Rune is a promise. Every line a covenant. Do not mistake the Runekeeper’s silence for weakness; their memory is the foundation of our craft.”

The Invokers

Invokers are those who dare. Neither archivists nor worshippers, they are travelers on the knife-edge between story and ruin. An Invoker learns the Rites of a Patron, weaves them into their own Art, and bends fate for a moment. Yet invocation is not command: it is negotiation. The Patron always leaves its mark. The stronger the Rite, the deeper the scar.

Invokers are often wanderers, exiles, or seekers. To common folk they are feared—witches, oathbreakers, meddlers with things not meant for mortal hands. But when the village falls to plague, when the sea closes its roads, when the dead refuse their rest, it is an Invoker who is called upon.

Closing Words

The dance between Patron, Runekeeper, and Invoker is a triangle of peril and necessity. Without Patrons, there is no power. Without Runekeepers, no record. Without Invokers, no action. Together, they shape the crooked, perilous art we call Invocation.

7.12 Patrons & Rites

Patron Rivalries

Use this matrix to quickly shade rulings. “Edge Loci” are environments or situations where one side tends to start a step better in Position or gains an Effect nudge (Keeper’s call). “Friction” are handy prompts for SB spends.

Patron	Rival	Edge Loci	Friction & Prompts (SB)
Raéyn (Sea, Tides, Travel)	Khemesh (Abyssal Maw)	Open water, coasts, shipping lanes, storms you can <i>read</i> .	SB: changing tides; shifting winds; a course opens <i>but</i> a vow at sea is invoked; waymarks appear then vanish; safe harbor demands a price.
Khemesh (Abyssal Maw)	Raéyn (Sea, Tides, Travel)	Trenches, lightless holds, flooded caverns, oppressive silence.	SB: pressure crush; voices from the bottom; hull-groan clocks; lanterns dim; maps unreliable; trustworthy; a crewman hears the treacherous call.

Patron		Rival	Edge Loci	Friction & Prompts (SB)
Sealed (Boundaries, Closure)	Gate	The Traveler (Ways, Roads)	Customs houses, oaths, locks, court thresholds.	SB: writ checked; stamp demanded; writ ledger; crossing exacts a toll; shortcut lapses into lawful detour; [WARD] k hum.
The Traveler (Ways, Roads)		Sealed (Boundaries, Closure)	Desire paths, smuggler tracks, wayshrines, liminal crossings.	SB: desire line opens; escort looks av marginalia proves true; the lock refuses lawful key <i>now</i> .
The Witness (Truth, Revelation)		Mab (Glamour, Courts)	Depositions, confessionals, cold light, mirrored chambers.	SB: mask slips; testimony contradicts courtier; illusion seams show; a polite scandal erupts.
Mab (Glamour, Courts)		The Witness (Truth, Revelation)	Masques, salons, petty courts, festive oaths.	SB: a favor called; duel by slight; tr offends protocol; a boon if the mask st on.
Ikasha (Shadow, Latent Potential)		The Witness (Truth, Revelation)	Deep shade, empty rooms, places holding unrealized action.	SB: hush worsens Position under scrutiny; a shadow remembers your step; a deferred answer comes due.
Mykkiel (Judgment, Writ)		Varnek (Necromantic Archives)	Courts martial, audit halls, sanctified ledgers.	SB: the writ binds the restless; precedent rejected; a ledger page missing; sentence invites a haunting.
Varnek (Necromantic Archives)	Karn	Oath of Light & Flame (Dawn, Vows)	Ossuaries, plague pits, memorial crypts, last testaments.	SB: bone answers but asks payment; unfinished business drags PCs into an old consecration threatens the archive.
Oath of Light & Flame (Dawn, Vows)		Khemesh (Abyssal Maw)	Sunrise rites, consecrated decks, sworn escorts.	SB: dawn burns back the hush; a vow compels aid; the abyss recoils <i>but</i> leaves a lo omen.
Ikasha (Shadow, Latent Potential)		Oath of Light & Flame (Dawn, Vows)	Twilight thresholds, watchfires, taboos kept at night.	SB: light corners a secret; a vow drags hidden into view; shadow offers escape a cost.
Varnek (Necromantic Archives)	Karn	Carrion King (Carrion, Renewal)	Catacombs, bone-fields, funeral workshops.	SB: ledger of skulls disputes the feast; remains refile themselves; scavengers d crate protocol.
Maelstraeus (Infernal Bargainer)		Oath of Light & Flame (Dawn, Vows)	Witness trees, oath-stones, sanctified doors.	SB: contract vs. vow; a pledge sears a lo hole shut; a promised price comes due <i>n</i>
Livaea (Temptation, Desire)		Inaea (Mercy, Hearth)	Bedchambers, feasting halls, clandestine trysts.	SB: desire strains hospitality; temptation corrodes bonds; mercy offers comfort, passion demands more.
The Traveler (Ways, Roads)		Clockwork Monad (Iteration, Process)	Caravans, milestones, scheduled relays.	SB: timetable buckles; a detour saves t a routine yields speed <i>but</i> blinds to amb
Nidhoggr (Dreaming Antiquity)		The Witness (Truth, Revelation)	Ancient dreams, truth-seeing rites among ruins.	SB: revelation wakes something old; tr contradicts myth—or proves it; an anced demands to be heard.

Patron	+1 Thematic Skill	Gift / Lore Bestowal
Ikasha (Shadow, Penumbra)	Stealth	Grants the hush between footsteps and the raven's omen at every threshold.
Mykkiel (Judgment, Writ)	Command	Grants the authority of seal and sentence, words that bind like iron.
The Witness (Truth, Revelation)	Notice	Grants the unblinking gaze that unmask deceit and remembers every oath.
Sealed Gate (Boundaries, Closure)	Tinker	Grants mastery of thresholds—doors that yield or bar at your command.
Raéyn (Storm, Tides)	Skirmish	Grants the sailor's fortune: winds that shift, storms that answer to will.
Khemesh (Abyss, Pressure)	Skirmish	Grants the crushing silence of the deep, where strength is drowned in weight.
Mab (Glamour, Courts)	Persuade	Grants the mask of favor, a voice that bends courtiers and kindles desire.
Sacred Geometry (Perfect Forms)	Tinker	Grants the compass of perfection, every shape reduced to its true measure.
Clockwork (Mechanism, Process)	Tinker	Grants the certainty of repetition: a cycle that never falters, a gear that never slips.
Varnek Karn (Ossuary, Dominion of the Dead)	Command	Grants the silence of the archive, where the dead obey and records speak.
Nidhoggr (Deep Earth, Rot)	Skirmish	Grants the weight of ages, the strength of stone and the hunger of roots.
The Traveler (Ways, Roads)	Notice	Grants the open way, a compass that never rests, and roads where none are marked.
Oath of Flame & Light (Dawn, Vows)	Command	Grants the fire of dawn, a vow that shields the faithful and sears the faithless.
Carrion King (Carrion, Renewal)	Survival	Grants the feast of decay, where what is dead becomes seed for what lives.
Gallows Bell (Doom, Last Rites)	Command	Grants the toll of ending, a voice that closes stories and calls debts due.
Old Man of the Black Forest (Primal Humanity, Instinct)	Survival	Grants the wild memory: fang, fire, and the path of instinct through the dark wood.
Isoka (Serpents, Shedding)	Skirmish	Grants the serpent's coil, strength in sudden strike and wisdom in renewal.
Inaea (Mercy, Hearth)	Persuade	Grants the hearth's warmth, shelter to the weary and mercy for the lost.
Maelstraeus (Infernal Bargainer)	Persuade	Grants the contract's weight, every deal sealed in fire and shadow.
Livaea (Temptation, Desire)	Persuade	Grants the lure of longing, beauty sharpened into power over hearts.

Table 7.2: Patron's Gift: fixed Thematic Skill and lore of their bestowed blessing. Thematic bonuses apply only when the fiction matches the Patron's domain.

Quick Rulings.

- **Position Nudge:** In a home locus, start one step better; in a rival locus, one step worse.
- **Effect Shade:** Where a Patron dominates, consider an Effect bump; where opposed, consider Limited Effect unless paid for.
- **Symbol Interference (Invokers):** Carrying both sides' Symbols increases narrative noise: first ritual each scene may mark +1 Obligation (Keeper's call).
- **SB Color:** When spending SB in these matchups, prefer suits that fit: Hearts (social), Spades (harm/escalation), Clubs (material cost), Diamonds (numinous disturbance).

7.13 Obligation Overflow (Rites)

When **Obligation** is ticked past its maximum (from Rites, vows, bargains), mark **Fatigue** based on scene severity:

- **Low:** +1 Fatigue
- **Standard:** +2 Fatigue
- **High:** +3 Fatigue

If this *fills* the Fatigue Track, apply the **Fatigue** → **Harm** conversion (see §8.7).

7.14 Clearing Obligation Segments (Extended)

Obligation measures the growing narrative weight of a Patron's attention. It is not debt in a transactional sense, but rather the sense that a Patron has invested, noticed, and expects relevance. This section expands the SRD guidance with philosophy, examples, and optional rules.

7.14.1 Core Principle

Obligation is cleared through **meaningful engagement** with the Patron. The system assumes Patrons are narrative entities: they do not care about coin, but about resonance. Clearing requires a demonstration that the character is still walking their path.

7.14.2 Off-Screen Clearing (Primary Method)

- **Act of Service.** Clear 1 segment by performing a resonant service aligned to the Patron's themes or goals.
- **Requirement.** The player must provide an *Intricate Description* of the act—detail, symbolism, and impact.
- **Scope.** The act need not be arduous, but it must be thematically precise (e.g., weaving a shadow tapestry for Ikasha; negotiating a shrewd pact for Maelstraeus).
- **Reward.** Successful clearing often comes with narrative color: whispers of approval, subtle omens, or a temporary advantage in Patron-facing scenes.

7.14.3 On-Screen Clearing (Optional Mechanic)

Talent: Focused Devotion (3–5 XP). Once per scene, spend 1 Boon to clear 1 segment of Obligation from a Patron. This cannot remove segments accrued during the same scene. It

represents a desperate or ritualized gesture to stave off attention without fully satisfying it.

7.14.4 Narrative Implications

1. **Player Agency.** The player defines how service manifests, reinforcing creativity within the Patron's thematic frame.
2. **GM Collaboration.** The GM adjudicates sufficiency: Is the service aligned? Is it intricate enough?
3. **Ongoing Relationship.** Clearing segments emphasizes that the Patron bond is active, not static. The relationship evolves with acts of recognition.
4. **Scene Economy.** The cap on on-screen clearing ensures the mechanic cannot erase costs just accrued. It forces the long view.

7.14.5 Worked Examples

Example 1: Ikasha, Angel of Serpents. A character clears a segment by shedding their old cloak, burning it, and narrating how it symbolizes leaving behind a former self. The GM rules it sufficient, noting the subtle scent of scales in the air.

Example 2: Maelstraeus, Infernal Bargainer. The player narrates writing an elaborate contract that offers a small service to a minor devil. The GM agrees: the service is thematically aligned and clears 1 segment. Later, this contract may resurface as a hook.

Example 3: Isoka, Angel of Change. The group weaves discarded materials into a shrine mosaic. Its intricate description convinces the GM, who clears 1 segment and hints that a future boon will resonate with this act.

7.14.6 Optional Modules

Overflow Consequences. When Obligation fills and overflows, the Patron demands immediate service. This may be delivered as a Complication Point (or Story Beat) trigger: the Patron intrudes, offering aid with a binding cost.

Segment Scaling. Particularly devoted characters may require greater services: clear 2 segments with a dramatic act (pilgrimage, sacrifice, or political maneuver), subject to GM approval.

Shared Obligation. In multi-character bonds, the GM may allow a group act of service to clear multiple segments, but only if each player contributes to the Intricate Description.

7.14.7 GM Guidance

- **Be Generous with Hooks.** Reward creativity with flavorful omens, not just a cleared box.
- **Maintain Tension.** Do not allow trivial or repetitive services to count. Require new symbolic angles each time.
- **Keep On-Screen Costly.** Remind players that Focused Devotion costs a Boon and cannot erase fresh debt.

- **Tie to Patron Themes.** If a service drifts off-theme, let it fail or only partially clear.

Summary

Obligation is cleared through **thematic service, intricate description, and narrative engagement**. Off-screen acts remain the primary path; on-screen clearing is a costly safety valve. Treat every act as a chance to show how characters evolve under their Patron’s gaze.

7.15 Acts of Service — Examples

Patrons delight in resonance, not labor. Use these examples as prompts—*petty*, incomprehensible acts, small sacrifices, and *involved* operations both count when on-theme. Each entry lists a scale suggestion and what it might clear.

7.16 Acts of Service — Examples

Patrons delight in resonance, not labor. Use these examples as prompts—*petty* butterflies and *involved* operations both count when on-theme. Each entry lists a scale suggestion and what it might clear.

7.17 Acts of Service — Examples

Patrons delight in resonance, not labor. Use these examples as prompts—*petty* butterflies and *involved* operations both count when on-theme. Each entry lists a scale suggestion and what it might clear.

GM Notes

- **Novelty Over Volume.** Repeating the same petty act does not keep clearing segments; vary the symbol or site.
- **Precision Beats Difficulty.** A sharp thematic hit at “petty” scale can clear 1 segment as surely as a muddled “modest.”
- **Hook the World.** Many of these acts conveniently create future clocks, NPC ties, or bargains—use them.

GM Notes

- **Novelty Over Volume.** Repeating the same petty act does not keep clearing segments; vary the symbol or site.
- **Precision Beats Difficulty.** A sharp thematic hit at “petty” scale can clear 1 segment as surely as a muddled “modest.”
- **Hook the World.** Many of these acts conveniently create future clocks, NPC ties, or bargains—use them.
- **Patron’s Largess** A Patron’s will is mysterious, but their displeasure is rarely subtle. For narrative reasons, the GM may rule that a Patron is especially offended—perhaps by

a neglected omen, a rival gaining favor, or simple caprice—and exact an additional toll beyond the usual cost.

Table 7.4: Acts of Service (Petty to Dramatic)

Patron	Scale	Example Act (Intricate Description prompt)	Why It Pleases	Clear
Aliyah, the Chained Angel	Petty	Wear a ribbon of black iron wire beneath your sleeve while offering alms to someone who wronged you. Describe the blessing that bites.	A gift that harms as it helps; curse couched as mercy.	1 seg
Aliyah, the Chained Angel	Significant	Accept a visible flaw to protect another from a worse fate; narrate the transfer of stain.	Willing corruption in service of a vow.	2 segs
Carrion-King	Petty	Compost a ruined feast and deliver the first harvest to the poor.	Turns ending into beginning.	1 seg
Carrion-King	Modest	Convert an abandoned shop into a guild for apprentices; show the before/after.	Renewal from decay.	1 seg
Clockwork Monad	Petty	Publish a tiny process that saves others three minutes a day; track its adoption.	Iterative optimization.	1 seg
Clockwork Monad	Significant	Refactor a broken civic system (queues, water rota) with transparent rules.	Systems that improve with use.	2 segs
Gallow's Bell	Petty	Return a stolen trinket with a note naming the debt and the hour of amends.	Restores balance with gentle toll.	1 seg
Gallow's Bell	Modest	Mediate restitution between victim and	Justice flowing like water.	1 seg

7.18 Summons and Outsiders

7.18.1 Definition

An **Outsider** is any being not native to the world of Fate's Edge. This includes summoned spirits, demons, celestials, and entities that arrive from beyond the veil of the Eight Elements. They are powerful but dangerous to bind.

7.18.2 Summoning (Pact-Whisperer Core)

Summoning is a way to call and bind Outsiders for temporary aid.

1. **Call** (1 Action): A spirit manifests at Near range. Choose a Spirit Template.
2. **Bind**: Choose one: spend 1 Boon or mark 1 Fatigue.
3. **Leash**: Set Leash = Cap + 2 segments (Cap is the Outsider's tier, typically 1/3/5 for Lesser/Greater/Elder).
4. **Tick Leash** whenever any occur:
 - Spirit takes harm.
 - You command against its nature.
 - You split focus (take another significant action while it acts).
 - A rival contests it.
 - It moves from Close to Far quickly.
 - It crosses a [WARD].
5. **Departure**: When the Leash fills, the spirit acts to its nature once, then departs.

Limits: Only one active summoned spirit at a time (unless a Talent says otherwise). All summons depart at Downtime unless explicitly sustained.

7.18.3 Boon Finesse

Once per round, you may spend 1 Boon to clear 1 tick from your current spirit's Leash. You cannot do this after the Leash has filled.

7.18.4 Outsider Caps

- PC-summoned Outsiders: Cap is limited by Talents (Lesser = 1, Greater = 3).
- NPC Outsiders: GM assigns based on story needs (Lesser = 1, Greater = 3, Elder = 5).

7.18.5 Tags for Summons & Outsiders

Certain Tags specifically interact with Outsiders.

WARD:

Creates a magical edge/zone that Outsiders must test to cross.

- DV = Outsider's Cap.
- Hit: Outsider crosses and its Leash gains +DV segments.
- Partial: Outsider crosses and its Leash gains +1 segment.
- Miss: Outsider fails to cross this beat.

BANISH:

Drives a visible Outsider toward departure.

- DV = Outsider's Cap.
- Hit: Add +DV segments to its Leash (or Exit Tally).
- Partial: Add +1 segment.
- Miss: No effect.

UNWARD:

Suppresses or dismisses a [WARD].

- DV by fiction (materials, sanctity, prep, locus, opposition).
- Hit: Ward dismissed/suppressed.
- Partial: Ward suppressed briefly (1 beat).
- Miss: No effect.

7.18.6 Unified Leash / Exit Tally System

- Summoned Outsiders track their service via a **Leash** (Cap + 2 segments).
- Non-summoned Outsiders affected by [WARD] or [BANISH] gain a temporary **Exit Tally** = Cap + 2. When the tally fills, they act to nature once, then depart.

7.18.7 GM Guidance

- Summons are not permanent allies; they are volatile forces.
- Always color Outsider behavior by their Elemental resonance and domain.
- When the Leash fills, deliver a memorable "act to nature" moment before they vanish.
- Use SB to escalate Outsider complications: a jealous Patron, a backlash of strange omens, or collateral spiritual harm.

7.19 Elemental Backlash

When magic disturbs the weave, the world pushes back. Backlash manifests as fiction-first complications with light mechanical teeth. Each element (and its metaphysical counterpart) has a **Minor** and **Major** pattern.

Using Backlash at the Table

Trigger. A roll shows a 1 (gaining a (SB)) or the text explicitly says "accept 1 (SB) to escalate."

Choose One: Apply the table's Minor effect, or escalate to Major by adding +1 (SB) immediately.

Mechanical Nudge Types. *Position/Effect shift, Clock tick (1/2), Condition, or Immediate Cost.*

Realms and Counterparts

- **Earth** (*Realm: Stone*) ↔ **Fate** (*Anti-magic, inevitability*)
- **Fire** (*Realm: Ember*) ↔ **Life** (*Vital spark, growth*)

- **Air** (*Realm: Gale*) ↔ **Luck/Fortune** (*Ephemera, unlikely turns*)
- **Water** (*Realm: Tides*) ↔ **Death/Dreams/Thresholds (Obishaal)** (*Passage, veils, the Ways Between*)

7.20 Rituals (Extended)

Rituals are *slow magic*: explicit intent, staged action, and negotiated risk. They are how characters bend the world carefully, trading time, components, and narrative exposure for precise results. This section expands the SRD quick-start (§??) with procedures, dials, and worked examples.

7.20.1 Design Goals

- **Fiction-first.** Components and steps are story handles, not inventory chores.
- **Visible costs.** Every ritual declares *what it costs* (time, component loss, conditions) and *how it risks* (SB)/backlash.
- **Tempting choices.** Players can *push*—accept (SB) to escalate position/effect/scale.
- **Portable.** Works for Runekeepers, Invokers, Summoners, and Free Casters with minimal chassis-specific tweaks.

7.20.2 Ritual Procedure

Use this skeleton for any ritual, published or improvised.

- Step 1: State Intent.** What do you want? Clarify element/Realm if obvious (Fire for heat, Water for memory, Fate for anti-magic, Obishaal for thresholds).
- Step 2: Choose Scope.** Size, duration, range, and detail. Start modest; escalations come later.
- Step 3: Lay Components.** Name *two things*: (a) **Focus** (tool/site/patron sign), (b) **Fuel** (herb, blood, pact, memory). Decide which is consumed vs. retained.
- Step 4: Set Time.** Default: *Low 1 minute / Med 5–10 minutes / High 15–20 minutes*. More time improves position/effect; rushing worsens it.
- Step 5: Call Risks.** Point to the element’s **Backlash** (§??) and the default **(SB) trigger**: any 1 rolled creates a (SB); re-rolling 1s does not remove (SB) and may add another.
- Step 6: Roll and Resolve.** Apply position/effect and any clocks. Offer a *push*: take +1 (SB) to step up result now.
- Step 7: Mark Costs.** Consume components, apply Conditions, or tick wear/concurrency (per chassis). Close the scene hooks the ritual created.

7.20.3 Component Economy

Components are levers, not taxes. Use them to signal tone and stakes.

7.20.4 Teamwork and Aid

- **Hands & Voices.** Each assistant names one component they contribute; either reduces cast time *or* accepts up to 1 (SB) on the caster’s behalf once per ritual.

- **Focus Chain.** Passing the Focus around the circle grants advantage on the finishing action but risks DISTRACTED if interrupted.
- **Distributed Load.** Splitting a High ritual into two coordinated Mediums avoids a Major backlash but creates two Minor hooks instead.

7.20.5 Clocks and Outcomes

Tie every consequential ritual to **named clocks**. Examples: *Spreading Fire*, *Inevitable Outcome*, *Crossing Due*, *Alarmed Attention*. Advancing or reducing clocks is often better than flat bonuses.

Outcome Palette

- On a strong result:** full effect, +1 effect step, or Clock −1.
- On a mixed:** effect with a cost (component consumed; condition applied).
- On a weak:** effect limited; Clock +1/2; Minor Backlash.
- On a push:** player may take (SB) +1 to upgrade one step immediately.

7.20.6 Backlash Integration

Use the condensed table (§??). Calibrate by scene weight: exploratory scenes favor Minor; pivotal moments bait a Major via (SB) +1.

7.20.7 Chassis-Specific Notes

Runekeeper. Embed Rites as *accelerants*: a published Rite may count as a Focus that upgrades position or halves time.

Invoker. Symbols accumulate *wear*; a maintenance rite can clear 1 wear mid-scene on success *or* shift backlash from Major to Minor.

Summoner. *Gate* effects occupy concurrency slots. Disruption on broken terms: (SB) +1 and the entity acts on its last instruction.

Caster (Free). Tags become explicit ritual steps (*bind*, *veil*, *reveal*)—chain two compatible tags once/scene for a synergy bump without extra cost.

7.20.8 Ritual Templates

Use these fill-in cards to author new content quickly.

Template: Utility Rite (Low)

Name: _____ **Element:** _____

Cast Time: 1 minute **Scope:** pocket-scale

Components: Focus (kept): _____; Fuel (consumed): _____

Effect: _____

Cost: _____

Backlash: Minor (§??). **Push:** take (SB) +1 to upgrade one step.

Template: Scene Rite (Med)

Name: _____ **Element:** _____

Cast Time: 5–10 minutes **Scope:** room/street

Components: Focus (kept): _____; Fuel (consumed): _____; Site: _____

Effect: _____

Cost: _____

Backlash: Minor; offer Major via (SB) +1. **Clocks:** _____

Template: Set-Piece Rite (High)

Name: _____ **Element:** _____

Cast Time: 15–20 minutes **Scope:** block/fort

Components: Focus (kept): _____; Fuel (consumed): _____; Site: _____; Vow: _____

Effect: _____

Cost: _____

Backlash: Likely Major; bait with (SB) +1. **Clocks:** _____

7.20.9 Worked Examples

Example 1: Quiet Veil (Team Infiltration). *Intent:* silence the group for one scene. *Scope:* corridor sweep. *Components:* ash (fuel, consumed), bell (focus, kept). *Time:* 5 minutes. *Risks:* Air/Luck Minor on 1; offer Major to avoid dogs' scent. *Roll:* mixed—effect with cost. *Outcome:* MUTED condition until scene ends; Clock $-1/2$ on *Patrol Pass*. Player takes (SB) +1 to also foil scent (Major avoided by paying the (SB)).

Example 2: River's Memory (Investigation). *Intent:* view last night's ferry landing. *Scope:* a few minutes of blurred images. *Components:* bowl, token from dock. *Time:* 10 minutes. *Risk:* Water/Obishaal Minor. *Roll:* strong—clear image; token ruined per Cost.

Outcome: Clock -1 on *Where did the courier go?*; whisper from the Ways foreshadows a revenant (hook).

Example 3: Fate-Splice (Boss Rescue). *Intent:* move the poison consequence from the prince to the knight. *Scope:* one Major consequence. *Components:* paired names on vellum; vow. *Time:* 15 minutes. *Risk:* Fate/Earth. *Roll:* weak—Minor Backlash; *Inevitable Outcome* +1/2. *Push:* (SB) +1 to capture the full consequence anyway. *Outcome:* knight bears the poison; the OMEN mark appears (future hook).

7.20.10 Safety and Consent

Rituals often touch body horror, spiritual intrusion, or coercive bargains. Use lines/veils, X-card, script change, or your table's preferred tools. Make **vows** opt-in; provide non-coercive alternatives with different trade-offs.

7.20.11 Optional Modules

Entropy Counters. Track ritual entropy per scene; at 3+ entropy, the next Minor backlash upgrades to Major automatically. Resets on scene change.

Resonance Sites. Mark places that boost one element (+1 effect) and hinder its counterpart (-1 position). Crossing a resonance flips the pairing.

Material Tags. Let special materials act like tags (cold iron, voidglass) granting narrow immunities or redirecting backlash type.

7.20.12 GM Troubleshooting

- **Pacing drifts long.** Shorten cast time by consuming an extra Fuel component; keep one meaningful step.
- **Risk feels toothless.** Name a clock and advance it on mixed/weak even if the effect lands.
- **Runekeeper dominates.** Insert a *Rune Draw* tell for high-grade rites *or* grant Invokers a mid-scene maintenance clear on a solid success.
- **Summons flood scene.** Enforce concurrency and Disruption (§7.20.7).
- **Casters feel mushy.** Require two explicit tags per ritual step (bind/veil/reveal); grant once/scene synergy bump.

Summary

Rituals trade **time, components, and exposure** for **precision and scale**. Keep costs visible, risk tempting, and outcomes named via clocks. Offer players the choice to buy bigger results with (SB)—then pay off every hook

Table 7.5: Backlash by Element (Minor / Major)

Element

Stone / *Fate*

Heat flares. Smoke blinds; sparks bite. • Effect,−1 or Condition,,: Singed (disadvantage to precis
Air

Table 7.6: Components as Narrative Levers

Type	Examples	Mechanical Nudge
Focus (retained)	Patron token, true-name sigil, saint's nail, ancestral blade.	+1 <i>position</i> on setup or advantage to related follow-up actions.
Fuel (consumed)	Herb bundle, salt vial, blood drop, silver bead, memory-laden note.	−1 <i>time step</i> (faster) or +1 <i>effect</i> step if expensive/rare.
Site (context)	Crossroads, standing stones, bathhouse, bell tower at midnight.	Shift backlash element or re-route it (e.g., into <i>Alarmed Attention</i> clock).
Vow (social)	Sworn phrase, bargain pledge, offered favor.	If broken, immediate (SB) +1 and an intrusion linked to the vow.

Chapter 8

Combat and Conflict

8.1 Core Philosophy

Combat in **Fate's Edge** uses the same consequence-forward mechanics as all other challenges. Every action can produce triumph and complication, and outcomes cascade through Story Beats (SB), clocks, and position changes. The focus is narrative positioning, tactical choice, and meaningful risk—not granular simulation.

8.2 Combat Structure

8.2.1 Rounds and Turns

- **Rounds:** A few seconds of simultaneous action.
- **Turns:** One significant action per participant.
- **Scenes:** A battle is usually one scene unless the fiction splits it.
- **Initiative:** Act in the order that makes sense fictionally; the GM adjudicates flow based on Position and established threats.

8.2.2 Action Declaration

1. **Approach:** Describe intent and method.
2. **Position:** GM sets *Controlled*, *Risky*, or *Desperate*.
3. **Pool:** Build dice (Attribute + Skill + situational modifiers).
4. **Roll & Resolve:** Compare to DV and the Outcome Matrix; any 1s generate SB.

8.3 Position States

Controlled

Advantage (cover, flank, surprise, elevation). Failure leaves options; consequences are minor.

Risky

Even footing; typical exchange of blows. Failure has teeth; moderate consequences.

Desperate

Bad footing, outnumbered, wounded. Failure is severe; success may unlock extra narrative

rewards.

8.4 Range Bands and Movement

8.4.1 Range Band Definitions

Close

Arm's length; grappling; only melee is practical.

Near

Same room/zone; most actions occur here.

Far

Same site but distant; requires movement to engage.

Absent

Off-screen/another area; requires significant effort/time.

8.4.2 Movement Rules

- **1 Move:** Shift one band (Close↔Near or Near↔Far).
- **Dash (action):** Shift two bands (Close→Far or Far→Close).
- **Engage:** Entering Close from Near usually costs a Move.
- **Disengage:** Leaving Close may require a test if threatened.

8.5 Combat Actions

8.5.1 Standard Actions

Attack

Strike with the appropriate Skill (e.g., Melee or Ranged).

Defend

Active defense against incoming harm (parry, block, roll aside).

Maneuver

Change Position, create advantage, or set up an ally.

Use Object

Doors, levers, lanterns, terrain, or gear.

Cast Spell

Perform magical actions (see Chapter 7).

8.5.2 Special Actions

Aid

Provide assistance to another's action (costs as per Assist rules).

Ready

Prepare an action with a clear trigger.

Withdraw

Attempt to disengage safely.

Sprint

Spend your action to Dash (two-band shift).

8.6 Ranged Combat

8.6.1 Firing Profiles

Fast

(knives, slings, shortbows) — Move *and* Shoot. Reload is incidental. Risky at Close while Engaged.

Standard

(longbows, crossbows) — *Move or Shoot*. Reload takes part of the turn. May *Aim* for +1 die or +1 Effect.

Slow

(greatbows, arbalests, siege) — Requires Set/Brace. Reload takes a full turn. Cannot Move and Shoot in the same round.

8.6.2 Options

- **Aim:** Spend a turn to gain +1 die or +1 Effect on the next shot (lost if you Move or are disrupted).
- **Volley:** Spend extra ammunition for +1 die (max +2).
- **Suppress:** Target a zone; foes act at -1 die or Limited Effect until they shift cover.
- **Overwatch:** Hold action; take a Risky shot when a foe crosses your line.

8.6.3 Cover & Close

- **Light cover:** +1 DV or -1 die to attacker.
- **Heavy cover:** +2 DV or -2 dice.
- **Obscured (fog, night):** Worsen Position by one step.
- **Shooting while Engaged at Close:** Risky (Fast) or Desperate (Standard/Slow).

8.7 Health, Fatigue, & Harm

Tracks & Caps

- **Fatigue Track:** boxes equal to **Body**.
- **Harm Levels:** as defined elsewhere (**Harm 1**, **Harm 2**, **Harm 3**).

Fatigue → Harm Conversion

When your Fatigue Track *fills*:

1. Increase your **Harm** by one level (0→Harm 1, 1→2, 2→3).
2. **Clear all Fatigue.**

This can occur multiple times in a scene.

Taking Fatigue

Mark Fatigue for strain, exertion, travel, magic costs, or §?? overflow. If an instance of Fatigue would exceed remaining boxes, only fill to trigger the conversion; any excess is ignored after Harm increases and the track clears.

Recovering Fatigue

- **Short Rest** (quiet watch, food/water): remove **2 Fatigue**.
- **Full Night**: remove **all Fatigue**.

Fatigue recovery does not remove Harm (use your medical/ritual rules).

Mitigation (Optional Dials)

- **Soak/Ward**: Reduce Fatigue by 1–2 before marking if protected by armor/boons/rites.
- **Convert**: Some effects turn **Harm 1** into **2 Fatigue**; if this fills the track, convert as normal.

8.7.1 Harm and Consequences

Harm 1

- 1 die to related actions.

Harm 2

- 1 die to most actions until treated.

Harm 3

- Incapacitated or dying.

Resist: Roll a relevant Attribute vs DV 3 (1s still generate SB) to reduce harm by one level.

8.8 Teamwork in Combat

8.8.1 Assistance

- **Cost**: 1 Boon (or your table’s stress-equivalent).
- **Effect**: +1 die to the assisted roll (max +3 from all assists unless a Talent says otherwise).

8.8.2 Setup Actions

- Create cover, draw fire, threaten flanks, or break formation.
- On success, grant +1 Position *or* step up Effect to an ally’s next action.

8.8.3 Protection

- Interpose to take harm intended for an ally.
- You must be in plausible Position; resolve as a defense or resist.

8.9 Tactical Clocks

Use clocks to track persistent pressures and battlefield states.

Mob Overwhelm [6]

Numbers begin to swamp the PCs.

Fatigue Spiral [4]

Exhaustion degrades performance.

Morale Collapse [6]

A side is on the brink of routing.

Environmental Collapse [8]

Fire, flood, or structure failure escalates.

Reinforcement Arrival [4]

Additional foes or allies appear.

8.10 Position Dynamics**8.10.1 GM-Initiated Shifts**

- **Spend 1 SB:** Worsen a character's Position by one step.
- **Narrative Events:** Reinforcements, collapsing cover, weather, smoke, crowding.

8.10.2 Player-Initiated Shifts

- **Spend 1 Boon:** Improve Position by one step for the current action.
- **Maneuvers/Assets:** Flank, gain elevation, trigger tools/terrain/followers.

8.11 Magic in Combat**8.11.1 Casting Actions*****Standard Casting***

Channel then *Weave*: 1 action each, in order.

Rushed Casting

Combine phases at *Risky* with harsher consequences.

Rites Invocation

1 action; may *Push* for +1 Obligation.

Invoker Rituals

Usually too slow; *Crack the Seal* for instant effect at cost.

8.11.2 Combat Spell Effects

- Shift Position for multiple combatants; advance clocks.
- Spawn hazards (smoke, grease, quake) or advantages (light, ward, barrier).
- Grant offensive/defensive edges; Backlash may add Fatigue/Harm or SB.

8.12 Social Conflict**8.12.1 Social Skills*****Sway***

Persuasion, negotiation, formal discourse.

Deception

Lies, misdirection, manipulation.

Performance

Oratory, entertainment, emotional appeal.

Insight

Reading people, spotting tells, motives.

Command

Leadership, intimidation, asserting authority.

8.12.2 Social Position & Consequences***Controlled***

You hold leverage, information, or status.

Risky

Even footing; standard negotiation.

Desperate

You lack leverage; they hold the cards.

SB may manifest as rumors/scandal, strained alliances, owed concessions, lost access, or broken relationships.

8.13 Mass Combat

Treat armies as high-Cap followers with domain tags and clocks.

8.13.1 Army as Followers

- **Cost:** Cap² XP to raise/maintain.
- **Types:** Infantry, cavalry, archers, engineers, fleets.
- **Capabilities:** Provide large assist dice to war-scale actions (still capped unless a rule overrides).
- **Risks:** Supply, morale, command/control, terrain.

8.13.2 War Clocks***Supply Lines [8]***

Logistics and provisioning.

Army Morale [6]

Cohesion and willingness to fight.

Strategic Position [8]

Passes, ports, bridges.

Alliance Stability [6]

Political support and coalition strain.

8.14 Environmental Combat**8.14.1 Environmental Hazards*****Fire [6]***

Spreading flames limit movement and cause harm.

Flood [8]

Rising water creates difficult terrain and drowning risk.

Collapse [6]

Falling debris, blocked routes.

Weather [4]

Storms, fog, glare reduce visibility/accuracy.

8.14.2 Terrain Effects

- **Choke Points:** Favor defenders, constrain numbers.
- **Elevation:** Bonuses to ranged/oversight, harder to assault.
- **Cover:** Improves Position and reduces consequence severity.
- **Difficult Terrain:** Consumes movement; may worsen Position.

8.15 Quick Reference**8.15.1 Position Effects**

Position	Typical Edge	Consequence Severity
Controlled	Better options, easier withdraw	Minor
Risky	Standard options	Moderate
Desperate	High reward potential	Severe

8.15.2 Harm Quick Reference

Harm	Penalty	Typical SB Grant	Recovery
Harm 1	–1 die (related)	0–1 (GM option)	Rest/basic care
Harm 2	–1 die (most)	0–1 (GM option)	Treatment
Harm 3	Incapacitated	1–2 (GM option)	Major intervention

8.15.3 Common Action DVs

Action Type	Typical DV	Notes
Basic Attack	2	Standard melee/ranged in even footing
Maneuver	2–3	Create advantage, change Position
Active Defense	3	Parry, block, evade under pressure
Complex Action	4	Multi-target or strong field control
High-Risk	5+	Desperate gambit, extreme precision

8.16 Combat Examples**8.16.1 Melee Combat Example**

Kael strikes a cultist (*Risky*, DV 2):

- 5d10 \rightarrow 9, 7, 5, 2, 1 \Rightarrow 3 successes, 1 SB.
- **Success with cost:** The cultist falls.
- GM spends 1 SB: *Blood spatters the ritual circle; the summoning clock advances 1.*

8.16.2 Ranged Combat Example

Lyra fires a longbow at a distant archer (*Desperate*, DV 3):

- 4d10 \rightarrow 10, 6, 3, 1 \Rightarrow 2 successes, 1 SB.
- **Partial:** The archer is hit but dives for cover.
- GM offers choice: shift Lyra to *Risky* (stay exposed) *or* take Harm 1 from return fire.

8.16.3 Magic Combat Example

Theron raises a defensive ward (*Controlled*, DV 3):

- **Channel:** 2 successes, 0 SB.
- **Weave:** 3 successes, 2 SB.
- **Success with cost:** Ward holds; GM spends 2 SB to start *Ward Strain* [4].

8.17 Tags & States

[HEALED]

Remove **all Fatigue**. (Does not remove Harm.)

[RALLIED]

Remove **2 Fatigue**; +1 die on your next action this scene.

[FORTIFIED]

Until scene end, the first incoming **Harm 1** becomes **2 Fatigue**.

[STABILIZED]

End bleed/burn/poison; does not remove Harm.

[MENDED]

Remove Harm per your recovery procedure.

[REVIVED]

Stand a fallen ally; follow Harm 3/KO rules.

Chapter 9

Lore-Heavy Backgrounds, Skills, and Talents

9.1 Introduction to Lore-Heavy Content

Lore-heavy backgrounds, skills, and talents provide deep integration with **Fate's Edge's** setting while maintaining mechanical consistency with the SRD. These options offer specialized capabilities tied to specific regions, cultures, and magical traditions, allowing characters to become true masters of their chosen domains.

9.2 Regional and Cultural Skills

9.2.1 Utaran Law and Precedent

Attribute: Wits or Presence + Utaran Law

Scope: Imperial codes, edicts, and forum custom from Ecktoria to the marches

Specialization: Legal/bureaucratic procedures, imperial precedent

Effects:

- On success in legal/bureaucratic scenes, downgrade one legal complication to *Bureaucratic Delay* (buys time without removing scrutiny).
- Critical success creates a temporary *Stay of Writ* (debt flip: clerk demands future favor).
- In Vhasia/Viterra ports, convert quarantine/levy complications to softer inspections.

Complications: Audit flags, paperwork trails, or offended minor officials.

9.2.2 Stone-Tongue (Aeler Affinity)

Attribute: Spirit + Stone-Tongue

Scope: Reading the memory of stone, from unworked rock to vault masonry

Specialization: Geological history, architectural insight, underground navigation

Effects:

- Ask 1–3 questions about who carved/used/strained the stone (Intricate description required).
- Each extra question risks 1 SB of haunt (fatigue or intrusive memory).
- Once per Aeler travel leg, peek at the next leg's location or complication card.

Complications: Disorientation; GM may add subtle echoes/omens to later scenes.

9.2.3 Monsoon-Reckoning

Attribute: Wits + Monsoon-Reckoning

Scope: Seasonal winds and their social/economic effects in southern/eastern regions

Specialization: Weather prediction, maritime timing, economic forecasting

Effects:

- Once per sea/river leg, shift weather complication severity down one rank.
- Or convert a weather complication to a *Forecast* boon (DV -1 to the next two navigation rolls).
- Intricate description requires reading skies, currents, and ledgers.

Complications: Failed predictions (miss by 2+) bank +1 SB for false windows later.

9.2.4 Heraldry and Lineage

Attribute: Presence + Heraldry

Scope: Houses, devices, marriages, feuds in Vhasia/Vilikari regions

Specialization: Noble identification, alliance tracking, protocol navigation

Effects:

- Gain Controlled position vs. titled NPCs in social interactions.
- Ask one specific House-truth on success.
- Critical success creates one-use *Letters of Lineage* pass (acts as local warrant).

Complications: Name a feud; someone slighted takes notice.

9.2.5 Geasa and Oath-Weaving

Attribute: Spirit + Geasa

Scope: Binding promises, taboos, and loopholes in Theona/Elven traditions

Specialization: Oathcraft, ritual binding, contractual magic

Effects:

- Attach a 4-segment geas clock to a willing target with defined trigger/consequence.
- Intricate description requires exact terms, witnesses, and tokens.
- GM must honor properly established geasa.

Complications: Failed geasa grant GM +2 SB as oath backlash or minor personal bind.

9.3 Specialized Talents

9.3.1 Echo-Walker's Step (Prestige)

Requirements: Visit site of deep memory (ruined city, great betrayal, etc.)

Cost: 20 XP

Use: Once per arc, enter perfect echo of past event at location

Effects:

- Observe past events perfectly; handle ephemeral objects.
- GM banks +2 SB; figures in echo may notice you (complication tag).

- Next mystery complication in arc treated as Known (DV -1).

9.3.2 Margravine's Warrant (Acasia)

Requirements: Complete job for petty ruler

Cost: 15 XP

Use: Carry portable warrant of rank (7–K value)

Effects:

- Bypass minor tolls, commandeer limited aid, sway magistrates in Acasia.
- Each use ticks Patron Exposure clock (3 segments).
- At Burned, warrant revoked and character wanted.

9.3.3 Pilot's Mirror Glint (Kahfagia)

Requirements: Survive hazardous channel using lantern-law

Cost: 12 XP

Use: Once per session predict lantern-law shift

Effects:

- Bank $+1$ free success on pilotage/navigation actions tied to the predicted shift.
- Failure grants GM $+2$ SB; timing off with convoy for current leg.

9.3.4 Speak with the Pale Shepherd (Aelaerem)

Requirements: Hearthbound tie and resolve hearth threat

Cost: 18 XP

Use: Ritual communion with protective spirits

Effects:

- Ask one question about cycles, loss, or protection; GM answers plainly.
- Requires significant personal offering.
- Gain *Melancholy* tag until next dawn (narrative weight).

9.3.5 Forge-Seal of Khaz-Vurim (Aeler)

Requirements: Craft masterwork in major Aeler forge

Cost: 16 XP

Use: Guild recognition and crafting authority

Effects:

- Automatic Controlled position with dwarven craft-guilds.
- Once per session upgrade a relevant action to *Intricate* when demonstrating method.
- Deception/shoddy work revokes Seal permanently.

9.3.6 Inspire (Bonded)

Cost: 3 XP (uses scale with Tier: 2/3/4 uses between downtime)

Prerequisite: Declared Bonded PC ally

Effects (choose Bonded ally in Near range):

- Bonded ally: $+1$ Boon and $+1$ die on next roll this scene.

- You: +1 die on next roll this scene.
- Each other PC in Near: +1 die on next roll this scene.

Limitations:

- Followers cannot benefit from Inspire.
- Each PC benefits once per scene maximum.
- All +1 dice count toward the +3 cap.
- Boons follow normal hold/carry limits.

9.4 Background Packages

Background packages combine cultural roles with signature talents, perks, scene keys, and narrative hooks.

9.4.1 Sepulcher Adept (Aeler)

Required Asset: Aeler Crypt Access or Oath-Pennant Keeper

Signature Talent: Whisper of the Unquiet Dead (6 XP)

Perks (choose one per session):

- Mitigate the first SB from spiritual/ancestral complications.
- Silence group movement in sealed stone spaces for one beat.
- Detect necromancy or grave-robbing instantly.

Scene Keys: Royal Crypt, Under-Vault Archive, Disputed Burial Site

Hooks: Ancestral spirit misidentification, senior adept censure, damning truths

9.4.2 Lantern-Law Advocate (Kahfagia)

Required Asset: Kahfagian Harbor Charter or Pilot's Guild Membership

Signature Talent: Jurisdiction on the Tide (5 XP)

Perks (choose one per session):

- Predict beacon shifts for pilotage advantage.
- Minor port official backs claims on technicalities.
- Halve customs levies through flawless paperwork.

Scene Keys: Admiralty Court, Fog-bound Harbor, Pilot's Guildhall

Hooks: Rival bylaw citations, precedent weaponization, lantern malfunctions

9.4.3 Curse-Breaker of Silkstrand (Acasia)

Required Asset: Silkstrand Safehouse or Archivolt Research Rights

Signature Talent: Follow the Unspooled Thread (7 XP)

Perks (choose one per session):

- Anchor location against a Curse for one scene.
- Identify persons/objects anchoring Curse knots.
- +1 effect protecting others from Curse fallout.

Scene Keys: Cursed Crossroads, Affected Estate, Archivolt Library

Hooks: Curse twisting successes, cult marking, knot transfer consequences

9.4.4 Voice of the Moot (Linn/Theona)

Required Asset: Thing-holm Speaking Rights or Foster-Bond with Jarl

Signature Talent: Word-Bond (6 XP)

Perks (choose one per session):

- Calm heated crowds with proverbs (Position → Controlled).
- Call minor boons from oath-bound parties.
- Detect geas/compulsion during parley.

Scene Keys: Thing Gathering, Wedding Feast, Oath-Swearing

Hooks: Loophole exploitation, conflicting judgments, oath nullification

9.4.5 Legate of the Silent Gate (Mistlands)

Required Asset: Protectorate Commission or Bell-Warden Authority

Signature Talent: Breath-Test (8 XP)

Perks (choose one per session):

- Command Cap 3 Protectorate squad for point security.
- Sanctify area against wraiths for one scene.
- Decode bell-logs for exact watch timing.

Scene Keys: Weeping Gate, Bell-Line Levee, Breach Site

Hooks: Local authority challenges, protocol exceptions, sacrificial demands

9.5 Prestige Backgrounds (Campaign Tier)

Prestige backgrounds represent destiny-tier roles earned through significant campaign achievements. Their signature talents are once-per-campaign abilities with major narrative impact.

9.5.1 The Cursed Child of Silkstrand

Requirements: Personal involvement in major Acasian Curse event; deep Silkstrand ties

Signature Talent: Laughter That Ends Sieges (20 XP, once/campaign)

Effects:

- End large-scale conflict (siege, battle, storm) through reality unraveling.
- No roll required; automatic success within line of sight.
- Creates *Silkstrand Echo* Front (6 segments) with personal consequences.

Epic Hook: Curse binds to character; minor echoes affect every session.

9.5.2 Stone-Speaker of Khaz-Vurim

Requirements: Broker monumental peace between Aeler holds or major powers

Signature Talent: Move the Mountain's Will (20 XP, once/campaign)

Effects:

- Reroute geological or political reality (pass opening, flooding, edict ignoring).
- No roll required; automatic success for defined objective.
- Creates *Geas of Stone* Front (8 segments) with monumental task.

Epic Hook: Loss of dwarven hospitality until geas completed.

9.5.3 The Last Dauphin's Shadow

Requirements: Public championing of Sun Court claimant; entangled in cause

Signature Talent: The Sunburst Warrant (18 XP, once/campaign)

Effects:

- Issue commands obeyed as from lost Sun-King (mobilization, levies, sanctuary).
- Concrete objective happens unless physically impossible.
- Creates *Candle of the Sun* Front (6 segments) tracking movement cohesion.

Epic Hook: Each use consumes loyalist assets through exposure or loss.

9.5.4 Mist-Seer of the Weeping Gate

Requirements: Endure Direwood and return changed; face uncommon horror

Signature Talent: Bargain with the Deep Mist (20 XP, once/campaign)

Effects:

- Parley with Mist's sentience for one true question or year-long protection.
- No roll required; automatic success for defined terms.
- Creates *Lost Thing* Front (6 segments) for surrendered attribute.

Epic Hook: Permanent loss of memory/name/sense/skill with narrative weight.

9.5.5 Keeper of the Foedus Stone

Requirements: Primary mediator preventing major faction war

Signature Talent: The Law That Binds Spears (18 XP, once/campaign)

Effects:

- Impose absolute truce between named factions with supernatural enforcement.
- No roll required; automatic success at treaty site.
- Creates *Coiled Blood* Front (8 segments) tracking compressed hostility.

Epic Hook: Passive escalation leading to worse conflict when truce breaks.

9.6 Magic System Integration

Lore-heavy backgrounds integrate seamlessly with Fate's Edge's magic systems, creating unique synergies between knowledge and supernatural power.

9.6.1 Rites and Pact Magic Integration

Rite-Bound Scholar:

- Use relevant Skills (Heraldry, Utaran Law) to improve Rite effectiveness.
- Background Perks can mitigate Obligation costs or reduce Backlash risks.
- Signature Talents can be used in conjunction with Rite effects for combined impact.

Example: A Lantern-Law Advocate using *Jurisdiction on the Tide* with Gate Patron Rites could create legally binding magical boundaries.

Pact Scholar Specialization:

- Lore Skills reduce SB costs for specific Outsider types.
- Background knowledge provides better Leash control for summoned entities.
- Cultural understanding helps navigate Patron relationships and Obligation management.

9.6.2 Freeform Casting Enhancement**Elemental Specialization:**

- Regional skills provide DV reductions for thematically appropriate spells.
- Background Perks can mitigate Backlash for specific Element types.
- Cultural affinities grant +1 die when casting aligned with background themes.

Ritual Casting Advantages:

- Lore-heavy characters can serve as better ritual anchors or coordinators.
- Specialized knowledge reduces helper-cap requirements for complex rituals.
- Background talents can provide additional free successes in ritual contexts.

9.7 Social and Leadership Applications**9.7.1 Bardic Traditions****Court Bard:**

- Uses *Inspire* to rally allies in social and combat situations.
- Heraldry Skill enhances *Inspire* effects with noble audiences.
- Utaran Law background provides Controlled position in legal contexts.
- Voice of the Moot background amplifies group decision-making influence.

Performance Integration:

- Use Performance to enhance social position through entertainment.
- Cultural knowledge allows for region-specific appeals and references.
- *Inspire* can be reflavored as epic recitations or stirring speeches.

9.7.2 Warleader and Command**Tactical Integration:**

- Use *Inspire* before major combat actions to ensure allied advantages.
- Combine with mass combat rules to amplify army effectiveness.
- Margravine's Warrant background provides authority for larger-scale commands.
- Stone-Speaker background makes *Inspire* effects more potent in defensive scenarios.

Strategic Applications:

- Heraldry identifies enemy formations and predicts tactics.
- Monsoon-Reckoning enables weather-aware campaign planning.
- Geasa can bind military agreements and truces.

9.8 Advanced Skill Uses

9.8.1 Synergistic Skill Combinations

Stone-Tongue + Heraldry:

- Read historical events from stone to verify lineage claims.
- Identify ancient property boundaries or territorial disputes.
- Authenticate artifacts through geological and historical analysis.

Utaran Law + Geasa:

- Create legally binding magical contracts.
- Enforce imperial edicts through oath-based magic.
- Navigate legal loopholes using ritual precision.

Monsoon-Reckoning + Pilot’s Mirror Glint:

- Perfect timing for maritime operations combining weather and law.
- Predict economic impacts of seasonal changes on trade routes.
- Coordinate complex naval maneuvers with environmental awareness.

9.8.2 Campaign-Scale Applications

Political Influence:

- Heraldry can shift faction relationships through marriage alliances.
- Utaran Law can rewrite regional governance through precedent.
- Voice of the Moot can unite disparate groups under common cause.

Economic Manipulation:

- Monsoon-Reckoning allows commodity market speculation.
- Pilot’s Mirror Glint can secure favorable trade route concessions.
- Margravine’s Warrant enables regional economic control.

Historical Revelation:

- Stone-Tongue can uncover lost civilizations or hidden histories.
- Echo-Walker’s Step can resolve ancient mysteries or conflicts.
- Curse-Breaker background can lift region-wide afflictions.

9.9 Balance and Implementation

9.9.1 XP Cost Guidelines

Minor Talents (2–4 XP)

Small situational bonuses, limited uses.

Major Talents (5–8 XP)

Significant scene-impacting abilities.

Prestige Talents (9–15 XP)

Campaign-defining capabilities.

Epic Talents (16–20 XP)

Once-per-campaign reality-shaping effects.

9.9.2 Usage Limitations

Session-Based Limits:

- Most talents limited to once per session.
- Some allow additional uses at increased cost or risk.
- Prestige talents often have arc or campaign-level restrictions.

Narrative Constraints:

- Many talents require specific fictional positioning.
- Regional talents only function in appropriate locations.
- Cultural talents may require maintaining certain relationships or status.

Resource Costs:

- Some talents consume Boons or other resources.
- Epic talents often have permanent narrative costs.
- Maintenance requirements for ongoing effects.

9.10 Character Creation Examples

9.10.1 Lore-Heavy Starting Characters

Example 1: Aeler Sepulcher Adept (34 XP)

- **Attributes:** Body 2 (6 XP), Wits 2 (6 XP), Spirit 2 (6 XP) \Rightarrow 18 XP
- **Skills:** Stone-Tongue 2 (4 XP), Lore 1 (2 XP) \Rightarrow 6 XP
- **Talent:** Whisper of the Unquiet Dead (6 XP)
- **Asset:** Aeler Crypt Access (4 XP)
- **Total: 34 XP** (*uses enhanced-starting options cap*)

Example 2: Kahfagia Lantern-Law Advocate (34 XP)

- **Attributes:** Wits 3 (9 XP), Presence 2 (6 XP), Spirit 2 (6 XP) \Rightarrow 21 XP
- **Skills:** Utaran Law 1 (2 XP), Sway 1 (2 XP) \Rightarrow 4 XP
- **Talent:** Jurisdiction on the Tide (5 XP)
- **Asset:** Pilot's Guild Membership (4 XP)
- **Total: 34 XP**

Example 3: Acasia Curse-Breaker (34 XP)

- **Attributes:** Wits 3 (9 XP), Presence 2 (6 XP), Spirit 2 (6 XP) \Rightarrow 21 XP
- **Skills:** Investigate 1 (2 XP) \Rightarrow 2 XP
- **Talent:** Follow the Unspooled Thread (7 XP)
- **Asset:** Silkstrand Safehouse (4 XP)
- **Total: 34 XP**

9.10.2 Advanced Character Development

Tier II Progression (40–90 XP):

- Add complementary skills and secondary talents.
- Develop asset networks and faction relationships.

- Begin working toward prestige background requirements.

Tier III Mastery (90–150 XP):

- Acquire prestige talents and epic capabilities.
- Establish regional influence and legacy projects.
- Mentor younger characters in specialized traditions.

9.11 Guidance for Game Masters

9.11.1 Integrating Lore-Heavy Characters

Campaign Planning:

- Include scenes that showcase specialized knowledge.
- Create challenges that allow lore-heavy abilities to shine.
- Balance between spotlight moments and general play.

Challenge Design:

- Provide opportunities for skill synergies.
- Include regional and cultural elements in adventures.
- Create consequences for specialized knowledge failures.

Reward Structures:

- Award XP for using lore-heavy abilities creatively.
- Provide narrative rewards for maintaining cultural ties.
- Offer unique opportunities tied to specialized knowledge.

9.11.2 Balancing Specialized Content

Party Composition:

- Ensure each character has moments to contribute.
- Mix generalist and specialist abilities in the group.
- Create challenges that require multiple approaches.

Regional Focus:

- Rotate regional emphasis throughout the campaign.
- Allow characters to introduce their specialties.
- Balance deep cultural content with accessible elements.

Progression Pacing:

- Space out prestige talent acquisition appropriately.
- Ensure epic talents have meaningful campaign impact.
- Maintain challenge levels as capabilities grow.

Chapter 10

Tracking Tools and Resources

10.1 Introduction to Game Management

Practical tools for implementing Fate’s Edge gameplay mechanics without complex bookkeeping. These resources help GMs and players track important game elements while maintaining narrative flow and minimizing administrative overhead.

10.2 Character and Campaign Tracking

10.2.1 Character Advancement Tracker

Track character growth and XP expenditure over time:

Session	Player 1	Player 2	Player 3	Player 4	Total XP
Session 1	4	5	3	6	18
Session 2	6	7	5	6	24
Session 3	8	6	7	9	30
Session 4	5	8	6	7	26
Session 5	7	9	8	8	32
Total	30	35	29	36	130

Usage Notes:

- Record XP earned each session.
- Track cumulative totals for tier progression.
- Note major talent acquisitions and milestones.
- Update between sessions during downtime.

10.2.2 Story Beat and Boon Tracker

Track the flow of narrative currency during sessions:

Player	SB Generated	SB Spent	Boons Earned	Boons Spent
Player 1	3	2	2	1
Player 2	5	3	3	2
Player 3	2	4	1	3
Player 4	4	3	2	1
Session Total	14	12	8	7

Management Tips:

- Reset SB totals at session start (base budget: **4 + character tier**).
- Trim Boons to 2 at scene endings.
- Track Boon conversion to XP (2 Boons → 1 XP, max 2 XP/session).
- Monitor SB spends to maintain appropriate challenge level.

10.3 Combat and Conflict Tools

10.3.1 Tactical Clock Tracker

Track persistent combat conditions and environmental hazards:

Clock Name	Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	Effect
Mob Overwhelm	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	–1 die per 2 segments
Fatigue Spiral	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			+1 Fatigue per segment
Morale Collapse	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	–1 die to social actions
Fire Hazard	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Harm 1 per segment

Usage Guidelines:

- Tick segments when triggered by narrative events.
- Filled clocks create significant scene changes.
- Multiple clocks can interact for complex situations.
- Reset appropriate clocks between major scenes.

10.3.2 Harm and Condition Tracking

Track character injuries and ongoing conditions:

Character	Minor Harm	Moderate Harm	Severe Harm	Conditions
Player 1	<input type="checkbox"/>			Fatigue 1
Player 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Compromised Gear
Player 3			<input type="checkbox"/>	
Player 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fatigue 2

Recovery Tracking:

- Minor harm clears with rest and basic care.
- Moderate harm requires medical treatment (DV 2).

- Severe harm needs extended care (DV 3).
- Critical harm requires major intervention (DV 4).

10.4 Magic System Tools

10.4.1 Obligation and Backlash Tracker

Track magical debts and consequences for spellcasters:

Patron/Element	1	2	3	4	5	6	Status	Backlash
Gate Patron	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Active	2 SB
Ikasha Patron	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inactive	
Fire Element	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			Active	1 SB
Fate Element	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ready	

Management Rules:

- Mark Obligation segments when using Rites.
- Clear 1–2 segments per downtime through service.
- Track Backlash SB for freeform casting.
- Note active/inactive patron status.

10.4.2 Summoning Leash Tracker

Track summoned entities and their service limits:

Spirit	Cap	Leash	1	2	3	4	5
Lesser Spirit	1	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Greater Spirit	3	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guardian	2	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Leash Triggers:

- Spirit takes harm.
- Command against nature.
- Split focus (another action while spirit acts).
- Rival contests control.
- Quick movement between range bands.
- Crossing wards.

10.5 Travel and Exploration Tools

10.5.1 Supply and Fatigue Tracker

Track party resources and exhaustion during journeys:

Resource	Full	Low	Dangerous	Empty	Effects
Supply Clock	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No penalties
Food/Water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fatigue at Dangerous
Ammunition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Limited attacks
Gear Condition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Penalties apply

Character	Fatigue 1	Fatigue 2	Fatigue 3	Fatigue 4	Effects
Player 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Re-roll success
Player 2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Re-roll one success
Player 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Normal
Player 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Re-roll each success

Recovery Rules:

- Night's rest removes 1 Fatigue (with adequate Supply).
- Cannot clear Fatigue if Supply is Dangerous or Empty.
- Extended downtime clears all Fatigue.
- Supply resets in civilization or through successful foraging.

10.5.2 Travel Leg Progress Tracker

Track journey segments and complications:

Leg	Destination	Clock	1	2	3	4	5	6	Status
Leg 1	Silkstrand	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	In Progress
Leg 2	Aeler Gate	8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Upcoming
Leg 3	Mistlands	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Future

Complication Tracking:

- Note drawn cards for each leg (Spade, Heart, Club, Diamond).
- Track SB generated during travel.
- Record environmental hazards and encounters.
- Mark completed legs and carryover effects.

10.6 Quick Reference Charts

Essential information for smooth gameplay decisions.

10.6.1 Difficulty Value Reference

DV	Difficulty	Typical Use Cases
2	Routine	Clear intent, modest stakes, controlled environment
3	Pressured	Time pressure, mild resistance, partial information
4	Hard	Hostile conditions, active opposition, precise timing
5+	Extreme	Multiple constraints, high precision, dramatic failure risk

10.6.2 Position and Effect Reference

Position	Consequence Severity	Typical Situations
Controlled	Minor complications	Advantageous position, surprise, preparation
Risky	Moderate consequences	Even odds, standard conflict situations
Desperate	Severe consequences	Disadvantaged, outnumbered, wounded

Effect	Impact Level	Examples
Limited	Minor impact	Scratch damage, slow progress, partial success
Standard	Expected impact	Normal damage, expected progress, full success
Great	Major impact	Significant damage, rapid progress, extra benefits

10.6.3 Story Beat Spend Menu

Quick reference for SB spending during gameplay:

SB Cost	Effect Scale	Examples
1 SB	Minor pressure	Noise, trace, +1 Supply segment, minor time loss
2 SB	Moderate setback	Alarm raised, lose position/cover, lesser foe appears
3 SB	Serious trouble	Reinforcements, key gear breaks, major complication
4+ SB	Major turn	Trap springs, authority arrives, scene shifts dramatically

10.6.4 Boon Usage Reference

Boon Cost	Effect	Limitations
1 Boon	Re-roll one die	Once per action
1 Boon	Activate on-screen Asset	Plausibility test required
1 Boon	Improve Position by 1 step	One step maximum per action
2 Boons	Convert to 1 XP	Once per session; max 2 XP via conversion
Var.	Power Rites/Abilities	As specified by talent or ability

10.7 Session Preparation Tools

10.7.1 Session Checklist

Pre-session preparation guide for GMs:

- **Review Previous Session**
 - * Note unresolved complications and carried-over SB.
 - * Check character conditions and ongoing effects.
 - * Update faction status and relationship changes.
- **Prepare Current Session**
 - * Set SB budget based on character tiers (4 + tier).
 - * Prepare key scenes and opposition.
 - * Set initial Position/Effect defaults.
 - * Have consequence ideas ready for common actions.

- **Post-Session Tasks**

- * Award XP based on session accomplishments.
- * Update character advancement trackers.
- * Note ideas for future sessions based on player choices.
- * Reset SB and trim Boons for next session.

10.7.2 Adventure Structure Template

Basic structure for session planning:

Opening Scene

Establish current situation and immediate goals.

Development Scenes

2–3 challenges advancing main objective.

Climax

Major conflict or resolution point.

Resolution

Consequences and setup for next session.

Downtime

Character advancement and resource management.

10.8 Digital Tool Recommendations

10.8.1 Virtual Tabletop Integration

Recommended approaches for online play:

- **Character Sheets:** Use customizable sheets with built-in trackers.
- **Token Status:** Implement status markers for conditions/harm.
- **Clock Widgets:** Use progress bars or custom tokens for clocks.
- **Card Decks:** Digital card implementations for travel and consequences.
- **Shared Notes:** Collaborative documents for faction tracking.

10.8.2 Mobile and App Tools

Useful applications for game management:

- **Note-Taking Apps:** For session notes and player records.
- **Spreadsheet Apps:** For character advancement tracking.
- **Map Tools:** For visual representation of travel and locations.
- **Randomizers:** For card draws and random element generation.
- **Communication Apps:** For between-session planning and discussion.

10.9 Troubleshooting Common Issues

Solutions for typical gameplay challenges.

10.9.1 Resource Management Problems

Issue: Players hoard Boons excessively

- Create compelling spending opportunities each scene.
- Implement time-limited Boon benefits.
- Demonstrate value through GM spending examples.
- Remind players of Boon carryover limits (trim to 2 per scene).

Issue: SB spending feels punitive

- Focus on narrative complications rather than pure penalties.
- Use SB to create interesting challenges, not just setbacks.
- Balance positive and negative consequences.
- Involve players in consequence choices when appropriate.

10.9.2 Tracking Overload Solutions

Issue: Too many clocks and conditions

- Focus on 2–3 most relevant trackers per session.
- Use simple tally marks instead of complex sheets for minor elements.
- Delegate tracking responsibilities to players when possible.
- Digital tools can automate some tracking tasks.

Issue: Game flow interrupted by administration

- Prepare trackers in advance.
- Use quick reference sheets to minimize lookups.
- Practice efficient tracking methods.
- Accept minor inaccuracies to maintain narrative momentum.

10.9.3 Balance and Pacing Adjustments

Issue: Combat runs too long or too short

- Adjust opposition based on player capabilities.
- Use tactical clocks to create natural endpoints.
- Vary Position/Effect settings to control challenge level.
- Be prepared to narratively conclude resolved conflicts.

Issue: Magic system feels too powerful or weak

- Ensure proper Obligation and Backlash application.
- Balance freeform casting DVs appropriately.
- Remember Rites limitations and costs.
- Adjust based on character tier and specialization.

These tools and resources provide practical support for implementing Fate's Edge mechanics while maintaining the game's narrative focus and collaborative spirit. The key is finding the right balance between useful organization and excessive bookkeeping.

Chapter 11

Appendices

11.1 Quick Reference Sheets

11.1.1 Core Mechanic Quick Reference

1. **Approach:** Player states intent and method (Attribute + Skill combination).
2. **Execution:** Roll dice pool of d10s. Each 6+ is a success; each 1 generates 1 Story Beat.
3. **Outcome:**
 - **Basic** — Roll as-is; all 1s generate SB.
 - **Detailed** — Re-roll one die showing 1.
 - **Intricate** — Re-roll all 1s; add a positive flourish on success.

11.1.2 Attribute and Skill Summary

Attributes:

Body

Physical strength, endurance, athletic ability.

Wits

Perception, cleverness, quick thinking.

Spirit

Willpower, intuition, spiritual resilience.

Presence

Charm, command, social influence.

Skill Levels:

0 Untrained

Rely on raw Attribute only.

1 Familiar

Basic competence, occasional use.

2 Skilled

Reliable training, regular practice.

3 Expert

Professional mastery, notable ability.

4 Master

Renowned specialist, exceptional talent.

5 Legendary

Near-mythic capability, extraordinary.

11.1.3 Experience Point Costs

Improvement	Cost	Downtime
Attribute increase	New rating \times 3 XP	New rating days
Skill increase	New level \times 2 XP	New level days
On-Screen Follower	Cap ² XP	1–3 days
Minor Asset	4 XP	1 day
Standard Asset	8 XP	1 week
Major Asset	12 XP	1 month

Upkeep

Frequency. Pay upkeep once per Downtime period.

- **Efficient (Higher XP, Less Time).** *Cost:* Upkeep XP = $\max\left(1, \frac{\text{XP Acquisition Cost}}{3}\right)$. *Time:* Minimal; delegation/check-in.
- **Intensive (Lower XP, More Time).** *Cost:* 1 XP. *Time:* One dedicated Downtime action of significant personal attention.

Failure. If upkeep is not paid this Downtime, the resource degrades:

- *Follower:* becomes **Wary** (or **Seized** if already Wary).
- *Asset:* becomes **Neglected** (or **Compromised** if already Neglected).

Notes. Each follower/asset checks upkeep separately; a single Intensive action may cover a cohesive group if fiction supports it. Tie upkeep scenes to Patron themes for flavor, not discounts.

11.1.4 Difficulty Value (DV) Reference

DV	Difficulty	Typical Situations
2	Routine	Clear intent, modest stakes, controlled environment
3	Pressured	Time pressure, mild resistance, partial information
4	Hard	Hostile conditions, active opposition, precise timing
5+	Extreme	Multiple constraints, high precision, dramatic failure risk

11.2 Deck Usage Reference**11.2.1 Deck Types and Meanings****Travel Decks (regional, 52-card)**

Used for journey content and location-based adventures.

- Spade = Place/Location

- Heart = Actor/Faction
- Club = Pressure/Complication
- Diamond = Leverage/Reward

Deck of Consequences (scene drama)

Used for immediate complications and narrative twists.

- Hearts = Social/Emotional fallout
- Spades = Harm/Escalation
- Clubs = Material cost/Resource drain
- Diamonds = Magical/Spiritual disturbance

Important: Never mix suit meanings across decks. Travel deck suits differ from Consequences deck suits.

11.2.2 Deck Usage Procedure

After a roll generating Story Beats:

1. **Direct Spend:** Translate SB into immediate consequences or clock ticks.
2. **Deck Draw:** Draw up to $\min(\text{SB}, 3)$ cards and synthesize a single twist.
3. Interpret cards based on suit meanings and highest rank.

11.2.3 Rank Severity Guide

Ace–3

Minor inconvenience or flavor complication.

4–6

Moderate setback with narrative impact.

7–9

Significant consequence altering the scene.

10–King

Major fallout introducing new problems or lasting effects.

11.3 Magic System Quick Reference

11.3.1 Magic Paths Comparison

Path	Requirements	Key Feature	Risk Type
Caster (Freeform)	Caster's Gift (2 XP)	Flexible improvisation	Backlash
Runekeeper (Rites)	Thiasos + Codex (6 XP)	Structured Rites	Obligation
Invoker (Symbols)	Patron's Symbol (4 XP)	Ritual precision	Symbol compromise

DV Reference Table

The following table shows the resulting DV for common Obligation Costs across Spirit scores and Rite Tiers. DV is always calculated as $\max(\text{Obligation} - \text{Spirit}, \text{Tier})$.

Obligation Cost	Spirit 0	Spirit 1	Spirit 2	Spirit 3–4	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3
2	2	1	1	1	1	2	3
3	3	2	1	1	1	2	3
4	4	3	2	1	1	2	3
5	5	4	3	2	1	2	3
6	6	5	4	3	1	2	3
7	7	6	5	4	1	2	3

How to Read.

- Left block: DV before applying the Tier floor.
- Right block: the minimum DV once Tier is considered.
- Example: A Rite with Obligation 4, Spirit 2, Tier 2 \rightarrow Base DV = 2, but Tier floor raises it to 2.

11.3.2 Casting Loop Summary

1. **Channel:** Wits + Arcana roll to gather Potential.
2. **Weave:** Wits + Art roll to shape spell effect.
3. **Backlash:** SB spent through thematic consequences.

11.3.3 Eight Elements of Magic

Earth

Solidity, stability, foundation.

Fire

Energy, transformation, destruction.

Air

Movement, speed, freedom.

Water

Fluidity, healing, adaptability.

Fate

Destiny, inevitability, causality.

Life

Vitality, creation, growth.

Luck

Chance, unpredictability, probability.

Death/Dreams

Endings, thresholds, subconscious.

11.4 Combat and Conflict Reference

11.4.1 Position States

Controlled

Advantageous position, minor consequences.

Risky

Standard situation, moderate consequences.

Desperate

Disadvantaged, severe consequences.

11.4.2 Harm Levels and Effects

Harm Level	SB Generation	Penalty	Recovery
Minor	1 SB on next 2 rolls	−1 die to related actions	Rest or basic care
Moderate	1 SB on next roll	−1 die to most actions	Medical treatment
Severe	2 SB on next roll	−2 dice to most actions	Extended care
Critical	3 SB on next roll	Incapacitated	Major intervention

11.4.3 Range Bands

Close

Arm's length, grappling distance.

Near

Same room or immediate area.

Far

Visible but not immediately reachable.

Absent

Off-screen or out of current scene.

11.4.4 Movement Actions

- **1 Move:** Shift one range band (Close↔Near or Near↔Far).
- **Dash Action:** Shift two bands in one action.
- **Disengage:** Test to leave Close range when threatened.
- **Sprint:** Rapid movement across the battlefield.

11.5 Resource Management Reference

11.5.1 Story Beat Economy

SB Cost	Effect Scale	Typical Effects
1 SB	Minor pressure	Noise, trace, time loss, +1 Supply segment
2 SB	Moderate setback	Alarm, lose position/cover, lesser foe appears
3 SB	Serious trouble	Reinforcements, key gear breaks, major complication
4+ SB	Major turn	Trap springs, authority arrives, scene shifts dramatically

11.5.2 Boon Usage Guide

Boon Cost	Effect	Limitations
1 Boon	Re-roll one die	Once per action
1 Boon	Activate on-screen Asset	Plausibility test required
1 Boon	Improve Position by 1 step	One step maximum per action
2 Boons	Convert to 1 XP	Once per session; max 2 XP
Variable	Power Rites/Abilities	As specified

Boon Limits:

- Hold maximum of 5 Boons at any time.
- Trim to 2 Boons at scene endings.
- Maximum 2 Boons from failures per character per scene.
- Conversion: 2 Boons = 1 XP (max 2 XP per session).

11.5.3 Supply Clock States

Full Supply (0)

No penalties; well-equipped.

Low Supply (2)

Minor narrative complications.

Dangerously Low (3)

Each character gains 1 Fatigue.

Out of Supply (4)

Severe penalties; starvation risk.

11.6 Travel and Exploration Reference

11.6.1 Travel Clock Sizes

4 segments

Short, straightforward journeys.

6 segments

Standard travel legs.

8 segments

Extended or complex journeys.

10 segments

Epic or highly dangerous travel.

11.6.2 Card Draw Procedures

Quick Hook (2 cards):

- Draw one Spade (place) and one Heart (actor).
- Use higher rank to set clock size.

Full Seed (4 cards):

- Draw until one card of each suit appears.

- Spade = location, Heart = faction, Club = pressure, Diamond = leverage.
- Highest rank sets main clock size.

11.7 Character Advancement Guide

11.7.1 Reputation Tiers

Tier I – Rookie (0–40 XP)

Local reputation; prestige locked.

Tier II – Seasoned (41–90 XP)

Regional notice; prestige may unlock.

Tier III – Veteran (91–150 XP)

National influence; second follower suggested.

Tier IV – Paragon (151–220 XP)

Movers and shakers; rivals emerge.

Tier V – Mythic (221+ XP)

Legendary status; kingdoms respond.

11.7.2 Player Archetypes

Solo

70–90% self investment; minimal followers/assets.

Mixed

50–65% self; balanced with followers/assets.

Mastermind

25–40% self; focuses on networks and followers.

11.8 Gamemaster Guidance

11.8.1 Session Preparation Checklist

- Review previous session notes and unresolved threads.
- Set initial SB budget (4 + character tiers).
- Prepare key scenes and opposition.
- Have consequence ideas ready for common actions.
- Check ongoing clocks and faction status.
- Prepare travel routes if journey expected.

11.8.2 Adjudication Principles

- **Fiction First:** Mechanics serve the narrative, not replace it.
- **Fail Forward:** Even failures should advance the story.
- **Player Agency:** Offer choices rather than impose outcomes.
- **Transparent Costs:** Clearly communicate risks and stakes.
- **Collaborative Spirit:** Work with players to create compelling fiction.

11.8.3 Pacing Tools

- Use clocks to create urgency and track progress.
- Vary scene intensity between high and low stakes.
- Include downtime for character development.
- Balance action, investigation, and social scenes.
- Use travel sequences for world-building and random encounters.

11.9 Common Rules Questions

11.9.1 Core Mechanic Clarifications

Q: Can players re-roll 1s to remove Story Beats?

A: No. Re-rolling 1s does not remove SB already generated. If re-rolled dice show 1 again, they generate additional SB.

Q: When does a miss or partial success award Boons?

A: Only when all three conditions are met: procedure followed, stakes stated, and consequence lands immediately.

Q: Can players assist each other on every action?

A: Yes, but total assist dice are capped at +3 from all sources combined.

11.9.2 Magic System Questions

Q: Can a character use multiple magic paths?

A: Yes, but each path has its own tracking (Backlash, Obligation, Symbol states). Specializing is more efficient.

Q: How does Crack the Seal work for Invokers?

A: Convert a ritual to instant casting by setting the Symbol to *Compromised* and marking +2/+3 Obligation.

Q: What happens when a Patron's Obligation clock fills?

A: The GM resolves the debt in-fiction through service demands, omens, or narrative consequences.

11.9.3 Combat and Conflict Questions

Q: How does the Over-Stack rule work?

A: If the party enters a scene with ≥ 3 structural advantages, either start one challenge at +1 difficulty *or* bank +1 SB.

Q: Can players spend Boons to improve Position?

A: Yes. 1 Boon improves Position by 1 step for the current action.

Q: How does harm recovery work?

A: Minor clears with rest; moderate requires medical treatment (DV 2); severe needs extended care (DV 3); critical requires major intervention.

11.10 Regional Quick Reference

11.10.1 Major Regions and Themes

Acasia

Broken marches, curses, lawless territory.

Aeler

Underground vaults, dwarven culture, engineering.

Ecktoria

Imperial remnants, bureaucracy, coinhouses.

Kahfagia

Maritime trade, lantern-law, convoys.

Mistlands

Bells, wards, supernatural boundaries.

Silkstrand

Trade hub, intrigue, Acasia's only major city.

Vhasia

Fractured sun, political fragmentation.

Viterra

Last kingdom, river-based power.

Valewood

Forest empire, natural magic.

Ykrul

Steppe nomads, wolf standards.

Zakov

Salt and serpent, criminal syndicates.

11.10.2 Key Geographical Features

- **Amaranthine Sea:** Western sea, major trade routes.
- **Dolmis Sea:** Inner sea, island networks.
- **Astroegro Straits:** Crucial maritime chokepoint.
- **Belworth River:** Major river system, boundary between regions.
- **Aelerian Mountains:** Extensive underground networks.

11.11 Campaign Management Tools

11.11.1 Session Log Template

Session Element	Notes
Session Date	
Players Present	
Major Objectives	
Key Scenes	
Story Beats Generated	
Boons Awarded/Spent	
Clocks	Ad-
vanced/Completed	
XP Awards	
Downtime Activities	
Next Session Hooks	

11.11.2 Campaign Clock Examples

Faction Rivalry (8 segments)

Tracks escalating conflict between major powers.

Ancient Curse (6 segments)

Progress of a regional supernatural affliction.

Imperial Collapse (10 segments)

Decline of a major governing power.

Magical Cataclysm (8 segments)

Buildup to a reality-altering event.

Trade War (6 segments)

Economic conflict affecting multiple regions.

11.11.3 Adventure Structure Template

Standard Three-Act Structure:

1. **Introduction:** Establish situation; introduce key NPCs and locations.
2. **Development:** 2–3 challenges that advance the main objective.
3. **Climax:** Major confrontation or resolution point.
4. **Resolution:** Consequences and setup for future adventures.

Alternative Structures:

- **Hex Crawl:** Exploration-focused with multiple points of interest.
- **Mystery:** Investigation-driven with clue accumulation.
- **Siege:** Defense-focused with resource management.
- **Journey:** Travel-based with episodic encounters.

11.12 Troubleshooting Common Issues

11.12.1 Player Engagement Issues

Issue: Players are passive or hesitant

- **Solutions:** Use leading questions, offer clear options, create immediate stakes.
- Provide obvious hooks and direct incentives for action.
- Use NPCs to demonstrate active approaches.
- Reward proactive play with narrative advantages.

Issue: Rules discussions slow the game

- **Solutions:** Make quick rulings; note for later review; keep momentum.
- Establish “ruling now, researching later” policy.
- Designate one player as rules reference to minimize lookups.
- Use standardized procedures for common actions.

11.12.2 Balance and Challenge Issues

Issue: Encounters are too easy or too hard

- **Solutions:** Adjust opposition on the fly; use SB to modulate difficulty.
- Remember that Position and Effect can be adjusted situationally.
- Use environmental factors to change challenge levels.
- Allow creative solutions to bypass straight combat.

Issue: Magic feels overpowered or underpowered

- **Solutions:** Ensure proper Backlash and Obligation application.
- Remember that high-DV spells carry significant risks.
- Use countermagic and magical opposition when appropriate.
- Ensure non-magical characters have meaningful contributions.

11.12.3 Tracking and Administration Issues

Issue: Too much bookkeeping slows play

- **Solutions:** Simplify tracking to essential elements; delegate to players.
- Use abstract ranges and conditions rather than precise measurements.
- Focus on narrative consequences rather than numerical modifiers.
- Use index cards or digital tools for complex tracking.

Issue: Players forget abilities or resources

- **Solutions:** Provide quick reference sheets; use visual aids.
- Create character-specific reminder cards.
- Use recap sessions to review capabilities.
- Encourage players to maintain updated character sheets.

11.13 Advanced Play Techniques

11.13.1 Narrative-First Adjudication

- Ask “What happens next?” rather than “What’s the rule?”
- **Use the Fiction:** Let the narrative dictate mechanical outcomes.
- **Embrace Improvisation:** Create rulings that serve the story.
- **Collaborative World-Building:** Involve players in creating details.
- **Consequence-Driven Play:** Ensure every action has meaningful results.

11.13.2 Pacing and Rhythm Management

Scene Pacing:

- Vary intensity between high-action and quiet moments.
- Use clocks to create natural endpoints.
- Alternate between player-driven and GM-driven scenes.
- Include breather moments for character development.

Campaign Rhythm:

- Balance episodic adventures with ongoing arcs.
- Use downtime effectively between major events.
- Vary the scope of challenges (personal, local, regional, global).
- Include both planned and emergent story elements.

11.13.3 Player Spotlight Management

- **Rotate Focus:** Ensure each character gets meaningful scenes.
- **Personal Arcs:** Develop individual character stories.
- **Group Dynamics:** Create situations that require teamwork.
- **Specialization Respect:** Allow experts to shine in their domains.
- **Shared Moments:** Include scenes that develop group bonds.

Spell [TAGS] Reference

[TAG]	Category	Gated By	DV	Effect (summary)
BIND	Control/Restraint	Ritual: Gate; Skill: Command+Arcana	3–4	Fix target in place or to locus; may start/advance a <i>Leash</i> .
SEAL	Control/Boundary	Ritual: Wards; Talent: Sealwright	3–5	Close portal/container; lock threshold or suppress effect.
UNSEAL	Control/Boundary	Skill: Arcana+Wits	3–4	Open sealed thing without damage (if keyed).
COMMAND	Control/Will	Ritual: Dominion; Skill: Presence	3–5	Issue short imperative to lesser mind/spirit.
COMPEL	Control/Geas	Skill: Geasa; Ritual: Oath	4–5	Bind stated taboo/trigger (attach 4-second clock).
LEASH	Summoning Control	Ritual: Gate; Talent: Binder	2–4	Establish/advance control track for a summoned entity.
SEVER	Control/Break	Skill: Arcana or Fate	4–5	Cut tethers (Leashes, bindings, glamours).
WARD	Protection/Zone	Ritual: Wards; Skill: Runecraft	2–4	Block/filter entities/effects by tag. Outsiders: DV = Cap to cross.
UNWARD	Protection/Break	Skill: Arcana+Tools	3–4	Suppress/unpick a ward's key.
REFLECT	Protection/Meta	Talent: Counter-Circle	4–5	Turn next targeted effect back on source.
DISPEL	Meta/End Effect	Skill: Arcana; Ritual: Unravel	2–5	End ongoing magical effect (DV by scale).
COUNTER	Meta/Interrupt	Skill: Arcana (Reaction)	3–4	Interrupt casting/ritual in its window.
AMPLIFY	Meta/Boost	Talent: Focused Weave	+1 DV	Increase Effect one step on current working.
MITIGATE	Meta/SB Control	Talent/Asset: “Mitigate SB”	—	Convert up to 2 SB from this cast to strain clock.
EXTEND	Meta/Duration	Talent: Sustainer	+1 DV	Double default duration.
REWEAVE	Meta/Repair	Skill: Arcana	3–4	Patch/stabilize a faltering effect/clock.
LEVITATE	Movement/Air	Element: Air; Art: Kinesis	3–4	Lift/hold target or self at Near height.
PULL	Movement/Vector	Element: Air/Earth	2–3	Draw object/creature toward locus.
PUSH	Movement/Vector	Element: Air/Force	2–3	Shove/knockback one band.
ANCHOR	Space/Lock	Element: Earth/Fate	3–4	Fix object/zone; resists movement/banish.
TRANSPORT	Space/Move Many	Ritual: Passage; Art: Wayfinding	4–5+	Move targets across bands/locations.
TELEPORT	Space/Blink	Element: Fate/Air	5+	Instant relocate (LoS or keyed sigil).
SENSE	Perception	Skill: Insight/Arcana	2–3	Detect presence of a named tag/element.
REVEAL	Perception	Element: Light/Fate	3–4	Unveil hidden/glamoured things.
SCRY	Divination	Ritual: Sight; Skill: Lore	3–5	Observe distant place/target via focus.
DIVINE	Divination/Omens	Element: Fate	3–4	Ask likely outcome/path.
MARK	Tracking	Talent: Hunter's Sigil	2–3	Tag target for later SENSE/SCRY.

[TAG]	Category	Gated By	DV	Effect (summary)
PROTECT	Protection/Shield	Element: Water/Earth	2–4	Reduce/deflect next harm or tag.
FORTIFY	Protection/Buf	Element: Earth/Life	3–4	Boost resilience; improve Position/Effect.
ABSORB	Protection/Soak	Talent: Spellguard	4–5	Convert incoming harm to SB or Fatigue
HASTE	Time/Boost	Element: Air/Fate	3–4	Speed one ally; extra Move or +Effect.
SLOW	Time/Hinder	Element: Water/Fate	3–4	Impose drag; worsen Position or remove Move.
WEAKEN	Debuff	Element: Fate/Death	3–4	Lower Attribute/Skill effectiveness one step.
ENTANGLE	Debuff/Control	Element: Earth/Plant	2–3	Restrain; worsen Position or steal action.
SILENCE	Debuff/Nullify	Element: Air/Shadow	3–4	Suppress sound/casting words in zone/target.
BLIND	Debuff/Sense	Element: Shadow/Light	3–4	Obscure sight of target/zone.
IGNITE	Fire/Heat	Element: Fire	2–3	Set alight; create burning hazard.
DOUSE	Water/Quench	Element: Water	2–3	Extinguish, cool, suppress heat.
STONE	Earth/Shape	Element: Earth	3–4	Raise wall, seal crack, shape masonry.
SHOCK	Air/Lightning	Element: Air	2–4	Stun/overload; arc between targets.
FREEZE	Water/Cold	Element: Water	3–4	Ice over; slow or trap.
MELT	Fire/Heat	Element: Fire	2–3	Thaw/liquefy; clear FREEZE.
WIND	Air/Control	Element: Air	2–3	Gusts, deflect missiles, carry sound.
FLOOD	Water/Volume	Element: Water	4–5	Surge of water; zone hazard/knockdown.
DRAIN	Water/Void	Element: Water/Earth	3–4	Clear liquids/pressure from zone.
LIGHT	Radiance	Element: Fire/Light	2–3	Illuminate, reveal, or blind (high Effect).
SHADOW	Obscuration	Element: Shadow/Death	2–3	Deepen darkness; hide edges/tracks.
HEAL	Life/Repair	Element: Life	3–4	Mend living harm one step; stabilize.
RESTORE	Structure/Mend	Skill: Craft; Ritual: Repair	3–4	Remove COMPROMISED from gear/constructs.
CLEANSE	Purify	Element: Water/Life	2–3	Remove poisons/blights/marks.
CURSE	Bane	Ritual: Malediction; Skill: Hex	3–5	Attach hostile tag/clock to target.
BLESS	Boon	Ritual: Benediction	2–3	Grant favorable tag (luck, favor, ward-key).
BANISH	Spirit/Expel	Ritual: Gate; Skill: Exorcism	3–5	Drive outsider/spirit across threshold (DV = Cap).
SUMMON	Spirit/Call	Ritual: Gate	3–5	Call named class of entity; start <i>Leash</i> .
DREAM	Mind/Oneiric	Element: Death/Dreams	3–4	Enter/influence sleeping mind/realm.
WAKE	Mind/Counter	Skill: Medicine or Spirit	2–3	Break sleep/charm; end DREAM.
NIGHTMARE	Mind/Fear	Element: Death/Dreams	3–4	Inflict fear/visions; fill small clock.

[TAG]	Category	Gated By	DV	Effect (summary)
FATELOCK	Fate/Anchor	Element: Fate; Talent: Oaths	4–5	Fix outcome boundary (“this door will hold”).
LUCK	Fortune/Shift	Element: Luck	3–4	Tilt odds; convert 1 Miss to 1 Success (once).
OMEN	Fortune/Flag	Element: Fate/Luck	2–3	Mark looming twist the GM may cash later.
PROPHECY	Fate/Foretell	Ritual: Oracle	4–5	Declare true but costly future clause.
GLAMOUR	Illusion/Seeming	Element: Air/Shadow	3–4	Alter appearance/sound/scent; not substance.
VEIL	Illusion/Hide	Element: Shadow/Water	2–3	Hide subject/area from casual notice.
PHANTOM	Illusion/Construct	Talent: Image-Craft	3–4	Create interactive illusion (no weight).
NAME	Word/True Name	Talent: Name-Caller	4–5	Speak true name to compel or reveal.
OATH	Word/Binding	Skill: Geasa; Ritual: Pact	3–4	Bind parties to terms; create oath clock.
UNGEAS	Word/Release	Skill: Geasa+Utaran Law (or Ritual)	4–5	Lawful release or loophole clause.
BRIDGE	Terrain/Create	Element: Earth/Water/Air	3–4	Create traversable surface/path.
SHATTER	Terrain/Break	Element: Sound/Stone	3–4	Rupture brittle/strained matter.
SANCTIFY	Place/Threshold	Ritual: Consecration	3–4	Make area inhospitable to a named tag.
PROFANE	Place/Defile	Ritual: Desecration	3–4	Flip sanctity; empower rival forces.
TETHER	Utility/Link	Element: Fate	2–3	Link two objects for later PULL/SENSE.
STORE	Utility/Charge	Talent: Capacitor	3–4	Bank 1–2 successes in a vessel (once).
TRANSFER	Utility/Hand-off	Skill: Arcana+Tools	3–4	Move an ongoing effect between hosts.

Usage Notes

- **DV guidance:** 2 small/local, 3 scene-scale, 4 big swing, 5+ set-piece/ritual.
- **Duration defaults:** Buffs \approx 3 beats; areas 1 beat. Sustaining costs 1 Fatigue/beat.
- **Costs:** “SB” = Story Beats generated/at risk; *Obligation* applies to **Ritual** sources; some tags list sustain/asset ticks.
- **Counters:** A listed counter doesn’t auto-succeed—resolve with the appropriate action (often COUNTER, DISPEL, or fiction).
- **Gating:** “Gated By” lists *typical* prerequisites—swap in specific Patrons, Arts, or Talents to taste.

11.14 Quick Reference: Fatigue & Harm

Fatigue Track

Boxes Body

Clear on Short Rest (-2), Full Night (all), or [HEALED] (all)

Overflow

Trigger	Result	Then
Fatigue track fills	Harm +1 level	Clear all Fatigue

Obligation → Fatigue

Severity	Fatigue	Note
Low	+1	Nagging strain
Standard	+2	Significant cost
High	+3	Brutal, only for dire rites

Appendix A

Weapons & Armor Quick Reference

A.1 Weapons by Weight Class

Costs & Baselines

- **Light (4 XP)** — quick, concealable.
- **Medium (8 XP)** — balanced, battlefield mainstays.
- **Heavy (12 XP)** — punishing, slow to bring to bear.

Melee Modifiers (by Range Band)

Weight	Close	Near	Notes
Light	+2 dice	+1 die	Fast in tight quarters
Medium	+1 die	+2 dice	<i>Set</i> once/scene or -1 die on first attack
Heavy	-1 die	+3 dice	<i>Set</i> once/scene or -2 dice on first attack

Ranged Modifiers & Tempo

Weight	Tempo	Close	Near	Far
Light (4 XP)	Fast	Risky (Engaged)	+1 die	—
Medium (8 XP)	Standard	Desperate (Engaged)	+2 dice	+1 die
Heavy (12 XP)	Slow	Desperate (Engaged)	+1 die	+3 dice

Tempo shorthand (see §8.6):

- **Fast** — Move *and* Shoot; reload is incidental. Risky at Close while Engaged.
- **Standard** — *Move or Shoot*; partial-turn reload. May *Aim* for +1 die or +1 Effect.
- **Slow** — Requires *Set/Brace*; full-turn reload; cannot Move and Shoot same round.

Common Examples (Non-exhaustive)

- **Light Melee:** dagger, hatchet, cudgel, short-spear, main-gauche.
- **Medium Melee:** arming sword, war pick, mace, battle-axe, spear.
- **Heavy Melee:** greatsword, poleaxe, maul, glaive, long-spear.

- **Light Ranged (Fast):** throwing knives, javelins, sling, shortbow.
- **Medium Ranged (Standard):** warbow, hand crossbow, light crossbow.
- **Heavy Ranged (Slow):** greatbow, arbalest, pavise-rest crossbow.

Weapon Tags (Optional, +4 XP each, max 2)

Reach

Ignore Engage cost once/round; foes suffer +1 DV at Close.

Close

No penalty at grappling distance; safer to draw in melee.

Accurate

+1 die when you *Aim*.

Brutal

+1 Effect on a 6+, but the roll generates +1 SB if any 1 appears.

Hook

On hit, may shift target to worse Position instead of extra Effect.

Concealable

No penalty to smuggle; draw is incidental.

Quickdraw

First attack you make this scene is +1 die.

Two-Handed

Stronger leverage; cannot benefit from shields.

Off-Hand

When dual-wielding, +1 die to one *Attack* per round.

A.2 Shields (Optional)

Shield	XP	Benefit (per round)	Tradeoff
Buckler	4	+1 die to <i>Defend</i> vs melee <i>or</i> +1 DV once	Off-hand occupied
Heater	8	+1 die to <i>Defend</i> and convert 1 Harm→1 Fatigue once	-1 die to your Ranged attacks
Pavise	12	<i>Plant</i> (action): heavy cover cone; allies may use	Slow to move; counts as bulky

A.3 Armor

Armor converts incoming Harm into Fatigue (see §8.7). Choose one suit.

Armor	XP	Conversion	Penalties
Light	4	Up to 1 Harm → 1 Fatigue	—
Medium	8	Up to 2 Harm → 1 Fatigue	-1 die to physical skills
Heavy	12	Up to 3 Harm → 2 Fatigue	-2 dice to physical skills; no sprint in rough

Notes:

- Apply conversion before marking Fatigue. If this fills the Fatigue track, resolve Fatigue→Harm conversion and clear Fatigue (see §8.7).
- Conversion is per incoming instance of Harm; you may still *Resist* to reduce level first.

A.4 Condition & Upkeep

Neglected

Weapons: -1 die until maintained. Armor: conversion reduced by 1 step (Light=0; Medium treats 2→1F; Heavy treats 3→2F).

Compromised

Weapons: -1 die on your first attack each exchange. Armor: no conversion.

Maintenance: A Short Rest with tools removes **Neglected**. A scene of work or a Smith removes **Compromised**.

A.5 At-a-Glance Options (Ranged)

- **Aim:** +1 die *or* +1 Effect next shot (lost if you Move or are disrupted).
- **Volley:** Spend extra ammo for +1 die (max +2).
- **Suppress:** Zone under fire; foes there act at -1 die or Limited Effect until they shift cover.
- **Overwatch:** Ready a Risky shot on a clear trigger crossing your line.

A.6 Designer’s Technical Analysis

A.6.1 System Architecture & Innovation

Constraint-Based Procedural Design. *Fate’s Edge* uses a *constraint lattice* rather than authored modules. Suits act as semantic categories (Spade=Places, Heart=Actors, Club=Pressures, Diamond=Leverages), while ranks serve as scalar intensity. This ensures each generated element remains interpretable within a universal grammar. The result is bounded emergence: every card draw is both random and coherent.

Narrative State Abstraction. Instead of simulationist minutiae (e.g. hit points, inventories), the system uses *abstract state markers*: Supply Clocks, Fatigue, Gear Condition, Boons, and Story Beats (SB). These are pressure vectors that drive decision-making. The system emphasizes consequence over bookkeeping, creating clarity at the table.

A.6.2 Comparative Systems Analysis

- **Apocalypse World.** Moves are predefined with narrow triggers. *Fate’s Edge* instead uses Position/Effect with SB, producing infinite expressions under a consistent framework.
- **PbtA Families.** Most require bespoke moves per genre. *Fate’s Edge*’s constraint lattice is *genre-agnostic*, supporting noir, horror, or fantasy without redesign.
- **D&D 5e.** Relies on authored encounters. *Fate’s Edge* uses procedural pressure generation, enabling prep-free replayability.

- **Fate Core.** Leverages player-authored Aspects. Fate’s Edge generates *obligations* (SBs) rather than permissions, easing creative load while preserving agency.

A.6.3 Mechanical Sophistication

Dual Currency Economy. The SB/Boon loop is a closed economy of risk and reward:

- **Story Beats (SB):** GM resource, generated by complications.
- **Boons:** Player resource, generated by failures.
- **Conversion:** 2 Boons \rightarrow 1 XP, linking short-term resilience to long-term growth.

This models a non-zero-sum exchange: tension fuels opportunity, ensuring drama is always conserved.

Position/Effect Combat. Resolution is framed as *risk management*, not hit-point attrition:

- **Controlled:** Favorable odds, minor consequences.
- **Risky:** Neutral odds, moderate consequences.
- **Desperate:** Long odds, severe consequences.

This matrix scales consequences narratively instead of arithmetically.

A.6.4 Content Layer: Patrons, Rites, and Symbols

Patrons embed metaphysical allegiances into the system. Each offers:

- **Gifts:** Scene-long imbuements (+1 Melee, +1 Thematic).
- **Rites:** Ritualized expressions of authority.
- **Symbols:** Physical anchors for Invokers.

Character paths map onto these allegiances:

- **Runekeepers:** One Patron, Codex + Familiar, on-screen Rites.
- **Invoker:** Symbols as ritual keys, crack seals for urgency.
- **Oathbound:** Embody vows; Patrons define their praxis.

A.6.5 Table Experience & Clarity

The design emphasizes *legibility*:

- **Tokens:** Boons and SBs are visible momentum.
- **Clocks:** Escalation is paced, not hidden.
- **Position States:** Everyone at the table recognizes consequence bands.

Shared cognitive load ensures tension is felt equally by players and GM.

A.6.6 Scalability

- **Solo:** The lattice doubles as oracle.
- **One-Shot:** Prep-free, instant emergent drama.
- **Campaign:** Boon-to-XP loop sustains arcs long-term.

The system is robust under all play modes, satisfying the game-theory criterion of resilience under stress tests.

A.6.7 Technical Achievements

Emergent Complexity. From $4 \text{ suits} \times 13 \text{ ranks} = 52$ prompts, combinatorics produce infinite permutations through recombination and narration.

Design Patterns.

- **Constraint Lattice:** Ensures modular integrity.
- **Feedback Loop:** SB/Boon economy conserves drama.
- **State Matrix:** Position/Effect governs resolution.
- **Domain Grammar:** Patrons overlay mythic texture.

A.6.8 Comparative Metrics

A.6.9 Paradigm Shift in Design

Fate's Edge addresses enduring RPG tensions:

- **Prep vs Improvisation:** solved via procedural constraint.
- **Freedom vs Structure:** balanced by Position/Effect.
- **Replayability vs Persistence:** SB/Boon loop resolves both.
- **Complexity vs Clarity:** hidden backend, visible frontend.

A.6.10 Conclusion

Fate's Edge demonstrates that:

- Constraint systems can replace authored prep.
- Feedback loops sustain momentum and consequence.
- Symbolic grammars (Patrons) provide flavor without fracturing mechanics.
- The system scales across solo, one-shot, and campaign play.

This makes it a reference design for **constraint-driven narrative RPGs**, a model of elegant equilibrium where every risk, boon, and beat is metabolized into story.

System	Prep Burden	Replayability	Flexibility	Clarity
D&D 5e	High	Low	Narrow	High
Fate Core	Medium	Medium	High	Medium
Fate’s Edge	None	Infinite	Universal	Consistent

Table A.1: Comparative design metrics across RPG systems.

Closing Thoughts

Every roleplaying game is, at its heart, a shared act of imagination. FATE'S EDGE offers rules and structures, but the real magic happens between players and game master, in the pauses between dice rolls and the sparks that leap across the table. The mechanics are not a cage—they are a scaffold, meant to support the story you want to tell.

You will not find every answer written in these pages, nor should you. The best sessions arise when the table embraces uncertainty: when a Story Beat pulls the tale in an unexpected direction, when a character's flaw drives the narrative forward, when laughter follows disaster. The system gives you tools; the table gives those tools meaning.

If you remember nothing else, carry these three principles into play:

- **Fiction First.** Let the world breathe, and let the rules bend to the needs of the story.
- **Every Choice Matters.** Risk, consequence, and reward shape characters as surely as dice.
- **Build Together.** Collaboration turns scenes into sagas and mechanics into myth.

The rules are here to help you weave drama, not to constrain it. Use them generously, ignore them when they slow the story, and trust your table to improvise with honesty and care. Above all, let the edges of fate guide you not toward certainty, but toward possibility.

May your journeys be bold, your dice fall true, and your stories echo long after the table is cleared.

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