

Fate's Edge

System Reference Document

October 6, 2025

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1 Core Principles

1.1 Identity of Fate's Edge

Fate's Edge is a narrative-first tabletop roleplaying system where every action carries weight, every choice has consequence, and every spell risks backlash. Dice are not simply a measure of success or failure—they are instruments of fate, weaving opportunity with risk.

1.2 A World of Consequences

1.2.1 Design Goals

- **Narrative Primacy:** Mechanics exist to serve the story.
- **Risk as Drama:** Every roll carries the potential for triumph and complication.
- **Meaningful Growth:** Advancement is more than improving statistics.

1.2.2 The Central Question

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

1.2.3 Tone of Play

- Cinematic, with pacing tied to narrative beats.
- Consequential, where even small choices ripple outward.
- Collaborative, empowering both GM and players.

1.3 Key Concepts

1.3.1 Narrative Time

Time is measured by story weight:

- **A Moment** — A heartbeat, a glance, a single strike or word.
- **Some Time** — A few minutes, enough for a skirmish.
- **Significant Time** — Hours, long enough for travel or rituals.
- **Days** — Large-scale endeavors: marches, training, recovery.

1.3.2 Story Beats

Whenever a player rolls dice, each result of 1 generates a Story Beat (SB). These are narrative fuel. The GM spends them to introduce twists.

1.3.3 Affinity

Each culture provides an Affinity: a narrative edge or metaphysical bond. Affinities make certain Arts, skills, or actions more reliable.

1.3.4 Prestige Abilities

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

1.3.5 On-Screen vs. Off-Screen

- **On-Screen Resources:** Companions, hirelings, or allies who stand beside you in danger.
- **Off-Screen Resources:** Taverns, estates, titles, or networks of informants.

2 Core Mechanic

2.1 The Art of Consequence

2.1.1 Procedure

All significant actions follow a three-step process:

1. **Approach:** The player describes both what their character wants and how they attempt it.
2. **Execution:** Build a dice pool equal to *Attribute + Skill* and roll that many d10s. Each die of 6+ counts as a success. Each 1 rolled generates a **Story Beat (SB)**.
3. **Outcome:** The GM interprets total successes against the difficulty (DV) of the task. Story Beats are then spent to weave narrative setbacks.

2.1.2 The Description Ladder

- **Basic Action:** Roll the pool as-is. All 1s remain as Story Beats.
- **Detailed Action:** A clear, descriptive flourish allows the player to re-roll one die showing 1.
- **Intricate Action:** A richly described, multi-sensory action allows the player to re-roll *all* dice showing 1, and add one positive narrative flourish to the scene if they succeed.

Rule — Re-rolling 1s and SB Re-rolling 1s does not remove the Story Beats already generated by those dice. If any re-rolled dice show 1 again, they generate additional SB as normal.

Let C_0 = initial 1s, C_r = 1s on re-rolls \Rightarrow **Total SB** = $C_0 + C_r$.

Example: You roll 7d10: {9, 8, 5, 4, 3, 1, 1} $\Rightarrow C_0 = 2$. You re-roll both 1s (Intricate): {6, 2} $\Rightarrow C_r = 0$. Final: successes = 3, SB = 2 (the initial SB remain).

2.1.3 Story Beats

Story Beats (SB) are the engine of drama. They are not simple penalties, but narrative levers. The GM spends SB to introduce setbacks appropriate to the context:

- **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.

2.1.4 Design Intent

This mechanic ensures that every roll changes the story. Success without risk is rare, and even failure opens new narrative avenues.

2.1.5 GM Quick Reference: Adjudicating Skill Checks

Difficulty Ladder (set before the roll)

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

Outcome Matrix (after the roll) Let S be successes (≥ 6) and C be SB (number of 1s rolled).

Case	Guidance
$S \geq DV$ and $C = 0$	Clean Success: Deliver the intent crisply.
$S \geq DV$ and $C > 0$	Success & Cost: Grant the intent; spend/bank SB for complications.
$0 < S < DV$	Partial: Progress with a fork.
$S = 0$	Miss: No progress. Cash/bank SB.

SB Spend Menu (guidance)

- **1 SB:** Minor pressure: noise, trace, +1 Supply segment.
- **2 SB:** Moderate setback: alarm raised, lose position/cover, lesser foe or lock.
- **3 SB:** Serious trouble: reinforcements, key gear breaks, rail tick.
- **4+ SB:** Major turn: trap springs, authority arrives, scene shifts.

Assistance, Boons, & Description

- **Assists:** One helper per action; total Assist dice across sources are capped at +3 (unless a specific Talent states otherwise).
- **Boons:** A player may re-roll one die after seeing the pool. Once per session, in downtime, you may convert 2 Boons → 1 XP (max 2 XP via conversion per session). Hold cap: 5. Trim to 2 at scene end.
- **Description Ladder:** Basic (roll as-is), Detailed (re-roll one 1), Intricate (re-roll all 1s and add one flourish on success).

2.2 Time Guidance Framework

2.2.1 Narrative Time Scales

Time in Fate's Edge is measured by story weight, not by clocks:

- **A Moment** — A heartbeat, a glance, a single strike or word.
- **Some Time** — A few minutes: a skirmish, a careful lockpick, a short negotiation.
- **Significant Time** — Hours: travel between locations, work a ritual, endure a siege.
- **Days** — Large-scale endeavors: marches across countryside, training a cadre, recovery.

2.2.2 Game Structure Definitions

Scene

The basic unit of narrative play (Some Time to Significant Time); resolves a specific question or conflict.

Player Turn (Beat)

Declare action → GM sets position → roll → resolve outcome → manage consequences.

Round

Simultaneous or near-simultaneous actions within a scene (primarily for combat), representing a few seconds.

Session

One complete game session (typically 3–6 hours), containing 2–4 major scenes and resolving significant narrative progress.

Campaign

Entire story arc (6–20+ sessions) with major character development and lasting consequences.

2.2.3 Magic and Ritual Time

- **Standard Casting:** Channel and Weave phases each take 1 Player Turn; resolves within a single scene.

- **Ritual Casting (Optional Rule):** Channel and Weave phases each require 1 Scene (Significant Time).
- **Rites Invocation:** Invoke takes 1 Player Turn; Weave takes 1 Player Turn. High-Power rites may require extended time by fiction.

Extended Rituals Attach long rituals to clocks:

- 4-segment clock: Significant Time (hours)
- 6-segment clock: Extended Time (days)
- 8+ segment clock: Campaign Time (weeks/months)

Advance the clock through player actions, scenes, or set intervals.

2.3 Worked Micro-Examples

- **Lockpick Under Watch (DV 2):** Roll 6 dice: 10, 8, 5, 4, 1, 1 $\Rightarrow S = 2, C = 2$. *Success & Cost.* Door opens; GM spends 1 SB for a squeal (patrol starts moving) and banks 1 SB to bring that patrol around on the next beat.
- **Charm the Captain (DV 2):** Roll 5 dice: 7, 6, 6, 2, 1 $\Rightarrow S = 3, C = 1$. *Success & Cost.* Passage granted; GM spends 1 SB: “He expects a favor on the return leg—he’ll collect.”
- **Traverse the Pass (DV 3):** Group pools to net 3 successes but produces $C = 3$. *Success & Cost.* GM spends 2 SB to add Fatigue 1 to all from cold and exposure, banks 1 SB to crack a wagon axle next scene.

Fail Forward: Every Roll Matters When you **MISS** on a *significant action*, you gain 1 **Boon**. Boons can be spent immediately for re-rolls, Asset activations, Rites, and other abilities. You can hold up to 5 Boons (trim to 2 at scene end).

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

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

Rehearsal/null-risk probes and repeated identical attempts in the same scene do not award Boons.

3 Combat System

3.1 Core Philosophy

Combat in Fate’s Edge is not a separate mini-game; it is simply conflict under sharper focus. It uses the same dice pool system and SB economy as all other actions. The rules are designed to emphasize narrative consequence, positional play, and risk management.

3.2 Structure of Combat

- **Rounds:** Each round represents a few seconds of action.
- **Turns:** Each participant takes one significant action per round.
- **Scenes:** A battle is one scene unless the fiction dictates otherwise.

3.3 Taking Action

On your turn, declare intent and method as normal:

1. **Set Position:** The GM decides if you are Controlled, Risky, or Desperate.
2. **Build Pool:** Attribute + Skill (+ gear, + assists, +1 from Imbuement if active).
3. **Roll:** Each 6+ is a success. Each 1 generates SB.
4. **Resolve:** Successes vs DV, SB spent by GM, Position/Effect applied.

3.4 Position & Effect

Controlled

You act from safety or advantage. Failure still leaves you options.

Risky

Standard case. Failure has teeth, but not ruin.

Desperate

High stakes. Failure is severe; success may bring extra XP (mark Desperate use).

4 Health, Fatigue, & Harm (Revised)

Tracks & Caps

- **Fatigue Track:** boxes equal to **Body**.
- **Harm Levels:** as defined elsewhere in the SRD (**Harm 1**, **Harm 2**, **Harm 3**).

Fatigue → Harm Conversion

Whenever you would mark Fatigue and your Fatigue Track *fills* (all boxes marked):

1. **Increase** your **Harm** by one level (e.g., 0→Harm 1, Harm 1→Harm 2, Harm 2→Harm 3).
2. **Clear all Fatigue** (erase the Fatigue Track back to 0).

This conversion can occur multiple times in a scene. Effects of Harm tier (disadvantage, action limits, incapacitation at Harm 3, etc.) follow your existing SRD.

Taking Fatigue

Mark Fatigue for strain, exertion, travel, magic costs, or §?? overflow. Fatigue can exceed remaining boxes only to *trigger* conversion; any excess is ignored after the Harm increase and Fatigue clear.

Recovering Fatigue

- **Short Rest** (quiet watch, food/water): remove **2 Fatigue**.
- **Full Night**: remove **all Fatigue**.

Fatigue recovery does not remove Harm. Recover Harm via your normal medical/ritual rules in the SRD.

Mitigation (Optional Dials)

- **Soak/Ward**: Before marking Fatigue, reduce it by 1–2 (to a minimum of 0) if protected by armor/boons/rites.
- **Convert**: Some effects may convert incoming **Harm 1** to **2 Fatigue**; if this *fills* the track, convert as normal.

Effect Effect is narrative reach:

- **Limited**: Scratch or slow progress.
- **Standard**: Expected impact (downing a guard, disabling a lock).
- **Great**: Overwhelming impact, bigger than expected.

4.1 Damage & Consequences

When you take harm:

- **Level 1 Harm**: Minor injury or hindrance. -1 die to related actions.
- **Level 2 Harm**: Serious wound. -1 die to most actions until treated.
- **Level 3 Harm**: Critical injury. You are incapacitated or dying.

Harm may be resisted (roll Attribute vs DV 3; 1s generate SB). On a hit, reduce harm by one level.

4.2 Teamwork

- **Assist**: Spend 1 Stress or Boon to add +1 die. Max +3 dice from assists.
- **Setup**: Make a roll to improve another's Position or Effect.
- **Protect**: Take harm or consequence meant for another.

4.3 GM Guidance for SB in Combat

Use SB to escalate combat fiction:

- **1 SB:** Reinforce enemy cover, minor injury, reveal new foe.
- **2 SB:** Reinforcements arrive, key gear breaks, enemy gains +1 die.
- **3 SB:** Enemy unleashes a Rite or summon, terrain shifts, ally is endangered.
- **4+ SB:** Scene twists—fires spread, the floor collapses, Patron omens manifest.

4.4 Combat and Magic

- **Casting:** Casters spend an action to Weave and another to Cast. Requires the Caster's Gift talent.
- **Rites:** Invoking a Rite is 1 action. Push may be applied for +1 Obligation.
- **Invokers:** May spend Significant Time for rituals or Crack the Seal for instant cast at the cost of Obligation and Symbol compromise.
- **Imbuements:** Require 1 action once per scene to activate, then provide +1 to one Weapon and one Thematic Skill for the remainder of the scene.

4.5 Worked Example

Kael swings his Imbued blade at a cultist (DV 2). He rolls 5 dice: 9, 7, 5, 2, 1.

- Successes = 3 (hit), SB = 1.
- GM grants success: cultist is cut down.
- GM spends 1 SB: "Blood sprays across the sigil—energy flares, the summoning accelerates."

5 Talents and Advancement

5.1 What are Talents?

Talents are the building blocks of character specialization. They represent learned techniques, supernatural gifts, or cultural inheritances. Each Talent costs XP, and their costs are tied to impact.

5.2 Talent Costs

- **2 XP** — Minor edge (e.g., Caster's Gift, +1 situational bonus, small narrative trick).
- **4 XP** — Major edge (e.g., Patron's Symbol, a strong summon upgrade, permanent +1 effect in a niche).
- **6+ XP** — Prestige abilities, rare and campaign-defining.

5.3 Gaining Talents

- Spend XP earned through play.
- XP comes from fulfilling Drives, resolving Arcs, trading Boons (2 Boons = 1 XP, max 2 XP/session), and GM awards.
- XP is spent between sessions or during downtime.

5.4 Magic Access Through Talents

Caster's Gift (2 XP):

Grants access to Weave & Cast freeform spellcasting using the Eight Elements. Without this, characters cannot freeform cast.

Familiar (2 XP):

Required to access Patron features such as *Patron's Gift*. Binds a Thiasos.

Codex (4 XP):

Required to fully join a Patron's service as a Warlock. Grants access to that Patron's Rites and Obligation system.

Patron's Symbol (4 XP):

Minor Asset. Allows an Invoker to access a Patron's Rites via ritual precision. Each Patron requires its own Symbol.

5.5 Imbuements

Patron's Gift (Free, Requires Thiasos)

Duration: Scene; Range: Touch; Stacking: No.

Effect: Imbue one item with temporary magical power related to your Patron's domain. The item functions as a magical weapon (+1 Melee) and specialized tool (+1 thematic Skill) for the scene.

Activation: Requires 1 Action once per scene.

Push It: The item's power persists for one additional scene but marks +1 Obligation.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

5.6 Advancement

- Characters advance primarily through acquiring Talents.
- Each 8–12 XP represents significant growth.
- Characters may retrain (swap out) one Talent per arc with GM approval, if fictionally justified.
- Advancement should always reinforce narrative identity: what drives, obligations, and affinities are shaping the character?

5.7 Prestige Abilities

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

- Breaking fundamental limits of casting or rites.
- Access to forbidden summons.
- Rewriting obligations or reshaping patron bargains.

5.8 Worked Example

Sable earns 2 XP from fulfilling a Drive and 1 XP from trading in 2 Boons at session's end. He now has 4 XP. He buys the Caster's Gift (2 XP) and saves the other 2 XP toward a Patron's Symbol. Next downtime, he will be able to invoke Ikasha's rites through ritual.

6 The Magic System

Magic in Fate's Edge is expressed through three interconnected paths. You may specialize in one, or mix them at greater bookkeeping cost. All paths share the same dice engine and SB/Obligation economies, but their flavor and risks differ.

6.1 Three Faces of Magic

Caster (Freeform):

Requires **Talent: Caster's Gift (2 XP)**. Grants access to Weave & Cast using the Eight Elements. Flexible, creative, and risky (Backlash on 1s).

Rites User (Warlock):

Requires **Patron + Thiasos (Familiar) + Codex (4 XP)**. Grants access to a Patron's Rites. Structured, powerful, but debt-driven through **Obligation**.

Invoker (Symbol Path):

Requires one or more **Patron's Symbols (4 XP each)**. Grants access to that Patron's Rites via rituals. Safe but slow; can *Crack the Seal* to cast instantly at steep Obligation cost.

6.2 Casting (Freeform)

Weave & Cast Casters describe the effect in terms of the Eight Elements (Earth, Fire, Air, Water, Fate, Life, Luck, Death). The GM sets DV and Effect based on scope.

- **Weave:** Player builds dice pool and rolls. On success, they stabilize the spell's form.
- **Cast:** A second roll channels the effect into the world.
- **Backlash:** Any 1 rolled may cause narrative backlash related to the Element.

Limits Casters can attempt any effect that can be described, but the larger the scope, the higher the DV. Improvisation is costly; reliable effects require repeated use and narrative justification.

6.3 Rites Users (Warlocks)

Requirements A Patron bond, a Thiasos (Familiar), and a Codex (4 XP) mark a character as a Warlock.

Invocation

- **Action Cost:** Invoking a Rite requires 1 Action.
- **Obligation:** Each Rite used marks Obligation on its clock.
- **Push It:** Once per Rite, you may Push to increase its duration or potency by +1 step at the cost of +1 Obligation.

Obligation Clock Tracks the Patron's claim. When full, the GM resolves the debt in-fiction. Obligation is reduced through service or downtime actions.

6.4 Invokers (Symbol Path)

Patron's Symbol

- **Minor Asset, 4 XP each.**
- Each Symbol is consecrated to one Patron and grants ritual access to that Patron's Rites.
- You may hold multiple Symbols, one per Patron.

Ritual Invocation

- **Time:** Requires Significant Time (typically 10–30 minutes).
- **Obligation:** Completing a ritual always marks +1 Obligation.
- **No Push:** Invoker Rites cannot use Push It benefits.
- **Symbol Display:** The Symbol must be visible throughout the ritual.

Crack the Seal (Instant Cast) As part of an Invoker Rite, you may immediately resolve the effect by setting the Symbol to *Compromised* and marking +2 Obligation segments (+3 if High-Power). The GM may spend 1 SB on-theme. The Symbol remains but must be restored in downtime.

Restoring Symbols A Compromised Symbol is inert until repaired. Use a downtime action and test (DV 3 or fiction-appropriate). Success restores it; a shaky result leaves it Neglected (rituals work but cost +1 Obligation).

Invoker Path Limitations

- Cannot Push.
- Environment must be suitable (ritual space, purity, etc.).
- Max simultaneous rituals = Spirit. Starting a new ritual ends the oldest or adds +1 Obligation to it.
- Carrying 4+ Symbols causes interference: the first ritual each scene marks +1 extra Obligation.

6.5 Patron's Gift (Imbuements)

Patron's Gift (Free, Requires Thiasos)

Duration: Scene; Range: Touch; Stacking: No.

Effect: Imbue one item with +1 Weapon (Melee) and +1 Thematic Skill (Patron domain) for the scene.

Activation: Requires 1 Action once per scene.

Push It: The item's power persists for one additional scene but marks +1 Obligation.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

6.6 Mixing the Paths

Players may combine Casting, Rites, and Invoking, but each path introduces its own bookkeeping:

- Casters track Backlash.
- Rites users track Obligation.
- Invokers track Symbol states (Maintained, Neglected, Compromised).

Mixing provides flexibility but less efficiency than specialization. Specialists gain stronger benefits, while mixers gain narrative breadth.

7 Summons and Outsiders

7.1 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.

7.2 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.

7.3 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.

7.4 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).

7.5 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.

7.6 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.

7.7 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.

8 Story Beats and Boons

8.1 Story Beats (SB)

Story Beats are the core dramatic currency of Fate’s Edge. They represent the risks, twists, and unintended consequences that emerge from every action.

8.1.1 Generating SB

- Each die result of **1** generates 1 SB for the GM.
- Re-rolling a 1 does not remove its SB; if the re-rolled die also shows 1, it generates additional SB.
- Certain Harm effects or narrative triggers may also generate SB on future rolls.

8.1.2 Spending SB

The GM spends SB to introduce complications:

Escalation:

Draw more enemies, raise the stakes.

Exhaustion:

Drain time, resources, or positioning.

Exposure:

Reveal hidden actions, alert foes.

Collateral:

Harm or danger spills onto allies, innocents, or surroundings.

Menu of SB Spends (Guideline):

- 1 SB: Minor pressure (noise, trace, +1 Supply segment).
- 2 SB: Moderate setback (alarm raised, lose cover, lesser foe arrives).
- 3 SB: Serious trouble (reinforcements, broken gear, major twist).
- 4+ SB: Scene-shaping turn (trap springs, authority arrives, narrative shift).

8.1.3 Limits on SB

- **Base SB Budget:** $4 + \text{Character Tier}$ (e.g. Tier I = 5, Tier II = 6).
- **Scene Limits:** 12 SB max for standard scenes, 16 SB max for climactic scenes.
- **Session Limit:** 20 SB total per session.
- **Threads:** Max concurrent complication threads = Tier + 1.

8.2 Boons

Boons are the player-facing reward for meaningful failure or bond-driven actions. They represent insight, opportunity, or a sudden edge.

8.2.1 Earning Boons

- On a **Miss** (0 successes), if the stakes are meaningful and SB is spent/banked, the player gains 1 Boon.
- On a bond-driven assist with an **Intricate Description**, the player may gain 1 Boon (once per bond per session).
- Other narrative rewards: The GM may award Boons for spotlighting bonds, sacrifices, or creative solutions.

8.2.2 Spending Boons

- Re-roll a single die in a pool.
- Activate an on-screen Asset.
- Power a Rite or magical ability.
- Improve Position by 1 step.
- Convert into XP: Once per session, during downtime, convert 2 Boons \rightarrow 1 XP (max 2 XP).

8.2.3 Limits on Boons

- Hold up to 5 Boons at a time.
- At the end of a scene, reduce held Boons to 2 (excess are lost).
- Max 2 Boons earned from failure per scene per character.

8.3 Interplay: SB and Boons

- SB fuels the GM's complications; Boons fuel the players' resilience.
- Every roll potentially adds to both sides: Successes drive story, 1s feed the GM, and misses feed the players.
- This dual economy ensures narrative momentum—every result matters.

8.4 Example

Kael rolls 6 dice to pick a lock under watch. Results: {9, 7, 5, 3, 1, 1}. Successes = 2, SB = 2. He succeeds, but the GM spends 1 SB for a squealing hinge and banks 1 SB for guards incoming. Because it was a Success & Cost, no Boon is awarded. If Kael had missed entirely, he would have gained 1 Boon.

9 Combat System

9.1 Core Philosophy

Combat in Fate's Edge is not a separate mini-game; it is simply conflict under sharper focus. It uses the same dice pool system and SB economy as all other actions. The rules emphasize narrative consequence, positional play, and risk management.

9.2 Structure of Combat

- **Rounds:** Each round represents a few seconds of action.
- **Turns:** Each participant takes one significant action per round.
- **Scenes:** A battle is one scene unless the fiction dictates otherwise.

9.3 Taking Action

On your turn:

1. **Set Position:** The GM decides if you are Controlled, Risky, or Desperate.
2. **Build Pool:** Attribute + Skill (+ gear, + assists, +1 from Imbuement if active).
3. **Roll:** Each 6+ is a success. Each 1 generates SB.
4. **Resolve:** Compare successes to DV; GM applies Position, Effect, and SB costs.

9.4 Position & Effect

Controlled

You act from safety or advantage. Failure still leaves you options.

Risky

Standard case. Failure has teeth, but not ruin.

Desperate

High stakes. Failure is severe; success may bring extra XP (mark Desperate use).

Effect

- **Limited:** Scratch or slow progress.
- **Standard:** Expected impact (downing a guard, disabling a lock).
- **Great:** Overwhelming impact, bigger than expected.

10 Health, Fatigue, & Harm

Tracks & Caps

- **Fatigue Track:** boxes equal to **Body**.
- **Harm Levels:** Harm 1 (minor), Harm 2 (serious), Harm 3 (critical/incapacitated).

Fatigue → Harm Conversion

When Fatigue fills:

1. Increase Harm by 1 level.
2. Clear all Fatigue.

This can occur multiple times per scene.

Taking Fatigue

Mark Fatigue for strain, exertion, travel, magic costs, or §?? overflow.

Recovering Fatigue

- **Short Rest:** remove 2 Fatigue.
- **Full Night:** remove all Fatigue.

Harm is not removed by Fatigue recovery.

Mitigation

- **Soak/Ward:** Reduce Fatigue by 1–2 before marking if shielded.
- **Convert:** Some effects turn Harm 1 into 2 Fatigue.

10.1 Damage & Consequences

- **Harm 1:** -1 die to related actions.
- **Harm 2:** -1 die to most actions until treated.
- **Harm 3:** Incapacitated or dying.

Harm may be resisted (roll Attribute vs DV 3; 1s generate SB).

11 Weapons & Armor

Weapons

Purchased by weight class. Provides modifiers by range.

- **Light (4 XP):** Melee +2 Close, +1 Near. Ranged +1 Near. Fast, no penalties.
- **Medium (8 XP):** Melee +1 Close, +2 Near. Ranged +2 Near, +1 Far. Must *Set* once per scene or roll -1 die first attack.
- **Heavy (12 XP):** Melee -1 Close, +3 Near. Ranged +1 Near, +3 Far. Must *Set* once per scene or roll -2 dice first attack.

Armor

Armor converts Harm into Fatigue.

- **Light (4 XP):** Up to 1 Harm → 1 Fatigue.
- **Medium (8 XP):** Up to 2 Harm → 1 Fatigue. -1 die physical skills.

- **Heavy (12 XP):** Up to 3 Harm → 2 Fatigue. -2 dice physical skills, no sprint in rough terrain.

Condition

- **Neglected:** Conversion reduced by 1 step; weapons roll -1 die.
- **Compromised:** No conversion; weapons roll -1 die first attack each exchange.

12 Ranged Combat

Range Bands

Close:

Room-length, melee-adjacent.

Near:

Street, courtyard, glade.

Far:

Field, battlement, valley.

Firing Profiles

Fast:

(knives, slings, shortbows) — Move and Shoot. Reload is incidental. Risky at Close.

Standard:

(longbows, crossbows) — Move or Shoot. Reload takes part of turn. Aim for +1 die or Effect.

Slow:

(greatbows, arbalests, siege) — Requires Set/Brace. Reload full turn. Cannot Move and Shoot same round.

Options

- **Aim:** +1 die or Effect next shot (lost if disrupted).
- **Volley:** Extra ammo = +1 die (max +2).
- **Suppress:** Zone fire; foes act at -1 die/Limited Effect.
- **Overwatch:** Hold, fire Risky shot when target crosses line.

Cover & Close

- Light cover: +1 DV or -1 die to attacker.
- Heavy cover: +2 DV or -2 dice.

- Obscured (fog, night): Position worsens by 1 step.
- Shooting while Engaged: Risky (Fast) or Desperate (Standard/Slow).

Weapon Tags (defaults)

- Light ranged = Fast.
- Medium ranged = Standard.
- Heavy ranged = Slow.

12.1 Teamwork

- **Assist:** Spend 1 Stress or Boon for +1 die (max +3).
- **Setup:** Roll to improve ally's Position or Effect.
- **Protect:** Take harm meant for another.

12.2 GM Guidance for SB

- **1 SB:** Reinforce cover, minor injury, new foe.
- **2 SB:** Reinforcements, gear breaks, +1 die foe.
- **3 SB:** Rite unleashed, terrain shifts, ally endangered.
- **4+ SB:** Scene twist—fire spreads, floor collapses, omen manifests.

12.3 Combat and Magic

- **Casting:** Weave (1 action), Cast (1 action). Requires Caster's Gift.
- **Rites:** Invoke in 1 action. Push = +1 Obligation.
- **Invokers:** Rituals take time, or Crack the Seal (instant, costs Obligation).
- **Imbuements:** 1 action once per scene; +1 to one Weapon + one Skill.

12.4 Worked Example

Kael swings his Imbued blade at a cultist (DV 2). He rolls 5 dice: 9, 7, 5, 2, 1.

- Successes = 3 (hit), SB = 1.
- GM: cultist falls.
- GM spends 1 SB: "Blood sprays across the sigil—energy flares, the summoning accelerates."

13 Rites, Invokers, and Symbols

Magic in **Fate's Edge** expresses through three intertwined practices: **Rites** (oathbound authority), **Invocations** (symbolic ritual), and **Patron Pacts** (gifts and obligations). The rules below emphasize fiction-first play: consequences are Story Beats (SB) that prompt twists; numbers follow the story.

13.1 Rites and Patrons (Runekeepers)

Characters who bind themselves to a *single* Patron and study that Patron's **Codex** are **Runekeepers**. Their magic is structured, immediate, and tied to service.

- **One-Patron Rule.** A Runekeeper may be bound to *only one* Patron at a time. This sharpens identity and keeps Obligation on a single ledger.
- **Thiasos (Familiar).** A circle, retinue, or emissary that grounds the pact in fiction. Required to access *Patron's Gift*.
- **Codex.** The Patron's corpus of rites and precedents. Grants access to the Patron's Rites.
- **Invoke Rites.** A Runekeeper may Invoke a known Rite from their Patron as a **1 action** effect. On completion, mark **+1 Obligation** to that Patron. You may *Push It* once per scene to amplify the effect, marking **+1 additional Obligation**.

13.2 Invokers and Symbols

Invokers relate to Patrons through consecrated **Symbols**: physical tokens that anchor names and permissions.

- **Symbols (Minor Asset).** Each Symbol is keyed to one Patron; cost **4 XP**. You may own Symbols of different Patrons (one Symbol per Patron).
- **Ritual Invocation.** Display the Symbol and perform the Rite as a *ritual* (Significant Time). Completion always marks **+1 Obligation** on that Rite's ledger.
- **Crack the Seal.** As part of an Invoker Rite, you may resolve the effect instantly by setting the Symbol to *Compromised* and marking **+2 Obligation** (**+3** if High-Power). The Keeper may spend 1 on-theme SB immediately. The asset remains but is inert until restored.
- **Restore a Symbol.** 1 downtime action and a fitting test (DV 3 or by fiction). Success: *Maintained*; shaky: returns *Neglected*. Or spend **1 XP** to fully restore.
- **Display Requirement.** Symbols must be openly displayed for rituals. Hidden Symbols do not function.

13.3 Casting and Free-Form Magic

Improvised casting is possible with the **Caster's Gift** Talent (**2 XP**). It is a *backup toolkit*:

- Small, local effects (typ. DV 2–3), fiction-first, colored by Elements and locus.

- Heavy control effects such as [WARD], [BANISH], or [UNWARD] require a printed Talent, Rite, or Spell result.

13.4 Patron's Gift (Imbuements)

The pact may mark a devotee's tools with a short-lived boon aligned to the Patron's domain.

Requirements. **Thiasos (Familiar)** is required. Invoking the Gift costs **1 Boon**. A Codex is *not* required for the Gift.

Activation and Duration.

- **Action:** 1 action to activate; **1/scene**.
- **Duration:** Scene. *Push It:* extend for one additional scene by marking **+1 Obligation** to that Patron (max one Push per scene).
- **Range:** Touch (you must handle the item).
- **Stacking:** Gifts from the *same Patron* do not stack; take the best active version. Dice bonuses respect the table's **+3 dice cap**.

Effect. Choose one held item you or an ally carries. Until scene end it grants:

- **+1 Melee** (the item counts as a magical weapon), and
- **+1 Thematic** (a *+1 die* to a fixed Skill tied to your Patron; see Table 1). Apply only when the fiction clearly fits the Patron's sphere and how the item is used.

Runekeeper Clarification. A Runekeeper (one Patron + Codex) may Invoke Rites on-screen and use Patron's Gift if they also possess **Thiasos (Familiar)**. Codex alone does not grant the Gift. Symbols are optional for parley or omens and do not gate Runekeeper Invocation or the Gift.

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.

13.5 Specialization vs. Mixing

Characters can mix paths (Summoner, Caster, Invoker, Runekeeper), but specialization is usually stronger and cleaner. Mixing increases upkeep (Obligation, Symbol state, Leash) and action congestion without guaranteed power gains. Let fiction guide choices: Story Beats are prompts to advance the scene, not punishments.

13.6 The Witness, Who Sees All (Memory & Omen)

Lore. The Witness remembers what others bury. Every shadow cast and oath broken is a line in her unending ledger.

“I will show you what you would rather forget.”

Patron		+1 Thematic Skill	Example Symbols
Ikasha (Shadow, Penumbra)	Stealth		Knot of black silk; soot-oil vial; fingerbone ring lacquered matte
Mykkiel (Judgment, Writ)	Command		Cold-iron seal matrix; parchment writ-tag; square rule stamped with code
The Witness (Truth, Revelation)	Notice		Obsidian eye pendant; silver mirror shard; wax seal-stamp with an open eye
Sealed Gate (Boundaries, Closure)	Tinker		Lead sounder-weight; iron chain link; sealed lockplate token
Raéyn (Storm, Tides)	Skirmish		Sea-glass disk; salt-crusted rope knot; vial of rainwater from three crossings
Khemesh (Abyss, Pressure)	Skirmish		Barnacle-bitten coin; abyssal-spiral lead weight; salt-etched iron chain
Mab (Glamour, Courts)	Persuade		Hawthorn thorn wrapped in silver; mirror shard with green felt; silk-lined acorn cup
Sacred Geometry (Perfect Forms)	Tinker		Brass heptagram compass; bone tablet with golden-ratio spiral; plumb-bob with proof in red thread
Clockwork (Mechanism, Process)	Tinker		Gear tooth sealed in oil; mainspring coil; rivet stamped with forbidden numerals
Varnek Karn (Ossuary, Dominion of the Dead)	Command		Ossuary bead rosary; carved phalanx tally; fused bone-and-obsidian coin
Nidhoggr (Deep Earth, Rot)	Skirmish		Fossil tooth shard; dark river-stone; obsidian spindle with flaw
The Traveler (Ways, Roads)	Notice		Road-nail wrapped in thread; waystone pebble; brass compass missing its needle
Oath of Flame & Light (Dawn, Vows)	Command		Cold-iron sun-stamp; vow-ring with sunrise and true name; ampoule of consecrated spark

Table 1: Patron’s Gift: fixed Thematic Skill and example Symbols. Thematic bonuses apply only when the fiction matches the Patron’s domain and the item’s use. Symbols also serve Invokers as ritual anchors.

Mark of Remembrance (Low, 4 XP) *Action; Near; Yes (creature/object).* **Materials:** A drop of ink or blood traced in a circle.

Effect: Ephemeral mark for one day. You unerringly recall its location/condition; +1 die to track or investigate it.

Push It: The mark whispers its last hour to you; mark 1 SB (Spades) as grief/echoes cling.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of Testimony (Low, 5 XP) *Scene; Near; Stacking: No.* **Materials:** A knotted cord held while the oath is spoken.

Effect: Within the space, lies falter into hesitation or contradiction; Keeper signals tells.

Push It: Record an image/phrase in your memory; once this scene, replay for others. Costs 1 SB (Clubs).

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Omen of Recall (Standard, 8 XP) *Action; Near; No.* **Materials:** A mirror shard or still water.

Effect: Target vividly relives a recent event; suffers –1 die to contested actions for the duration.

Push It: You glean a hidden motive/sensory detail; mark 1 SB (Hearts).

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

The Written Ledger (Standard, 7 XP) *Scene; Near; Stacking: Yes.* **Materials:** A book or ledger marked with charcoal.

Effect: Agreements recorded cannot be forgotten by signers; denying/obfuscating suffers –1 die.

Push It: Record the emotional truth; once, ask what a signatory *truly* felt when signing.

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

Burden of Memory [OMEN] (High, 11 XP) *Scene; Near; No.* **Materials:** A blindfold or veil, worn until end of scene.

Effect: Confront one target with visions of broken oaths. They suffer –2 dice to defiant acts this scene.

Push It: Name a second target; both dilute (–1 die). Immediately mark 2 SB (Spades).

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

Obligation: 6 segments.

13.7 Ikasha, She Who Sleeps (Latent Potential & Shadow)

Lore. Ikasha is the hush between footfalls, the patience of dark water. In stillness she gathers what might be.

Blow out the candle. If the room listens back, ask softly.

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.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Whispering Shade (Low, 5 XP) *Scene; Zone; No.* **Materials:** Extinguish a candle.

Effect: Shadows subtly move; grant +1 die to a Create Diversion *or* impose –1 die on one enemy's concentration action.

Push It: A brief terrifying shape forms; the shadows remember your face.

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/inner-reserve *or* clear *Fatigue 1*.

Push It: Also gain one free escape attempt; you must help another escape next scene.

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 emotion; target learns one of your secrets in return.

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

Become the Shadow Itself (High, 12 XP) *Scene; Self; No.* **Materials:** Stand in absolute darkness.

Effect: Intangible to mundane harm; pass through small gaps; +2 dice to Stealth; auto-succeed one escape. Cannot manipulate normal objects.

Push It: Interact with a single bound object once; you become partially corporeal (vulnerable) for one beat.

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

Obligation: 7 segments.

13.8 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.

13.9 Inaea, Angel of the Spider (Webs & Fate)

Lore. Where Isoka sheds, Inaea binds—threads of debt, favor, and inevitability.

Tie one knot for what you owe, two for what you're owed, and a third for what will answer both.

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 may also tug an unintended party

once.

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.

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). Breaking the link's fiction creates **1 SB (Hearts/Clubs)**.

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*.

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)**.

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

Obligation: 7 segments.

13.10 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.

13.11 Mykkiel, Arbiter of the Writ (Judgment & Writ)

Lore. Mykkiel weighs speech against deed and seals verdicts in cold iron.

Name the charge. Name the terms. Then sign where you'll bleed if you're wrong.

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.

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).

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.

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.

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).

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

Obligation: 7 segments.

13.12 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.

13.13 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.

13.14 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.

13.15 The Clockwork Monad (Iterative Evolution)

Lore. Perfection is a process. Each pass files the burrs; each trial teaches the next.

Again. Better. Again. Perfect.

First Attempt (Low, 4 XP) *Action; Self/Ally; No.*

Materials: A marked gear or etched tally.

Effect: Mark an **Iteration Track [4]** on a specific action type (“lockpicking this vault,” “parrying this duelist”). Each repeat of that same action within the scene fills 1 segment.

Push It: Fill an extra segment now but generate 1 SB (Clubs).

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of Refinement (Low, 5 XP) *Scene; Self/Ally; No.*

Effect: While acting on a marked Iteration Track, each repeat gains +1 die (max +2 dice) or +1 Effect once the track is half-filled. Bonuses reset at scene end.

Push It: Swap a +die for +Effect on one repeat; mark *Fatigue 1*.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Process Optimization (Standard, 7 XP) *Scene; Crew; No.*

Effect: The party gains an **Efficiency Buff:** the *first* time any PC repeats a prior action this scene, improve Position by one step. One party-wide trigger.

Push It: A *second* party trigger this scene; mark +1 Obligation.

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

Iterative Advantage (Standard, 8 XP) *Action; Self/Ally; No.*

Effect: On a repeat covered by an Iteration Track, choose: +2 dice or +1 Effect. Consumes 2 segments from the track.

Push It: Also clear 1 SB from a related past stumble by demonstrating learned correction; mark +1 Obligation.

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

Evolutionary Leap (High, 12 XP) *Instant; Self/Ally; No.*

Effect: When an Iteration Track fills, choose one: (a) Convert the track into a *permanent +1 die specialty* for this specific action pattern or (b) Scribe an *improved ritual version* (GM helps define

tag). One leap per scene.

Push It: Apply to *two* different tracks at once; mark +1 Obligation.

Requires: Familiar + Codex + Tier III (Invoke: 2 Boons). Obligation: 6 segments.

13.16 Varnek Karn, the Bone King (Necromantic Archives)

Lore. Bones remember. Varnek keeps their ledgers: last sights, last debts, last names.

Ask gently. The skull will answer in fragments; the ledger is never truly closed.

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; mark +1 Obligation.

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; mark +1 Obligation.

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; mark +1 Obligation.

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

13.17 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.

13.18 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 §13.4.)

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.

13.19 The Carrion-King (Decay & Cycles)

Lore. The Carrion-King does not bring rot to destroy but to recycle. To him, decay is not an end but a return to the great cycle of flesh into soil, bone into earth. His priests are gardeners of entropy, ensuring that nothing lingers beyond its time and that new life always rises from death.

Quote. *“All banquets end in bones, and from those bones the feast begins anew.” — The Carrion-King*

Rite of Gentle Rot (**Low, 5 XP**) *Instant; Touch; Yes (decay only).* **Materials:** Spoiled food or a dead insect.

Effect: Accelerate natural decay on a small, non-living object (rope, lock, rations): **+1 Effect** to *Break/Sabotage*.

Push It: A second, similar item in Close range decays; scavengers/vermin are drawn.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Wilting Bloom (**Low, 4 XP**) *Scene; Self; No.* **Materials:** A withered flower.

Effect: Aura of mild decay: **+1 die** to resist disease/poison; your carried food won't worsen (becomes tasteless).

Push It: Wither a small plant/food source in Near; suffer **Fatigue 1**.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Cycle's Turn (Standard, 8 XP) *Scene; Touch; No.* **Materials:** A creature dead less than an hour.

Effect: From death, sustain life: choose one—purify a small food/water cache; sprout useful fungi/herbs; *or* grant +1 die to resist disease/poison to one target.

Push It: Superior yield/quality; local life/death balance tilts (GM clocks/complications).

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

Rite of the Peaceful Rest (Standard, 7 XP) *Instant; Near; No.* **Materials:** Grave dirt over the corpse.

Effect: Lay a minor spirit; prevent easy animation *or* quiet a small haunting. Gain +2 dice on the next social roll with mourners/spirits.

Push It: You/ally gain undead-fear immunity for the scene; other nearby spirits grow restless.

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

Rite of the Final Compost (High, 13 XP) *Scene; Zone; No.* **Materials:** A handful of grave dirt.

Effect: Accelerate decay across a zone: structures falter (attackers relying on them –1 die), enemy maintenance falters (–1 die to keep gear/efforts stable). Alternatively, consume a major obstacle over the scene.

Push It: The zone erupts with sickly growth; creatures lingering gain *Sickened*. The growth may be harvested later.

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

Obligation: 7 segments.

Rite of the Great Cycle (High, 14 XP) *Extended; Touch; No.* **Materials:** Bury a seed in rich, rotten earth.

Effect: Transform a significant dead mass (large corpse/fallen tree) into something useful: fertile plot, unique reagent, or a temporary environmental boon (GM scales time/impact).

Push It: Compress to one scene; spectacle attracts attention and interference.

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

Obligation: 7 segments.

13.20 The Gallow's Bell (Consequences & Retribution)

Lore. The Bell tolls for every oath broken, every sin unatoned. Its sound is not heard by all, but by those whose guilt cannot be outrun. To follow the Gallow's Bell is to be an instrument of consequence, a reminder that no action escapes the echo of its price.

Quote. *"Three times shall the bell toll, and thrice shall the guilty stumble." — The Gallow's Bell*

Rite of the Whispered Name (Low, 4 XP) *Scene; Self; No.* **Materials:** Noose fragment; whispered confession.

Effect: Mark a target by name; within 3 scenes the GM must introduce a complication tied to their recent deeds.

Push It: The complication strikes immediately; homonyms may also be brushed by the omen.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Curse of the Unsettled Sleep (Low, 5 XP) *Scene; Near; No.* **Materials:** Dream-catcher woven with guilt; midnight vigil.

Effect: Target dreams of misdeeds, inviting roleplay leverage and soft penalties per fiction.

Push It: The dream grants a true omen of coming consequence; one of your secrets is revealed to the dreamer.

Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).

Rite of the Broken Mirror (Standard, 8 XP) *Scene; Near; No.* **Materials:** Shattered mirror; drop of the target's blood.

Effect: Target's reflection shows "true nature" to observers; their deceptions generate automatic narrative complications on success.

Push It: The reflection turns hostile (ambient social friction); all mirrors nearby become *strange* until scene end.

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

Mark of Unfinished Business (Standard, 7 XP) *Extended; Touch; No.* **Materials:** An unfinished letter; a broken chain link.

Effect: Target accrues story-weight from unresolved obligations; expect recurring complications until addressed.

Push It: The obligation focuses into a specific demand; you share narrative responsibility to resolve it.

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

Curse of the Singing Chain (High, 13 XP) *Scene; Near; No.* **Materials:** A prison chain and a funeral bell-hammer.

Effect: Target hears echoes of broken promises: suffer **Fatigue 1**; lying draws narrative backlash.

Push It: A spectral chain manifests (movement constrained by fiction); nearby chains resonate & misbehave.

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

Obligation: 7 segments.

The Bell That Rings Thrice (High, 14 XP) *Extended; Zone; No.* **Materials:** Gallows rope; three iron bells rung in order.

Effect: Over the next session, the target suffers three escalating, nature-true consequences (GM stages).

Push It: The toll splashes onto their close allies/kin; you are marked as an agent of retribution.

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

Obligation: 7 segments.

13.21 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.

13.22 Maelstraeus, The Infernal Bargainer (Pacts & Debt)

Rite of the Binding Quill (Low, 4 XP) *Scene; Near; No. Materials:* A drop of ink or blood upon parchment. **Effect:** Seal a spoken agreement in narrative force. Breaking the terms imposes a Minor Condition (Guilt, Debt, Marked). **Push It:** The pact is harder to break (Moderate Condition), but Maelstraeus claims a fragment of the truth surrounding the deal for his own designs. *Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).*

Rite of the Weighed Scales (Low, 5 XP) *Duration: Scene; Range: Self; Stacking: No. Materials:* A coin balanced upon your palm until it falls. **Effect:** Gain +1 die when bargaining, haggling, or leveraging debts. You instinctively sense if the other side is giving more than they receive. **Push It:** You may demand a small hidden truth in the bargain, but you take Fatigue 1 from the mental strain of weighing it. *Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).*

Rite of the Token Exchange (Low, 6 XP) *Duration: Scene; Range: Near; Stacking: No. Materials:* A small token given and received (coin, trinket, written word). **Effect:** You and the target both gain +1 die to a single roll this scene — but the GM chooses a minor narrative complication that ties you together until the “exchange” is settled. **Push It:** You may declare the complication instead, but the GM immediately gains 1 SB to “enforce the bargain” later. *Requires: Familiar (Invoke: 1 Boon).*

Rite of the Debt Ledger (Standard, 8 XP) *Duration: Scene; Range: Self; Stacking: Yes (different debts).* **Materials:** A written list of names or accounts. **Effect:** Track a target who owes you a boon or debt. You gain +1 effect to actions to collect or enforce repayment. **Push It:** You may declare a “hidden clause” that retroactively complicates the debtor’s situation in your favor, but this grants GM 1 SB immediately. *Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).*

Rite of the Infernal Seal (Standard, 7 XP) *Duration: Scene; Range: Touch; Stacking: No. Materials:* Wax seal impressed upon parchment or skin. **Effect:** Affix a mark of pact upon an ally or foe. For allies, once per scene they may reroll a failed action tied to the bargain. For foes, the mark imposes -1 die to resist your Sway or Command. **Push It:** The Seal glows with infernal script,

undeniable to all, but its visibility may draw unwanted attention from other Patrons. *Requires: Familiar + Codex (Invoke: 1 Boon).*

Rite of the Eternal Contract (High, 12 XP) *Extended; Range: Self+Other; Stacking: No.*
Materials: A signed document, sealed with both blood and wax. **Effect:** Forge an extended pact with another character. While active, both gain a persistent +1 die when acting in line with the contract, but each breach immediately advances a 6-segment “Debt Claimed” clock. **Push It:** The pact can cheat death once for one party — they revive at Harm 3 instead of dying — but the “Debt Claimed” clock jumps forward 3 segments. *Requires: Familiar + Codex + Tier III (Invoke: 2 Boons).* *Obligation: 7 segments.*

Rite of the Infernal Exchange (High, 14 XP) *Scene; Zone; No.* **Materials:** A balance scale with something of personal value upon each side. **Effect:** Exchange properties, conditions, or consequences between two willing targets. (e.g., swap Fatigue 2 for Harm 1, trade a social Condition, or move SB gain from one character to another). **Push It:** The exchange may include an unwilling target, but Maelstraeus claims something from you in kind — a permanent scar, memory, or name. *Requires: Familiar + Codex + Tier III (Invoke: 2 Boons).* *Obligation: 7 segments.*

Lore. Maelstraeus is whispered of as the Infernal Bargainer, the one who tallies every promise and weighs every gift. His followers insist that all power must be transacted, and no boon is free. Mortals who call him do so for leverage, not devotion — and yet every coin spent in his name is another bead on his endless abacus.

Quote. *“Nothing is given. All is traded. You may forget the bargain, but I never do.” — Maelstraeus, The Infernal Bargainer*

13.23 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.

14 Patron Rivalries

Rivalries set expectations for tone and friction. Use them to color rulings, nudge Position, and guide how Story Beats (SB) land. In their home domains, a Patron’s work tends to start a step better in Position; in a rival’s, a step worse (Keeper’s call).

Patron	Primary Rival	Friction in Play (one-line read)
Raéyn (Sea, Tides, Travel)	Khemesh (Abyssal Maw)	Tides vs. trench: navigation and passage thrive against dread and crushing depths.
Khemesh (Abyssal Maw)	Raéyn (Sea, Tides, Travel)	Abyss unmoors charts: silence, pressure, and alien geometry devour routes.
Sealed Gate (Boundaries, Closure)	The Traveler (Ways, Roads)	Keys vs. roads: jurisdiction and permits against detours and desire lines.
The Traveler (Ways, Roads)	Sealed Gate (Boundaries, Closure)	Paths want to open; gates insist on form—who defines the threshold?
The Witness (Truth, Revelation)	Mab (Glamour, Courts)	Revelation strips glamour; courtly masks fight to endure the gaze.
Mab (Glamour, Courts)	The Witness (Truth, Revelation)	Mask and merriment contest the straight line of testimony.
Ikasha (Shadow, Latent Potential)	The Witness (Truth, Revelation)	Hiding and hush vs. the unblinking eye.
Mykkiel (Judgment, Writ)	Varnek Karn (Necromantic Archives)	Lawful writ and living order against bone-kept precedent and unfinished business.
Varnek Karn (Necromantic Archives)	Oath of Light & Flame (Dawn, Vows)	Memory of the dead resists purgation by vow and light.
Oath of Light & Flame (Dawn, Vows)	Khemesh (Abyssal Maw)	Consecrated dawn opposes abyssal hunger and despair.
Sacred Geometry (Order, Pattern)	The Traveler (Ways, Fortune)	Perfect forms vs. opportunistic routes; measure vs. happenstance.
Clockwork Monad (Iteration, Process)	The Traveler (Ways, Fortune)	Procedure and refinement versus improvisation and drift.
Nidhoggr (Dreaming Antiquity)	Sacred Geometry (Order, Pattern)	Ancient, slumbering memory resists imposed, modern measures.

Table 2: Primary Patron Rivalries and how they tend to color scenes.

15 Tags & Effects Library

15.1 Using Tags

Tags only function when *printed on a Talent, an Ability, or as the result of a Spell/Rite*. They do nothing on their own. Unless specified otherwise, **DV is set by fiction**, and duration defaults to **Scene**. When a Tag affects an **Outsider**, use the unified rules in §15.7.

15.2 Control & Countermagic

[DISPEL] End an ongoing magical effect/construct. DV by fiction. **Hit:** dismiss/suppress per source text. **Partial:** suppress briefly or shrink scope. **Miss:** no effect.

[COUNTER] Interrupt a cast/rite in progress. Window: during the listed casting/rite window. DV by fiction. **Hit:** cancel. **Partial:** degrade Position/Effect or impose a cost. **Miss:** no effect.

[BARRIER] Create cover/obstruction. DV by fiction. **Hit:** place barrier with integrity [2/4/6]. **Partial:** narrow/fragile lane. Counters: [DISPEL], brute force, clever route.

[SEAL]/[UNSEAL] Lock or unlock a container/door/portal (not a spirit). DV by fiction. **Hit:** locked/unlocked; state allowed bypasses. **Partial:** short-lived/leaky seal.

15.3 Concealment & Revelation

[VEIL] Obscure a person/thing/zone. DV by fiction. **Hit:** impose disadvantage on scans/Notice vs. subject; specify limits (angle, distance, scent). **Partial:** works only at range or under dim. Counters: [REVEAL], strong light, proof.

[REVEAL] Expose illusions, disguises, hidden clauses. DV by fiction. **Hit:** surface the truth/sign; say how it shows. **Partial:** a tell/clue, not the full picture.

[MARK] Tag a target for tracking or leverage. DV by fiction. **Hit:** place a visible/invisible mark; once/scene you or an ally gain +1 die when acting directly against the Marked target. **Partial:** noisy/short-lived. Counters: [CLEANSE], [DISPEL], or listed materials (salt/iron) if text allows.

15.4 Boons & Burdens

[CURSE] Inflict a sticky hindrance with a clear release. DV by fiction. **Hit:** apply a named condition. **Partial:** milder/intermittent. Counters: [CLEANSE] or listed keys.

[CLEANSE] Remove/suppress a condition (poison, disease, [CURSE], fear). DV by fiction. **Hit:** remove one named affliction. **Partial:** suppress/reduce for the scene.

[FORTIFY] Harden a person/place/object against a vector (fire, blades, fear, sway). DV by fiction. **Hit:** raise Position or reduce consequence severity vs. that vector this scene. **Partial:** limited scope (one ally/doorway).

15.5 Influence & Oaths

[COMMAND] Issue a clear order to a sapient target. DV by fiction (authority, leverage, fear, ritual standing). **Hit:** comply now or suffer an immediate cost (GM states). **Partial:** hesitate/bargain/partial. **Miss:** refusal/blowback.

[OATH] Bind parties to terms; breaking has teeth. DV by fiction (witnesses, sanctity, stakes). **Hit:** enforceable pact with stated boon and breach consequence. **Partial:** loophole exists. Counters: release clause, **[CLEANSE]** if text allows.

[SANCTIFY] Consecrate a zone to a code/patron. DV by fiction. **Hit:** specify allowed/prohibited acts; violations start Risky or impose a soft consequence. **Partial:** patchy coverage. Counters: opposing rite, profanation, time.

15.6 Movement & Making

[PASSAGE] Declare a route as permitted/easy. DV by fiction. **Hit:** allies on that path gain improved flow (Position/Effect bump or ignore 1 level of difficult terrain). **Partial:** one ally/segment only.

[TRANSPORT] Move a target across an obstacle (blink, lift, pull). DV by fiction (mass, range, warding). **Hit:** relocate within listed range; state tells/costs. **Partial:** arrive off-balance, drop gear, or worse Position.

[CONJURE] Create a useful object/cover/hazard. DV by fiction. **Hit:** conjure item/zone with integrity [2/4/6] or a ticking hazard (burn/freeze/haze). **Partial:** fragile/short-lived. Counters: **[DISPEL]**, force, time.

15.7 Outsider-Specific Tags

[WARD] Challenge Outsiders crossing a warded edge/zone.

- **DV = target Cap.**
- **Hit:** crosses; add +*DV* segments to its Leash (or Exit Tally).
- **Partial:** crosses; add +1 segment.
- **Miss:** fails to cross this beat.

The ability must explicitly state it affects Outsiders (or other targets).

[BANISH] Drive a visible Outsider toward departure.

- **DV = target Cap.**
- **Hit:** add +*DV* to its Leash/Tally.

- **Partial:** add +1.
- **Miss:** no effect.

[UNWARD] Unmake/suppress a [WARD] created by a Talent/Ability or Spell result. DV by fiction. **Hit:** dismiss/suppress per text. **Partial:** weaken/suppress briefly (about one beat). **Miss:** no effect.

15.8 Elemental Backlash Coloring (Reference)

On Partial/Miss (or double-1s on a Hit), color consequences by Element:

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Earth → rubble, pin, heavy footing; vs. Air → sound carries, exposure. | • Fate → options close, only-one-way; vs. Luck → mischance hits ally. |
| • Fire → burns, flares; vs. Water → slick, sputter, dim. | • Luck → side-effect elsewhere, fragile success; vs. Fate → harsher fixed outcome. |
| • Air → scatter, drop, vertigo; vs. Earth → stuck, dust choke. | • Life → overgrowth, fever; vs. Death/Dreams → numbness, sleep-tug. |
| • Water → leak, flood, cold drag; vs. Fire → smoke, shorted gear. | • Death/Dreams → fade, threshold opens/closes; vs. Life → pain returns, rot. |

15.9 Stacking & Duration Rules (Global)

- **No Same-Source Stacking:** Multiple scene-long effects from the same source do not stack; take the best instance.
- **Identical Tag Collision:** If two abilities would grant the same Tag in the same window, use the stronger; the weaker is suppressed while it lasts.
- **Default Duration:** Scene, unless a source states otherwise.
- **DV by Fiction:** Potency, preparation, place, materials, and opposition set DV (typ. 2–4; 5+ for set-pieces).

16 Backlash, Obligation, and Ritual Consequences

This section codifies how magical risks bite and how Patron debts accrue. It unifies the fallout for **Casting (freeform)**, **Rites (warlock path)**, and **Invocations (symbol path)** in a way that is fully consistent with the core SB/Boon economy.

16.1 Backlash (Casting: Weave & Cast)

Backlash colors the cost of magic and is always expressed through fiction first.

- **Trigger Windows:**

- *Primary*: On a **Partial**/**Miss** on either the *Weave* or *Cast* roll.
- *Also*: On a *Hit* that shows **two or more 1s**, minor backlash may ride alongside success.
- **Expression**: Choose a consequence flavored by the spell’s Element (see §15, Elemental Backlash). Options include: worsen Position by 1; impose a condition or brief Harm; drain time/resources; alert foes; create a fragile side-effect.
- **SB Integration**: Backlash does *not* generate extra SB by itself; it is one way the GM spends the SB created by rolled 1s (see §2). The color (Fire, Fate, etc.) guides *how* that SB spend lands.
- **Scale**: Small/local effects (DV 2) prefer small backlash; bigger spans (DV 4–5+) invite larger, more persistent fallout.

Backlash Menu (guideline) Pick one on *Partial*; pick two on *Miss*. Always color by Element.

- **Position Shift** (–1 step) for your current or next action.
- **Fleeting Harm/Condition** (e.g., sear, vertigo, chill) that matters for this scene.
- **Exposure/Noise** draws notice or complicates stealth.
- **Resource Drain** (time, focus, a component damaged).
- **Collateral Spark** threatens an ally or fragile thing nearby.

16.2 Obligation (Rites: Warlock Path)

Rites bind you to a Patron through **Obligation**. Each Patron has its own clock.

- **Marking Segments**: Invoking a Rite marks its listed Obligation (typically +1 segment). *Push It* adds +1 more.
- **Cross-Patron Interference**: If you Invoke Rites from two different Patrons in the same scene, immediately mark +1 Obligation to the *second* Patron (jealous attention).
- **Resolution**: When a clock fills, the GM resolves debt in-fiction (audits, omens, service, seizure of a boon). Reduce/clear by fitting service or downtime actions.

Patron’s Gift (Imbuements) and Obligation

- **Activation**: 1 Action once/scene to empower an item with +1 Weapon (Melee) and +1 Thematic Skill for the scene.
- **Push It**: Extend for *one* additional scene; mark +1 Obligation to that Patron.

16.3 Invocation via Symbols (Invoker Path)

Symbols allow ritual access to a Patron’s Rites without a bond.

- **Access**: Each **Patron’s Symbol (Minor Asset, 4 XP)** grants ritual access to that Patron’s Rite list.

- **Ritual Completion:** Completing an Invoker ritual *always* marks +1 Obligation on that Rite's clock, even outside scene context (attention cost).
- **No Push:** Invoker rituals cannot use *Push It*.
- **Environment:** Requires a suitable ritual space; the Symbol must be openly displayed during the rite.

Crack the Seal (Instant Cast) Convert a ritual into a one-action cast by compromising the Symbol.

- **Cost:** Set the Symbol to *Compromised* and mark +2 segments on that Rite's Obligation clock (+3 if *High-Power*).
- **Instability:** The GM may immediately spend 1 **SB** on-theme to reflect ritual instability.
- **Aftermath:** Restore during downtime with a fitting test (DV 3 or by fiction). *Success:* Maintained. *Shaky:* Neglected (future rituals add +1 Obligation until properly restored).

Rival Symbols and Mixed Use

- **Rival Symbol Penalty:** Displaying or carrying a rival Patron's Symbol while Invoking another Patron's Rite worsens Position by 1 for that action and immediately marks +1 Obligation to the current Patron; on any rolled 1, the GM may also trigger a Patron omen/glitch.
- **Multi-Symbol Overload:** Carrying 4+ different Symbols causes choir effects: the first Invoker ritual completed each scene marks +1 additional Obligation.
- **Concurrency:** An Invoker may sustain at most **Spirit** ongoing Invoker rituals. Starting a new one either ends the oldest or marks +1 Obligation on it.

16.4 Interruption & Counterplay

- **[COUNTER]** can interrupt *Weave*, *Cast*, or a *Rite* within its casting window (DV by fiction).
- **[DISPEL]** ends or suppresses ongoing effects (DV by fiction).
- **[UNWARD]** suppresses/dismisses **[WARD]**s; **[BANISH]** and **[WARD]** interact with Outsiders per §15.7.

16.5 GM Budget Dials (Practical Limits)

Keep pressure high but readable.

- **SB Budgets:** Use scene/session limits in §7.
- **Obligation Pace:** A typical session sees 2–4 segments marked for an active warlock; spikes occur on set-pieces or heavy *Push* use.
- **Backlash Visibility:** Favor big, legible consequences over many minor pinpricks.

16.6 Micro-Examples

Fire Cast, Partial You *Weave* flame to blind a squad (DV 3). Partial with two 1s. GM spends SB to *Position -1* (flare blinds you too) and colors backlash as singed lashes; patrol is alerted (*Exposure*).

Warlock Push and Debt You Invoke *Circle of Denial [WARD]* and *Push It* to harden the ring. Mark +1 Obligation for the Rite plus +1 for the push. When a demon tests the ring, use [WARD] vs Cap; on its Hit, add +*DV* to its Leash.

Crack the Seal Under Fire You present Ikasha's Symbol and *Crack the Seal* to lay an instant shadow lane. Symbol → Compromised; mark +2 Obligation. GM immediately spends 1 SB to dim all lights (panic), then the lane forms. During downtime, you restore the Symbol (Arcana DV 3): a shaky hit leaves it *Neglected* until you perform the full rite of cleaning.

17 Character Creation & Starting Build

17.1 Starting Build Points

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

17.2 Enhanced Starting Builds

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**. (See bonds and bond-driven play in the core rules.)
- **Complications:** Up to two initial complications may be accepted for **+4 XP total**. *Note:* Scenes start with **+1 banked SB per complication per character** until those complications have cleared.

This allows for a maximum starting build of **34 XP**. Players are encouraged to aim for 30 XP and use bonds/complications to mitigate slight overages while maintaining narrative balance.

17.3 Recommended Approach

GMs should encourage players to:

- Target 30 XP for balanced starting characters.
- Use bonds and complications to enhance characterization rather than pure mechanical optimization.
- Consider the narrative implications of any starting advantages.

17.4 Initial Complications (Reminder)

For each *initial complication* taken at character creation:

- Start each scene with **+1 banked SB** per character with *initial complications* until those complications have cleared in play.

17.5 Early Talent Choices (Magic Access)

- **Caster's Gift (2 XP):** Required for Weave & Cast freeform magic. Provides flexible but limited effects with Element-colored backlash.
- **Familiar / Thiasos (2 XP):** Required for Patron features such as *Patron's Gift* (Imbuements).
- **Codex (4 XP):** Required to fully join a Patron's service as a Runekeeper (Rites access, Obligation). A Runekeeper may serve only one Patron.
- **Patron's Symbol (4 XP):** Minor Asset. Grants ritual access to a Patron's Rites via the Invoker path. One Symbol per Patron; Invokers may carry Symbols of multiple Patrons.

17.6 Quick Build Guides

Caster (Freeform) Buy *Caster's Gift* (2 XP). Invest in Arcana-adjacent attributes/skills. Expect backlash; leverage aligned loci, tools, and prep for DV/Effect nudges. Casting is flexible but less reliable than Rites.

Runekeeper (Rites User) Acquire *Thiasos (Familiar)* and *Codex* (4 XP) tied to a single Patron. You can Push Rites for +1 Obligation. Use *Patron's Gift (Imbuement)* once per scene (activation: 1 action). The Gift provides exactly **+1 Melee** and **+1 Thematic Skill**, fixed by Patron (see Patron table).

Invoker (Symbol Path) Purchase one or more *Patron's Symbols* (4 XP each). Perform Rites as rituals (Significant Time, always marks +1 Obligation). Use *Crack the Seal* for instant casts at the cost of setting the Symbol to *Compromised* and marking +2/+3 Obligation. Invokers may hold Symbols from multiple Patrons.

Summoner (Pact-Whisperer) You call spirits fast and manage their timer. *Call* a spirit (1 action) → *Bind* it by spending **1 Boon** or marking **1 Fatigue** → track its **Leash = Cap + 2** segments. The Leash ticks when the spirit takes harm, you split focus (you act meaningfully while it acts), you order it against its nature, rivals contest it, or it rushes *Close* to *Far*. Once per round you may spend **1 Boon** to clear **1 Leash** tick (Boon Finesse). Limit **one active spirit** at a time; issuing a meaningful command uses your action. Spirits depart at downtime unless an ability states otherwise.

17.7 Session Zero Tips

- Establish the table's tone and stakes; tie Drives to setting fronts.

- Map Bonds among PCs; mark possible bond-driven Boon triggers.
- Seed 1–2 personal Complications per PC for early spotlight.
- Discuss Patron choices, Gifts, and what their omens look like.

18 Advancement & XP

Advancement in Fate’s Edge reflects meaningful growth in capability and standing. XP is awarded for table-facing accomplishments, hard choices, and the dramatic friction that defines your story. Boons can be converted sparingly to accelerate growth.

18.1 Awarding XP

Choose a session pacing dial and stick to it for a campaign arc.

Gritty:

4–6 XP per session (slow burn).

Standard:

6–10 XP per session (default pace).

Heroic:

10–14 XP per session (fast growth).

18.1.1 Session Awards (Guidelines)

- **Table Attendance:** +2 XP
- **Major Objective Reached:** +2–4 XP
- **Discovery or Lore Unlocked:** +1–2 XP
- **Hard Choice Embraced:** +1–2 XP
- **Complication Spotlight:** +1–3 XP
- **Bond/Flag Driven Play:** +1–2 XP
- **GM Curveball Award:** +0–3 XP

18.1.2 Milestones

- At the conclusion of a major story arc, award **+8–12 XP to all players**.
- Grant **+2 XP** to one player for a signature moment of the arc.

18.1.3 Boon Conversion

Once per session, during downtime, a character may convert **2 Boons** → **1 XP** (max **2 XP** via conversion per session). All normal Boon limits apply (hold 5; trim to 2 at scene end).

18.2 Spending XP

Attributes:

Cost = *new rating* × 3. Downtime = *new rating* in days.

Skills:

Cost = *new level* × 2. Downtime = *new level* in days.

On-Screen Followers:

Cost = *Cap*². Downtime = 1–3 days to recruit and brief.

Off-Screen Assets:

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

Talents/Minor Assets:

As listed (e.g., Caster's Gift 2 XP; Patron's Symbol 4 XP).

18.3 Rush Rule

You may *skip downtime* when buying or upgrading, but the GM creates a **Haste clock** [4]. If the clock fills, the new ability or asset carries flaws or narrative complications.

18.4 Tiers of Reputation

Reputation tiers reflect how the world responds to you.

Tier I — Rookie (0–40 XP):

Local reputation; prestige 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.

18.5 Advancement Notes

- Attribute cost scaling encourages diversification over single-stat spikes.
- Skill mastery yields tangible, fiction-first benefits.
- Prestige abilities (6+ XP) should be gated by narrative milestones or patron bargains.

19 Range & Position Quick Reference

This section condenses the guidance from §8 into table form for fast table use.

19.1 Range Bands

Band	Default	Notes
Close	Touching	Grapples, knives; polearms from Near at Limited Effect.
Near	Assumed	Same room/street segment; quick step away.
Far	Distant	Same site but not in reach; needs time/route/long implement.
Absent	Off-screen	Outside scene frame; needs cut/travel to interact.

19.2 Movement (beats, not meters)

- **1 Move** shifts one band: Close↔Near or Near↔Far.
- **Dash (Action)** shifts two bands: Close→Far or Far→Close.
- **Terrain/Obstacles** may add +1 Move or require a test first.
- **Absent↔Scene** use a Travel clock [2–4] or a quick cut; under pressure treat as Risky.

19.3 Melee Flag

Mark two parties **in Melee** when they are in Near and directly engaged.

- **Enter:** 1 Move from Near (Risky if under fire).
- **Leave:** 1 Move to break off; if threatened, test *Disengage* at Risky. On Partial/Miss: soft consequence, remain in Melee.

19.4 Targeting & Tools (defaults)

Type	Default Reach / Off-band Rules
Melee/Touch	Close only (Near on long polearms at Limited Effect).
Thrown / Short magic	Near; at Far impose Limited Effect or +1 DV unless source says otherwise.
Firearms / Long bows / Line spells	Near and Far if stated; at off-band, reduce Effect or +1 DV.
Social	Near by default; at Far need voice/signal/proxy; at Absent need message/oath/setup.
No line of sight	Raise DV by +1, drop Effect one step, or require [REVEAL]/[MARK].

19.5 Perception, Stealth, Cover

- **Notice:** Near normal; Far harder (DV +1 or Limited Effect) especially with noise/cover.
- **Hide:** Break LoS or move to Far; at Absent you're off-frame unless tracked.
- **Cover:** Improves Position or reduces consequence severity; quality/angle sets bump.

19.6 Position (Controlled / Risky / Desperate)

Position affects consequence severity on Partial/Miss (not DV).

- **GM Spend (1 SB):** Shift Position one step worse for current action or apply a brief environmental shove.
- **Player Spend (1 Boon):** Shift Position one step better for current action or cancel a single 1-step GM shift.
- **Narrative Triggers (free):** Flanking, reinforcements, collapsing cover, superior leverage can move Position one step (say why).

Limits: One Boon shift per action. Multiple forces don't stack beyond one step each way—resolve in order declared.

19.7 GM Quick Cues

- Default to **Near** and **Risky/Standard**. Ask: "Do you need a beat to get there?" If yes, spend a Move.
- Call **Melee** when knives are actually in play; don't track hexes.
- Prefer one strong twist over nickel-and-diming with many petty penalties.

20 Travel Framework

Adventuring often means crossing dangerous or unknown lands. The travel framework provides pacing tools to turn journeys into dramatic scenes without micromanaging miles.

20.1 Legs and Clocks

- Break long journeys into **legs**, each representing a significant change in terrain, danger, or political region.
- Each leg is tracked with a **Travel Clock [4]** by default.
- A leg completes when the clock fills through **progress actions, encounters, or scene resolution**.

20.2 Roles on the Road

Assign roles each travel leg (rotate or repeat as desired):

Guide:

Sets course, reads signs, rolls navigation.

Scout:

Moves ahead; first contact with hazards, ambushes, or terrain.

Quartermaster:

Manages food, supplies, and encumbrance.

Watch:

Maintains vigilance; first line against ambush or mishap.

20.3 Encounters & Events

When advancing the Travel Clock, the GM may also introduce:

- **Discovery:** Ruins, strange omen, hidden site.
- **Hazard:** Terrain challenge, illness, weather.
- **Encounter:** Bandits, emissaries, beasts.
- **Complication:** Bond tested, supplies strained, rival pursuit.

20.4 Encounter Frequency

- For every 1–2 segments filled, insert one encounter or hazard scene.
- Each leg should include **at least one meaningful encounter**.

20.5 Resolution

- When a Travel Clock fills, narrate arrival at the new region, with fallout from any hazards or complications unresolved.
- If complications remain, they carry forward into the next leg until resolved.

20.6 Deck of Consequences Integration

- Draw from the **Deck of Consequences** when rolling travel hazards or unexpected encounters.
- Crown Spread or Campaign Clock can foreshadow upcoming travel-related events.

20.7 GM Quick Cues

- Travel should **advance story stakes**, not pause them. Use it to foreshadow threats, deepen bonds, or reveal patron omens.
- Let players showcase talents in their assigned roles.
- Mix discovery and hardship to keep legs tense but rewarding.

21 Deck of Consequences

The **Deck of Consequences** is a narrative tool for injecting drama, setbacks, and twists. It replaces or supplements GM fiat with randomized complications that remain thematically consistent.

21.1 Deck Structure

- Use a standard 52-card deck (jokers optional).
- Divide into four suits, each tied to a **theme of complication**.

Suit	Theme	Examples
Hearts	Social / Emotional	Betrayal, love triangle, family drama, ally under strain.
Clubs	Physical / Violent	Ambush, wound, fatigue, weapon break.
Diamonds	Resources / Wealth	Supplies run low, theft, loss of funding, gear breaks.
Spades	Mystical / Supernatural	Omen, curse, patron demand, haunting.

21.2 Card Ranks & Severity

Ace:

Scene-altering twist; compels immediate response.

King/Queen/Jack:

Major complication with lasting effects.

10–8:

Moderate complication that reshapes current scene.

7–5:

Minor complication; nuisance, but creates tension.

4–2:

Subtle complication or foreshadowing omen.

21.3 Jokers (Optional)

- **Red Joker:** Catastrophic event (environmental collapse, patron intervention).
- **Black Joker:** Dark boon (immediate help, but with lasting cost or debt).

21.4 Usage in Play

- **Trigger:** GM may draw when a roll shows multiple 1s, when SB overflows, or during travel (see §20).
- **Cadence:** Aim for 1–2 draws per session, more if the tone skews chaotic.
- **Integration:** Complications should align with fiction already present; do not derail core arcs.

21.5 Crown Spread Integration

Use the Crown Spread (see §18) to seed campaign-scale twists. Draw 5–7 cards in Session 0 to foreshadow long-term arcs.

21.6 Campaign Clock Tie-In

When the Campaign Clock advances, the GM may flip a card face-up from the Deck of Consequences to signal how pressure is mounting.

21.7 GM Quick Cues

- Translate raw card results into fiction, not mechanical penalties alone.
- Complications should build on what’s already happening, not restart the story.
- Respect player agency: allow clever mitigation, but ensure consequences land.

22 Player Archetypes at the Table

Fate’s Edge gameplay flexes to different player archetypes. These roles are not strict classes but rather **approaches to play** that help a group balance spotlight and tone.

22.1 The Solo

- **Focus:** Mastery of self, independence, one-on-one drama.
- **Strengths:** Quick spotlight scenes, duelists, scouts, specialists.
- **Risks:** Can drift into isolation or hog solo arcs. Needs explicit ties to group goals.
- **GM Tools:** Use Bonds, rival duels, and one-on-one omens to keep engagement tethered to the group.

22.2 The Mixed

- **Focus:** Hybrid adaptability—both support and lead.
- **Strengths:** Bridges gaps in group dynamics; excels in team tactics.
- **Risks:** May feel overshadowed by extreme specialists.
- **GM Tools:** Spotlight them when versatility matters: flexible magic, leadership, negotiation, or sudden pivots.

22.3 The Mastermind

- **Focus:** Schemes, plans, and command over the long arc.
- **Strengths:** Drives strategic play, coordinates others, excels in intrigue.
- **Risks:** May over-plan or dominate spotlight with metagame thinking.
- **GM Tools:** Challenge them with shifting information, patron demands, and rivals who anticipate their moves.

22.4 Balancing Archetypes

- A healthy table mixes all three archetypes, ensuring solo tension, group cohesion, and strategic play coexist.
- Encourage players to flex between archetypes scene by scene; they are fluid, not fixed.
- Spotlight balance: in a 3-hour session, each archetype should anchor at least one major scene.

22.5 GM Quick Cues

- Use archetypes as a lens for framing scenes: duel for Solos, shifting tactics for Mixed, grand reveals for Masterminds.
- When spotlight imbalances arise, rotate complications or bonds to another archetype's strength.
- Archetypes inform how patrons and factions court PCs: Solos as champions, Mixed as envoys, Masterminds as plotters.

23 Campaign Frame: The Crown Spread

The **Crown Spread** is a campaign-framing tool that uses a spread of cards to establish the long arc of a story. It provides seeds for GMs and players alike to weave motifs, omens, and foreshadowed events.

23.1 Setup

- In Session 0, lay out 5–7 cards in a semicircle (the “Crown”). Use either the **Deck of Consequences** or a standard card deck.
- Each card anchors a motif, omen, or looming event.
- Record the spread openly on a Campaign Sheet or digital log.

23.2 Interpreting the Spread

Position 1 (Root):

The underlying tension or theme of the campaign.

Position 2 (Crest):

A key faction or patron influence that will rise.

Position 3 (Crown):

The climax image or major confrontation the arc builds toward.

Position 4 (Left Hand):

A bond, ally, or relationship that anchors play.

Position 5 (Right Hand):

A rival, betrayer, or challenger who pressures the party.

Optional 6+7:

Expansions for setting-wide twists (environmental, mystical, or political).

23.3 Using the Spread in Play

- Each drawn card becomes a **Foreshadow Clock [4]** attached to its motif. Advance the clock when events lean toward that omen.
- When a Foreshadow Clock fills, the motif manifests concretely in play (e.g., a faction rises, a betrayer reveals themselves).
- Tie Spread cards to **Campaign Clocks** for pacing (see below).

23.4 Campaign Clock

The **Campaign Clock** tracks rising stakes across the arc.

- Default size: [8].
- Advance the Campaign Clock when: multiple SB overflows in a session, when travel legs resolve with major cost, or when Spread omens manifest.
- On fill: the Crown confrontation arrives. Play through its fallout as campaign climax.

23.5 Ending & Legacy

- After the Crown confrontation resolves, hold an epilogue session.
- Resolve any remaining Foreshadow Clocks as epilogue vignettes.
- Players may mark **Legacy Bonds**—new anchors for future campaigns or descendants.

23.6 GM Quick Cues

- The Spread is not a railroad—it foreshadows, not dictates.
- Reinterpret cards liberally as play evolves; symbols matter more than literal events.
- Remind players of their omens between arcs to build tension and payoff.

24 Tags & Outcomes Cheat Sheet

This section condenses common tags, outcomes, and modifiers into a one-glance reference. It supplements the full explanations in §10.

2pt

24.1 Core Action Outcomes

Result	Meaning	GM/Player Guidance
Hit (6)	Full success	Effect as stated, no new cost.
Partial (4–5)	Success + cost	Complication, worse Position, reduced Effect.
Miss (1–3)	Failure + cost	GM spends SB, introduces backlash/complication.
Critical (2x6)	Strong hit	Upgrade Effect or create new advantage.

24.2 Common Tags

Tag	Quick Reference Effect
[AREA]	Hits all in zone; collateral risk.
[ARMOR]	Grants +1 Resistance against matching Harm.
[BANISH]	Expel Outsider; vs. Cap. On hit, it departs or weakens.
[BOUND]	Immobilizes target until broken.
[COUNTER]	Interrupt cast/ability in progress (DV by fiction).
[DISPEL]	End/suppress ongoing effect.
[FOLLOW-UP]	Trigger additional linked action; usually free if fiction permits.
[HEAL]	Remove or downgrade Harm/Condition.
[ILLUSION]	Fictional effect; resisted by disbelief or disruption.
[MARK]	Target acquires tracer; next action gains +1 die.
[REVEAL]	Expose hidden or cloaked subject.
[TETHER]	Bind two entities; strain if separated.
[WARD]	Block specific entity/domain; test Cap to cross.

24.3 Position & Effect Shorthands

- **Position:** Controlled (safe), Risky (default), Desperate (big payoffs, big costs).
- **Effect:** Limited (weak), Standard (expected), Great (strong, extra reach).
- GM can spend 1 SB to worsen Position one step; Player can spend 1 Boon to improve Position one step.

24.4 Backlash Reminders

- On Partial/Miss with Weave & Cast, expect backlash colored by Element (fire burns, fate twists, etc.).
- Backlash does not add SB directly—it is a GM SB spend colored by the roll’s Element.

24.5 Obligation Reminders

- Warlock Rite: +1 Obligation on completion, +1 more if Pushed.
- Invoker Ritual: Always +1 Obligation, even out of scene. Crack the Seal: +2/+3.
- Multi-symbol overload: carrying 4+ Symbols = +1 Obligation on first ritual each scene.

24.6 Quick Costs

- **Caster’s Gift:** 2 XP. Required for Weave & Cast.
- **Familiar/Thiasos:** 2 XP. Required for Patron’s Gift.
- **Codex:** 4 XP. Full Rite access; Obligations apply.
- **Patron’s Symbol:** 4 XP Minor Asset. Invoker ritual access.

24.7 GM Quick Cues

- Default to Near + Risky + Standard.
- Use tags as handles for rulings—if a move fits the tag, apply its shorthand.
- Complications escalate campaigns; use Clocks and the Deck of Consequences for follow-through.

25 Design Philosophy Guardrails (Flow-First GMing)

Fate’s Edge is built to **keep play flowing**. If you remember nothing else: **The Narrative is primary**. Mechanics exist to shape *how* the story changes, not *whether* it moves. This section translates the rules into plain, table-ready guidance—especially for new GMs.

25.1 Simple Translations

Story Beats (SB) ⇒ Story Beats:

1s on dice give you *beats* to spend. Spend them on twists, escalations, or new information. One strong beat is better than three tiny ones.

Clocks ⇒ Checkboxes/Lists:

A Clock is just a short checklist that tracks progress or rising danger. When it fills, the listed thing *happens*. Name it and tick it when fiction leans that way.

[TAGS] ⇒ Gates with a Cost:

Tags are labels that unlock specific effects (e.g. [WARD], [BANISH]). They don't do anything alone. They appear on Talents, Rites, or Spells to say, "Yes, you can do this—*here's the price and limits.*"

25.2 The 30-Second Adjudication Loop

Use this loop to resolve almost anything without breaking flow.

1. **Clarify intent and approach.** "What do you want, and how?"
2. **Set stakes and Position.** "If it works, what changes? If it fails, what bites?" Start *Risky/Standard* unless fiction says otherwise.
3. **Roll & read.** Count 6+ as successes; each 1 gives you SB (beats). Compare successes to DV.
4. **Spend one beat well.** Cash SB on one memorable twist or tick a relevant Clock.
5. **Push forward.** Describe how the fiction is now different; ask, "Who moves next?"

25.3 When to Reach for Mechanics (and When Not To)

- **Roll** when uncertainty + meaningful stakes exist *now*. Otherwise, say "Yes" or offer a choice/cost.
- **Use a Clock** when danger or progress builds over time (guard alert, ritual, chase, social sway).
- **Draw from the Deck** when you want an oracular twist consistent with the current tone.
- **Skip subsystems** if they slow the table. You can always tick a Clock and move on.

25.4 Defaults That Keep Things Moving

- **Range/Position:** Assume *Near* and *Risky/Standard*. Ask: "Do you need a beat to get there?"
- **DV:** 2 for small/local, 3 for scene-scale, 4 for big swings, 5+ for set-pieces/rituals.
- **Boons:** Misses on meaningful actions grant Boons (player fuel). Trim to 2 at scene end.
- **SB Budget:** Prefer one strong spend over many petty taxes. Bank sparingly and pay off soon.

25.5 Rookie GM Comfort Dials

You can use these dials to simplify play, then loosen them later.

Soft SB:

For your first 2 sessions, cap each roll's SB spend to **1–2** unless it's a set-piece.

Visible Clocks:

Put Clocks on the table. Name them aloud: "*Guards Incoming [4]*". Tick them in ink.

Tag Cards:

Print a one-liner for frequently used Tags ([WARD], [BANISH], [COUNTER]). Hand them out when a power is active.

One Move, One Sentence:

Every ruling should end with one sentence that states the new situation.

25.6 Narrative-First Rulings (with Examples)

Example 1: The Locked Gate Player: "I pick the lock fast before the patrol rounds the corner."
GM: "Risky/Standard, DV 3. If it works, you're through; if it fails, the patrol clocks closer."
Roll shows 1 SB. GM spends 1 SB to tick *Guards Incoming [4]*. "You're through, but boots echo—two ticks left." *Flow continues.*

Example 2: The Shadow Rite Player Invokes a [WARD]. "You're safe unless Outsiders test the edge: DV = Cap. If one hits, its Leash gains +DV. Your Push would add +1 Obligation—do you Push?" The scene stays in motion; costs and gates are clear.

Example 3: Fire Cast Backlash Caster hits but shows two 1s. GM picks one strong backlash: "Flare blinds you; Position -1 for the next action." No rules dive; *one beat lands*, story moves.

25.7 Let the Fiction Lead

- Say what the world does next. If a rule is unclear, follow the fiction and note a ruling; refine between sessions.
- If you forget a tag nuance, ask: "What is the effect trying to *gate*?" Charge a cost (time, risk, Obligation, or a tick), then go.
- Tie SB spends to **visible** outcomes: a new foe appears, a path closes, a clock advances.

25.8 Common Pitfalls and Fixes

Over-cranking SB:

If scenes feel punitive, halve your SB spends for a while or cash them into visible Clocks instead of immediate penalties.

Clock Sprawl:

Merge redundant Clocks. Each active scene rarely needs more than **2–3**.

Tag Paralysis:

If a player stalls waiting for a perfect tag, paraphrase: “Sounds like [VEIL]. DV 3. Want to roll?”

Rules Drift:

If table memory conflicts with text, pick the ruling that keeps flow, then sticky-note a TODO to reconcile after play.

25.9 The Four Questions (Cheat Prompts)

When stuck, ask out loud:

1. If this goes right, what changes? (*Intent*)
2. If this goes wrong, what bites back? (*Stakes*)
3. What single twist will make this memorable? (*SB spend*)
4. Who moves next? (*Momentum*)

25.10 Design Guardrails (for Consistency)

- **Narrative Primacy:** Mechanics serve story, not replace it.
- **Risk as Drama:** Every roll carries potential for triumph+complication.
- **Meaningful Growth:** XP changes characters and the world.
- **Consequence Weight:** Choices ripple outward; nothing is free.
- **Fail Forward:** Misses fuel Boons; 1s become SB (beats).

25.11 Session Checklist (One Page)

Before play: set tone, stakes, and clocks in plain sight.

During play: adjudicate with the 30-second loop; spend one strong beat; move on.

After play: award XP, clear/advance Clocks, note rulings to revisit.

If you keep the flow, the game will carry you. The rules are rails you lay just ahead of the train.