

Fate's Edge GM Reference Document

Modular Reference Compilation

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1 Core Principles

1.1 The Central Question

At its heart, Fate's Edge asks:

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

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

1.2 Key Concepts

1.2.1 Narrative Time

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

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

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

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

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

1.2.2 Complication Points

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

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

1.2.3 Affinity

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

1.2.4 Prestige Abilities

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

1.2.5 On-Screen vs. Off-Screen

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

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

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

1.3 Design Philosophy

1.3.1 Core Principles

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

1.3.2 Mechanical Constraints

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

2 Deck-Based Generators

2.1 Standard Deck Structure

Fate’s Edge uses distinct card-based tools to generate narrative content, each with its own specialized suit meanings and purpose. These generators transform randomness into meaningful story elements while maintaining thematic coherence.

Travel Decks (regional, 52-card). *Spade*=Place, *Heart*=Actor, *Club*=Pressure, *Diamond*=Leverage. These power journeys and gates.

Deck of Consequences (scene drama). *Hearts*=social fallout, *Spades*=harm/escalation, *Clubs*=material cost, *Diamonds*=magical/spiritual disturbance.

Guidance: Never mix suit meanings across decks. When a rule references “Spade/Club/Diamond,” it means *Travel*. When it says “Hearts/Spades/Clubs/Diamonds,” it means *Consequences*.

Each generator follows a consistent pattern: draw until you have the required suits, let the highest rank determine the clock size, and use the specific suit meanings to inspire coherent narrative elements. This system ensures that random draws create meaningful complications and opportunities rather than disconnected fragments.

2.2 Rank Severity and Clock Size

The card rank determines the size of the primary Clock for the scene or mission:

- 2–5 (Minor): 4-segment Clock
- 6–10 (Standard): 6-segment Clock
- J, Q, K (Major): 8-segment Clock
- Ace (Pivotal): 10-segment Clock

Color influences tone:

- Black suits (♠, ♣): travel hazards, tangible threats, fatigue
- Red suits (♥, ♦): social intrigue, reputational pressure

2.3 Draw Procedures

2.3.1 Quick Hook (2 cards)

Draw one Spade and one Heart. The Spade provides the place, the Heart the faction. Use the higher rank to set the Clock.

2.3.2 Full Seed (4 cards)

Draw until one card of each suit appears:

1. Spade = location
2. Heart = main actor/faction
3. Club = complication
4. Diamond = reward/leverage

The highest rank sets the main Clock. If multiple face cards or Aces appear, begin parallel Clocks.

2.3.3 Act Builder

For each act or session, draw three cards: setting, actor, complication. Save Diamonds to foreshadow leverage or as act payoffs.

2.4 Using the Deck

1. Player rolls; each 1 generates a Complication Point (CP).
2. GM chooses one method for that roll:
 - (a) **Direct Spend:** translate CP into immediate consequences/clock ticks; or
 - (b) **Deck Draw:** draw up to **min(CP, 3)** cards and **synthesize a single twist** guided by suit and highest rank.

2.5 Combo Rules

Pair (same rank) Recurring motif with a twist

Run (3+ sequential ranks) Momentum—reduce the main Clock by 1 segment

Flush (3+ same suit) Strongly theme the act toward that axis

Face + Ace Reveal a hidden patron or power behind the drawn element

All one color GM gains 1 free Complication Point in that scene

2.6 Regional Generator Summary

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

Table 2.1: Regional Generator Summary

3 Acasia — “Broken Marches” Generator

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

2. Broken milestone on the old Imperial Road; borders “moved” overnight.
3. Vine-terrace hillside with an abandoned press; strangler ivy owns it now.
4. Toll-bridge town over a cold river—two tolls, no receipts.
5. Wolfstairs Pass switchbacks beneath a stonefall cliff.
6. Sootfall Abbey ruins; bell tower intact, crypts breathing.
7. Hill-motte with fresh palisade; ditch scattered with caltrops.
8. Border-stone ring carved with seven crowns; each points wrong.
9. Blackwood charcoalers’ hollow; witch-posts at every path.
10. Salt-road ford; rains expose old bones in the chalk banks.

J Iron mine adits held by a miners’ commune; air full of whispers.

Q Margravine’s hunting lodge; tapestries of victories that never were.

K War-camp city—tents around a burned keep; every banner claims the throne.

A The Pale Causeway: the last high road that survives spring thaws.

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

2. Tithe-collector’s runner with tally-rod and empty stomach.
3. Roadside prior and three lay brothers guarding a relic.
4. Hedge-witch who knows which bridges eat travelers.
5. Free Company captain (pike and shot) between contracts.
6. River reeve who rents every boat twice.
7. Salt-Baron with hired blades—owns the ford and your timetable.
8. Blackwood matriarch who tends the feud like a garden.

9. Ex-imperial surveyor with the last accurate map.
10. “King” of three villages; iron-nail crown, iron-will taxes.
 - J Bride with no dowry but a claim; daggers in the wedding chest.
 - Q Margravine of the Broken March—half-saint, half tax-roll.
 - K The Lame King on a traveling throne; makes law by pointing.
 - A The Cursed Child of Silkstrand (a rumor more than a person) whose laughter ends sieges.
- Clubs — Complications/Threats (feud, levy, weather, curse)
2. Peat-fog; all horns sound like someone calling your name.
3. Sudden levy—every traveler pressed for a day’s service.
4. Bridge feud; rival banners drop the chain on your cart.
5. Grain blight doubles the tithe; refusal means torches at night.
6. Scree slide seals the pass; the “safe” detour is owned by your enemy.
7. Wedding turns ambush; you’re between two bloodlines.
8. Witch’s tithe night; lights move in the woods—owe nothing or else.
9. Pox sign on a village gate; your escorts desert you.
10. Condotta breaks; the Free Company flips colors mid-march.
 - J Heretic preacher sparks a march; toll-gates come down in splinters.
 - Q Imperial pretender arrives; every petty lord changes tabards.
 - K River overruns the levee; the pontoon goes—your rivals don’t.
 - A The Curse stirs: no matter the road, you return to the same crossroads.
- Diamonds — Rewards/Leverage (papers, claims, safe-conduct)
2. Toll-exemption plaque for one bridge (once).
3. Monastery letter for bed-and-bread on a named road.
4. Wine-right on an abandoned terrace; locals will work for shares.
5. Condotta—a signed pike contract (one battle on your terms).
6. Tithe-remission writ for a village; they owe you a season’s labor.
7. Border-stone adjustment—move a line two fields over.
8. Pass-key charm recognized by Pale Causeway watchmen.
9. Sealed dowry chest of claims, not coin; certain doors open.

10. Mine-share in the commune; they fight like they mean it.

J Blood-peace charter; suspend a feud long enough to move your wagons.

Q Marriage proxy from the Margravine—bind a hill-king to your cause.

K The Lamé King's traveling writ—troops must make way (for now).

A Curse-redemption rite (temporary): for one night no crossroads can hold you.

Quick Use Notes

- Draw until you have all four suits: Spade = place, Heart = actor, Club = pressure, Diamond = leverage. Highest rank sets the main Clock (2–5 → 4, 6–10 → 6, J/Q/K → 8, A → 10).
- Diamonds are codified outcomes (blessings/tokens/host-rights) that change position rather than call for a roll.
- If any A appears, echo Hearth & Hollow motifs—quiet bells, red thread, watch-geese, footsteps under the soil—so the dread feels woven through the hedges.

4 Aelaerem (Halflings)—“Hearth & Hollow” Generator

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

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

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

2. Hedge-witch midwife who ties red thread and unties feuds.
3. Miller and his watch-geese—better sentries than men.
4. Orchard reeve with a tally-stick and a cider-stained smile.
5. Beekeeper; keeps odd honey aside for “winter churches.”
6. Shepherd with a bone whistle that calls dogs—and other things.

7. Lantern-warden who trims lamps and knows which shadow is wrong.
 8. Mummers’ captain with a chest of masks and stricter rules than church.
 9. Traveling tinker with bright kettles and a dull knife for cutting oaths.
 10. Bailiff of the Moot Oak, as polite as a noose.
- J Wold-Wardens, elders who swear by hedges, not crowns.
- Q Apple-Matron, hostess of harvest feasts; power sits where she pours.
- K Thresher-King in harvest robes: a title that moves but never leaves.
- A The Pale Shepherd—comes when lambs are born and when people go missing.

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

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

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

2. Guest-loaf & salt—one night’s safe board anywhere with a red door.
3. Cider-mark—a free cup on the green buys gossip and patience.
4. Hedge-pass ribbon—step through any thicket unsnagged, once.
5. Bee-queen share—honey and warning from the hives when danger nears.

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6. Shepherd's whistle—dogs and door-bolts heed you for one scene.
 7. Lantern-writ—the lamps stay lit along your path despite wind.
 8. Mummers' license—lawful mask and after-dark crossing for a feast day.
 9. Orchard right—pick at Mother's Orchard without offense; fruit hides a truth.
 10. Mill token—the wheel turns at any hour, grain or rumor ground.
- J Apple-Matron's blessing—hands help unseen when you ask no coin.
- Q Private moot under the Oak; elders hear you alone, precedent sticks.
- K Thresher-King's guard—six red-hooded harvesters escort you; doors open.
- A Pale Shepherd's clause—once, the Hollow will not notice you; pass uncounted.

Quick use notes

- Draw until you have all four suits: Spade = place, Heart = actor, Club = pressure, Diamond = leverage. Highest rank sets the main Clock (2–5 → 4, 6–10 → 6, J/Q/K → 8, A → 10).
- Diamonds are codified outcomes (blessings/tokens/host-rights) that change position rather than call for a roll.
- If any A appears, echo Hearth & Hollow motifs—quiet bells, red thread, watch-geese, footsteps under the soil—so the dread feels woven through the hedges.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. Lamp-priority tally—skip one lamplighter queue.
3. Breath-measure allotment—lawful time in a sealed chamber (once).
4. Key-Writ—operate a named lock one time, witnessed.
5. Underway Pass—escorted travel between two vaultmouths.
6. Stall-Right in the under-market for a season.

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7. Engineer Shoring—a crew stabilizes your chosen corridor on your timetable.
 8. Assay Mark—your coin/metal accepted sight unseen below.
 9. Crypt Asylum—temporary sanctuary under crown law.
 10. Vault Inventory License—remove a named cache under witness.
- J Under-Guard Commission—command a vault detachment for a day.
- Q Private Descent with the Vault-Queen or High King's chancellor.
- K High King's Sealed Writ—doors open, mouths close across crownlands.
- A The Under-Seal Clause—temporary exception to any lock, levy, or rite below.

Quick use notes

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

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

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

2. Tide-rift steps cut into black rock; limpets and old votive nails.
 3. Moonwell basin in a granite bowl; coins turn green in a week.
 4. Dolmen stair up a ridge; each capstone rings if you tap it right.
 5. Charcoal coppice under witch-hazel; a neat ash-heap hides a door.
 6. Basalt organ cliffs: sea-caves breathe like slow bellows.
 7. Stag Road—game-trail marked by antler-posts; hooves know it best.
 8. Quartz spring where the sand shines like ground stars.
 9. Elf-causey of pale flags through a marsh; visible at dawn and dusk only.
 10. Root gallery under an oak hill; lanterns hang from living bark.
- J Barrow gallery with stone chimes and a cold draft from below.
- Q Thorn Court ring—hawthorns trained into arches; petals fall like knife-points.
- K Hall of Aelinnel: a timber keep threaded between standing stones.
- A The Green Gate in a sea-arch; at certain tides it opens to a forest not on any map.

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

2. Goat-herd of the stone edges—knows every safe hoof-width.
3. Charcoal-burner clan who can read draught and omen by smoke.
4. Hedge-witch with a pocket full of thorns and deals you’ll regret.
5. Stone-singer (quarryman) whose hum finds a seam and a secret.
6. Forester-warden with copper nails and a polite dislike of iron.
7. Reed-net fisher who knows when the selkies listen.

8. Oath-carver who sets promises in quartz so they can be seen.
9. Way-keeper of the Stag Road; never lost, often followed.
10. Green-market broker who trades truths for trinkets and back again.
 - J Green Knight—antler helm, mirror-bright blade, old courtesy.
 - Q Lady of Thorns, sovereign of a hawthorn court; smiles like a snare.
 - K Stone Prince of Aelinnel, mortal crown with fae debts properly indexed.
 - A Huntsman of the Moonlit Ride; his horn turns shortcuts into roads.

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

2. Glamour fog; time drifts, footfalls don't match.
3. Iron offense—someone brought the wrong nails to the right grove.
4. Root-slide pulls a trail two ridges away while you blink.
5. Wrong tide at the sea-arch; boats rise where mathematics say no.
6. Spoken geas catches on an unlucky word; the task names itself.
7. Green Market price: payment demanded in names and memories.
8. Stone-wight stirs in a barrow; echoes hate company.
9. Lost day—the sun miscounts; your dawn arrives at supper.
10. Thorn blight crawls across orchards; pruners bleed stories.
 - J Stag horn sounds; everyone owes the chase—especially you.
 - Q Thorn Court tithe levied on the Hall; arrests wear flowers.
 - K Muster of the Bough—forest banners rise; travel becomes trespass.
 - A Green Gate yawns at the wrong hour; roads rewire across your path.

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

2. Hazel token—step through a hedge uncut, once.
3. Salt license—carry and use ward-salt where it's “discouraged.”
4. Dolmen carving-right—inscribe a name or claim on a speaking stone.
5. Guest-bough from the Thorn Court—one night's safe table among thorns.

6. Quarry allotment of clear quartz; subtle doors open to its bearer.
 7. Green Market voucher—buy a truth at face value (today only).
 8. Oath-bead; a spoken promise warms the bead when kept, chills when not.
 9. Tide-path key—lawful crossing of a named sea-cave at neap.
 10. Forest truce—hunt, cut, or travel through a warded copse without offense.
- J Green Knight escort from ridge to gate; watchers bow, paths part.
- Q Private audience with the Lady of Thorns; a whisper exits as policy.
- K Stone Prince's seal—levies defer, foresters guide, scribes stop arguing.
- A Wild Hunt clemency—ride under the horn for one night; no hound will take you.

Quick use notes

- Draw until all four suits appear: Spade = place, Heart = actor, Club = pressure, Diamond = leverage. Highest rank sets the main Clock (2–5 → 4, 6–10 → 6, J/Q/K → 8, A → 10).
- Diamonds are codified outcomes (charms/passes/host-rights) that change position rather than call for a roll.
- If any A shows, echo moonlight-on-stone motifs—antlers in shadow, petals that cut, a tide that breathes—and let a shortcut appear where no road should be.

7 Black Banners — “Condotta & Crowns” Generator

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

2. Burned village with a makeshift field hospital; flies and fever dreams.
3. Frozen ford where the ice holds the bodies of last month’s skirmish.
4. War-camp latrine row; mud, shame, and whispered mutinies.
5. Crater field from last season’s alchemical barrage; glass flowers bloom in the spring.
6. Supply road with a dozen broken wagons; oxen pick through the wreckage.
7. Half-finished siege tower in an abandoned camp; wind through the planks.
8. Salt-cured meat cache behind the surgeon’s tent; the wrong kind of maggots move.
9. Command tent where maps show territories that no longer exist.
10. Watchtower built from stacked enemy skulls; crows know the password.

J Ancient keep held by a skeleton garrison; they remember when the banners were gold.

Q The Bone Fields—where the Ykrul clans come to negotiate terms with the dead.

K Marcher’s Fortress—three walls, two sieges, one gate that opens inward only.

A The Singing Wastes—where fallen weapons hum with the voices of their last wielders.

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

2. Young cadet with father’s sword and mother’s debt.
3. Veteran sergeant who counts scars like coins and spends them on whiskey.
4. Ecktorian banner-captain with a griffon standard and a grudge against nobles.
5. Condotta opportunist who switches sides when the wind changes.
6. Ykrul clan emissary who speaks in riddles and pays in copper.
7. Vilikari war-chief’s second son; honor burns brighter than his father’s approval.
8. Surgeon who treats friend and foe alike; ledger balanced in blood.

- 9. Quartermaster who knows where every coin goes and where every man dies.
 - 10. Tribune’s aide-de-camp with orders that contradict the general’s intent.
 - J The Black Colonel—legendary commander who hasn’t been seen in the field for months.
 - Q Ykrul Clan-Mother who weaves war-braids from the hair of fallen enemies.
 - K Vilikari High Chief who trades in mercenaries like chess pieces.
 - A The Bannerless One—a general who commands loyalty without rank or banner.
- Clubs — Complications/Threats (betrayals, weather, politics, war)
- 2. Payday delayed—supplies run out before the coin arrives.
 - 3. False orders arrive; your target is now your ally.
 - 4. Blizzard traps two rival companies in the same abandoned monastery.
 - 5. Ykrul clan offers better terms than Ecktoria; your contract becomes a liability.
 - 6. Condotta unit flips colors mid-battle; you’re fighting your own reinforcements.
 - 7. Plague spreads through the camp; the surgeon’s tent becomes a death house.
 - 8. Vilikari raiders burn your supply lines; winter comes early this year.
 - 9. Ecktorian honor code conflicts with mercenary pragmatism; the camp splits into factions.
 - 10. Tribune is captured; aide-de-camp must choose between rescue and mission.
 - J The Black Colonel’s banner appears on the wrong battlefield; chaos follows.
 - Q Clan-Mother declares a blood-feast; all contracts suspended until dawn.
 - K High Chief plays the companies against each other; winner takes nothing.
 - A The Singing Wastes awaken; every fallen weapon rises to find its last wielder.
- Diamonds — Rewards/Leverage (contracts, claims, dispensations)
- 2. Emergency supply requisition—take what you need from a fallen company.
 - 3. Dual contract—serve two masters with mutually exclusive objectives.
 - 4. Honor dispensation—your actions are justified regardless of Ecktorian code.
 - 5. Condotta rider’s pass—move between camps without question, once.
 - 6. Ykrul safe-conduct token—pass through clan territories unmolested.
 - 7. Vilikari war-mark—their scouts will guide you through hostile terrain.
 - 8. Surgeon’s debt-note—medical care when no coin remains.
 - 9. Tribune’s cipher ring—decode orders that don’t exist yet.

10. Banner-captain's seal—commandeer resources from junior companies.

J Field promotion warrant—assume command of a decimated unit.

Q Clan-Mother's war-braid—her warriors will fight beside you this battle.

K High Chief's trading charter—buy/sell anything in any camp, no questions.

A The Bannerless One's word—loyalty transcends rank, law, and coin.

Quick Use Notes

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

8 Dungeon Generator

Spades — Places (Chambers, Features, Architecture)

2. Cracked Gallery — Stone corridor with unstable ceiling; debris falls with loud impacts
 3. Sunken Vestibule — Stairs descend into a flooded antechamber; water reflects strange lights
 4. Vaulted Refectory — High-ceilinged dining hall with long tables set for a feast that's been waiting decades
 5. Spiral Stairwell — Tight stone steps winding upward/downward; acoustics carry sounds from distant levels
 6. Collapsed Observatory — Dome roof fallen in; starlight (or strange illumination) pours through gaps
 7. Armory Alcove — Weapon racks line the walls, but the best arms are behind a trapped display
 8. Chained Sanctuary — Holy shrine with heavy chains hanging from ceiling; something was bound here
 9. Mirror Hall — Polished surfaces reflect movement; some reflections show different times/places
 10. Garden of Stone — Statues of people in various poses; some appear to watch visitors
- J Throne of Echoes — Judgment seat carved from single block; whispers past verdicts when approached
- Q Vault of Whispers — Archive chamber where books murmur secrets; reading aloud attracts attention
- K Chamber of Seasons — Room that cycles through weather conditions; currently in [d6: 1-2=spring rain, 3-4=summer heat, 5=autumn wind, 6=winter frost]
- A The Heart Chamber — Central space where the dungeon's purpose was fulfilled; reality feels thin here

Hearts — Actors (Inhabitants, Factions, Entities)

2. Forgotten Custodian — Ancient caretaker who tends the dungeon out of habit; helpful but confused about current era

3. Scholar-Prisoner — Captive researcher who's learned dangerous secrets; willing to trade knowledge for freedom
 4. Symbiotic Colony — Group of creatures that function as a single entity; territorial but can be negotiated with
 5. Cursed Noble — Former ruler transformed by dungeon magic; seeks redemption or oblivion
 6. Mercenary Remnant — Last survivor of a failed expedition; knows layout but is paranoid and desperate
 7. Bound Guardian — Protector spirit/construct that can't leave its post but will aid those who prove worthy
 8. Cult Initiate — Recent arrival seeking forbidden knowledge; eager to prove themselves through dangerous tasks
 9. Refugee Family — Common folk hiding from outside threats; grateful but may unknowingly cause complications
 10. Merchant of Curiosities — Trader who's made the dungeon home; sells useful items but asks steep prices
- J Ascended Vermin — Ordinary creature that gained intelligence and power; leads a small kingdom of its kind
- Q Fallen Hero's Shade — Spirit of a legendary figure seeking to complete their unfinished quest
- K Dungeon's Creator — Original architect who never left; maintains the place according to their vision
- A The Collective Consciousness — All inhabitants share a single mind; individual personalities are fragments of a greater whole

Clubs — Pressures (Hazards, Threats, Complications)

2. Shifting Walls — Stone panels move slowly but deliberately; paths change over time
3. Hungering Dark — Shadows that consume light sources; darkness itself becomes a threat
4. Memory Fog — Mist that causes false recollections; players may remember events that didn't happen
5. Gravity Wells — Areas where weight increases dramatically; movement becomes difficult and tiring
6. Temporal Echoes — Past events replay in loops; interfering can have unpredictable consequences
7. Corrosive Atmosphere — Air itself degrades organic matter and metal; equipment requires constant maintenance
8. Phantom Locks — Doors and gates that appear only when specific conditions are met

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- 9. Borrowed Time — Visitors age rapidly while inside; must complete objectives before time runs out
 - 10. Infectious Transformation — Exposure to dungeon elements causes gradual physical/mental changes
 - J Reality Anchor Points — Specific locations where the laws of physics/magic fluctuate wildly
 - Q The Dungeon's Will — The structure itself resists intruders; rooms rearrange to confound progress
 - K Cascading Failure — Damage to one area triggers problems in distant sections; dungeon is interconnected
 - A The Price of Passage — Every benefit gained requires a corresponding sacrifice; the dungeon always balances its books

Diamonds — Leverages (Rewards, Tools, Advantages)

- 2. Wayfinder Compass — Points toward the nearest exit or objective; needle spins wildly near magical interference
- 3. Key of Echoes — Opens one lock/door that has been opened before by someone important to the story
- 4. Lantern of Clarity — Illuminates not just space but also hidden dangers, secret passages, and magical auras
- 5. Cloak of Passage — Allows movement through one type of barrier (walls, water, magical fields) for a scene
- 6. Tome of Convenient Knowledge — Contains exactly the information needed for current challenges
- 7. Ration of Sustenance — Food and water that never spoils; provides nourishment and minor healing
- 8. Focus Crystal — Enhances one type of skill or magic for a limited time; attuned to user's primary approach
- 9. Token of Safe Return — Guarantees one free escape from a dangerous situation, but only works once
- 10. Map that Grows — Reveals new sections of the dungeon as they're explored; shows current inhabitant positions
- J Shield of Temporary Immunity — Provides protection against one specific type of hazard for extended periods
- Q Crown of Momentary Authority — Grants command over one faction or type of creature for a scene

- K Forge of Quick Repair — Instantly restores one damaged item to perfect condition, but requires a component
- A The Dungeon's Blessing — Permanent minor enhancement to one ability, but creates a subtle dependency on the dungeon's influence

9 Ecktoria — “Marble & Fire” Generator

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

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

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

2. Torchbearer child with ash-smudged hands.
3. Ferrymaster who knows which banners pay late.
4. Coin-house factor sealing credit with three ribbons.
5. Lanista who owns fighters—and their secrets.
6. Decumanus-master surveyor who “moves” stones.
7. Procession marshal with permits and a whistle.

8. Grain-prefect allotting loaves; knives in the margins.
 9. Censor’s clerk who “misfiles” careers.
 10. Veteran standard-bearer selling honor as a retainer.
- J Gladiatrix darling of the crowds; owes no one but the sand.
- Q Duchess-Regent behind a silk screen; speaks through cousins.
- K High Priest of the Everflame; smiles like law.
- A Grand Magistrate—guardian of forms, breaker of them when needed.

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

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

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

2. Bread chit for a ward—street patience for a week.
3. Procession permit—move sacred flame through a crowded quarter.
4. Arena purse—settles debts and hires mouths.
5. Survey writ—reset one boundary stone.
6. Ducal safe-conduct ribbon—four guards and a trumpet.
7. Coin-house line of credit—silent and immediate.

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8. Magistrate's postponement—buy a tenday against any suit.
 9. Laurel-deed—crowd favor follows you into court.
 10. Grain allotment ledger—name who eats this month.
- J Minor title patent—style opens doors that bolts resist.
- Q Basilica audience—one private hour with the High Priest.
- K Censor's indulgence—one banned thing becomes permitted (for you).
- A Golden Edict—exception carved in marble; precedent travels.

Quick use notes

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

10 Kahfagia — “Pilot’s Mirror” Generator

Spades — Places (western littorals, pilot-lanes, lantern law)

2. Tidal mudflat with a hidden plank-way at low water.
 3. Salt-scar pier behind the dawn spice auctions.
 4. Reedbelt smuggler creeks where tax boats won’t follow.
 5. Breakwater under repair; gap lets cutters slip at dusk.
 6. Freshly dredged channel with temporary beacons.
 7. River sluice and tide-gate; boom-chain across the mouth.
 8. Narrow-keel cutter yard, apprentices on night shift.
 9. Fog-lane “lantern alley” where beacons migrate with the tide.
 10. Admiralty quay and bonded warehouses under seal.
- J The Red Shoal rendezvous—quiet water, loud reputations.
- Q Mirror-Light Tower (pilot station) that certifies safe water—today.
- K Kassamira presidial port: auctions at dawn, courts by noon.
- A “The Pointe” strait—storm-lights and wreckers’ tales.

Hearts — People & Factions (pilots, corsairs, admiralty hands)

2. Tide-runner (boy/girl with the bell and rope).
3. Pilot’s apprentice with a perfect memory for shoals.
4. Lantern-warden’s clerk—knows which lights moved, and why.
5. Oshiiran-trained factor keeping two ledgers.
6. Dock-syndic who can make a queue vanish.
7. Lantern-law advocate: “jurisdiction moves like tide.”

8. Privateer captain with a “crooked” letter of convoy.
 9. Thalassoi marine sergeant on shore leave, still on duty.
 10. Admiralty magistrate who rules fast and travels faster.
- J Dredging-consortium foreman; the channel follows their purse.
- Q Mirror-keeper (commodore’s confidante) who places beacons.
- K Kahfagian commodore, off the books but on the water.
- A Admiral of the Red Shoal; offers wine, figs—once.

Clubs — Complications/Threats (tide, law, weather, blades)

2. Tide turns two bells early—grounding risk rises.
 3. Smothering fog; sound travels, sight does not.
 4. Harbor boom slams shut; wrong side of the chain.
 5. “The lights change” mid-approach; your lane just moved.
 6. Pilots strike over unpaid “average”; no escorts available.
 7. Surprise inspection; customs ladder audits your cargo and crew.
 8. Reef-runners (corsair skiffs) circle with boarding hooks.
 9. Jurisdiction flips under lantern-law; your writ no longer bites.
 10. Regulated alchemical fire aboard—quarantine if anything spills.
- J Quartermaster sells your tide-tables to a rival.
- Q Yellow flag—port quarantine; deadlines rot on the hook.
- K Fleet redeploys; your “safe” corridor becomes a parade ground.
- A Black squall at the Pointe scatters ships and stories.

Diamonds — Rewards/Leverage (papers, rights, priority, favors)

2. Priority mooring chit (skip the Mooring Roll once).
3. Pilotage token—one certified escort through a bad channel.
4. Fee waiver on today’s cargo; ledger smile included.
5. Safe-conduct along a specific beaconed lane.
6. Salvage rights on a named quay or reach.
7. Bonded-warehouse access; seal your prize before rivals sniff it.

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8. Lantern-code page (what tonight's signals mean).
 9. Dredging grant (you decide where the next channel runs).
 10. Letter of marque/convoy for one season.
- J Admiralty judgment in your favor; precedent travels with you.
- Q Mirror-Light Warrant—the legal right to post a beacon.
- K A share in the spice auction floor at Kassamira.
- A “Move the lanterns” license—temporary authority to redefine the lane.

Quick use notes

- Highest rank sets the primary Clock (2–5 → 4-seg, 6–10 → 6-seg, J/Q/K → 8-seg, A → 10-seg).
- Treat Diamonds as position-changers and codified outcomes (licenses, charters, rights)—don't roll them.
- If your draw comes up all red or all black, remember the SRD's tone and free-CP nudges.
- If any A appears, echo sea & signal motifs—beacons that migrate, tides that remember, and law that flows like water.

11 Linn — “Skerries & Storm-Oaths” Generator

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

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

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

2. Net-wife who reads the sea like a ledger and the sky like a mood.
3. Steersman whose tiller-hand never shakes, even when the keel does.
4. Shipwright with pitch on his palms and a schedule in his teeth.
5. Oar-master who sets the beat that decides if home is today or never.
6. Mist-pilot (reed-runner) who ghosts boats through the marsh lanes.
7. Skald whose verses buy silence, start fights, and end them.

8. Shield-band of cousins: fine with coin, better with cattle.
 9. Foster-son from a southern coast; speaks both laws and all the subtext.
 10. Thing-speaker who can make a war into a lawsuit and a lawsuit into lunch.
- J Sea-queen’s hand—her envoy with a seal-bag and a sword-belt.
- Q Sea-Queen of the Linn, crown of hammered silver, eyes for weather and law.
- K High Jarl over the Strands, first among raids, last to boast.
- A Volva of the Mist, oath-reader whose nod can still the surf.

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

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

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

2. Harbor-green mark—dock without levy in a named strand (once).
3. Oar-share—claim two benches on a fast longship for a season.
4. Pilot’s token—a mist-runner guides you through the reed-maze.
5. Wharf-right at a Dolmis waystation; your boats load first.
6. Salvage claim on a reef stretch; flotsam is now “inventory.”
7. Thing ruling—a verdict in your favor that travels with you.

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8. Raid-truce ribbon—immunity in a named bay for one market day.
 9. Foster-bond—be recognized as guest-kin by a jarl's house.
 10. Herring allotment—priority barrels when the run hits.
- J Escort writ—eight shields and a wolf-banner from cape to cape.
- Q Private audience with the Sea-Queen; a whisper exits as policy.
- K High Jarl's pennon—levies open booms and mouths when it flies.
- A Storm-oath clause—one temporary exception to any local sea-law, spoken and sealed.

Quick use notes

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

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

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

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

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

2. Reed-cutter with peat-black hands and a precise opinion on fog.
3. Salt-monk who blesses pans and keeps the ward-measure honest.
4. Bell-warden whose ringbook decides which notes keep which ghosts.
5. Oath-ferryman collecting fares in salt and names; remembers both.
6. Lantern acolyte of the Light who trims wicks and arguments.

7. Linn mist-pilot who can ghost a longship through reed-lace—if paid.
 8. Protectorate clerk (Aeler) with oilskin ledgers and a narrow smile.
 9. Shroud-diver who harvests tokens from drowned fields before dawn.
 10. Direwood refugee with a cold breath and colder stories.
- J Fog-knight of the Pall—cavalry that rides levee crowns by bellcode.
- Q Legate of the Mists (Aeler governor), equal parts mercy and decree.
- K Lord Warden of the Fens, local strong hand sworn to the Legate’s seal.
- A Mist-Seer who bargains breath for answers; candles shorten when she speaks.

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

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

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

2. Ward-salt allotment—pure measure enough to draw a safe circle (once).
3. Ferry token—cross a named black runnel regardless of curfew.
4. Bell-key—unlock and set one bell on the Line to your note.
5. Lantern writ—lawful travel at night along a levee crown with escort.
6. Exorcist’s seal—a stamped clause that downgrades “haunt” to “nuisance.”

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7. Fog-beacon codeleaf—today’s mirror and horn sequences.
 8. Protectorate mark—priority rations and rope from Fort-Stair stores.
 9. Wraith-indemnity—legal immunity for actions taken under apparition threat.
 10. Bone-field license—salvage rights at a drowned hamlet (with witnesses).
- J Refuge-right—move a named household through the Gate unchallenged.
- Q Private audience with the Legate; one whisper exits as policy.
- K Warden’s commission—raise levee guards; local doors open, purses too.
- A Pall Indulgence—temporary exception to ward law, spoken and sealed by bell.

Quick use notes

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

13 Silkstrand — “City of Bridges & Dye-water” Generator

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

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

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

2. Bobbin-runner child—feet sure on parapets, rumors in pocket.
3. Mulberry steward counting leaves; desperate for pickers.
4. Foreign factor seeking a warehouse and a friend at customs.
5. Dyers’ Guildmistress—hands stained, permits tighter than purse strings.
6. Bridge bailiff who rents stalls and sells gossip by the breath.
7. Archivolt notary; “fixes” missing recitals—for a donation.

8. Watch captain on condotta to three lords; passwords change with the wind.
9. Spinner-matron of the wormhouses; temper like hot copper.
10. Exchange caller whose clap can still a thousand voices.
 - J Night-boat smuggler “Ravel,” owner of a silent oar and louder favors.
 - Q The Matron of Silkstrand—patient, velvet, iron.
 - K The Lame King’s envoy in velvet boots; claims certain alleys “protected.”
 - A The Saint of Broken Warps (if real): sees curses braided in cloth.

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

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

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

2. Bridge token—one peak-hour cart crossing free.
3. Dye-permit chit; process a “questionable” color this week.
4. Warehouse seal from the Matron’s office; rivals legally shut out.
5. Exchange floor pass (day) to trade without a sponsor.
6. Watergate priority—skip one flood closure when it matters.
7. Notarial indulgence—retrofit the missing recital; past deals stand.

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8. Wormhouse allotment—claim a share of next hatch.
 9. Ropewalk line of credit—hire crews before you have coin.
 10. Arsenal armory key—one night’s issue for your retinue.
- J Condotta rider—city watch escorts you through any ward, once.
- Q Private audience in the Palazzo; a whisper becomes policy.
- K Tax-farm share on Three-Queens stalls for a season.
- A The Matron’s Golden Thread—temporary charter to set tolls on a named canal.

Quick use notes

- Draw 4 cards to seed: Spade=place, Heart=actor, Club=pressure, Diamond=leverage. Highest rank sets the main clock (2–5→4, 6–10→6, J/Q/K→8, A→10).
- Treat Diamonds as codified outcomes (rights/papers/permits) that shift position rather than require tests.
- If you want stronger “Acasia-is-cursed” vibes, any A also adds a lingering omen you can echo in later scenes.
- If any A appears, echo silk & water motifs—threads that bind, currents that remember, and bargains that stain the canal beds.

14 Theona — “Three Greens, No Ninth” Generator

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

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

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

2. Peat-cutter with a steady barrow and steadier gossip.
3. Well-keeper who ties ribbons and unknots feuds.
4. Kelp-netter who reads rip lines like ledgers.
5. Harp-satirist; a few bars can end a career or a war.
6. Wick-warden who tends fog-lamps and counts in eights.
7. Taboo-witness (geas-keeper) who knows which words ruin deals.

8. Island abbot with a saint’s bell and a tolerant smile.
 9. Green Neighbor—a polite emissary from under the hill, wearing borrowed boots.
 10. Coracle-captain of an eight-boat flotilla, swift as rumor.
- J Bride-peacemaker who walks between bloodlines with a silver knife.
- Q Matron of Wells, queen-mother in truth if not in name.
- K Three-Isles King, elected by moots, whale-bone throne and weathered eyes.
- A Lady Beneath the Hawthorn, the unseen queen who bargains in dreams.

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

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

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

2. Well-blessing—named ford crosses you safely, once.
3. Moot token—an eight-knotted cord; skip any local queue.
4. Harbor-green—painted mark that exempts your boat from the next levy.
5. Hawthorn pass—immunity from a single local taboo (for one scene).
6. Bell-right—lawful ring at a fog-wick summons watchers.
7. Coracle share—crew and oars pledged for one crossing.

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8. Ogham ruling—a monk’s reading that settles a dispute in your favor.
 9. Unnumbered Right—ignore the Ninth prohibition for one action (costs a favor later).
 10. Salt-cure license—process scarce fish despite ration edicts.
- J Bride-peace charter—two feuding houses sheath knives for a season.
- Q Private moot with the Matron and the King; whispers become policy.
- K Whale-road escort—eight-oar guards across a Dolmis reach.
- A The Green Favor—one uncanny exception to custom, spoken beneath the hawthorn.

Quick use notes

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

15 Thepyrgos — “City of a Thousand Stairs” Generator

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

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

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

2. Bell-runner child whose feet know every stair by heart.
3. Master of Ropes (guild head); palms like oak, voice like a whistle.
4. Icon-smith with a portable shrine and a temper about pigment.
5. Wall Strategos who drills levies on the test ramp.
6. Chain-keeper of the harbor boom; hates “surprises” at dusk.
7. Oath-examiner (sworn notary) who weighs words like iron.

8. Archive Sister with a key to the “forbidden rung.”
9. Salt-fish Syndic—warehouse queen of the quays.
10. Nomophylax (law-scholar) whose citations close mouths.
- J Palikar Captain of tower guards; ladder-quick and letter-shy.
- Q Matriarch of the Ladder (synod primate) calm as stone.
- K The Archon of Thepyrgos, elected, entrenched, and counting bells.
- A The Lighthouse-Patriarch, reclusive seer said to steer beacons in storms.

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

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

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

2. Stair token—pass a barricaded stair without delay (once).
3. Harbor pass—the boom lowers for your vessel on command.
4. Cistern draw-right for a named ward during scarcity.
5. Crane allotment—one guaranteed lift on the Ropeyard Terrace.
6. Icon license to display or carry a disputed image without penalty.
7. Archive hour in the Library of Keys—one shelf opened to you.

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8. Bellmark—lawful right to ring a tower bell (summons a watch).
 9. Watchlight code leaf—today’s beacon and mirror signals.
 10. Synod indulgence—one proscribed chant or rite permitted (for you).
- J Pronoia grant—temporary farm/tax of a terrace hamlet.
- Q Private audience before the Matriarch and Synod clerks.
- K Archon’s guarded writ—palikars escort you between towers.
- A Golden Key—authority to open or seal any city gate once.

Quick use notes

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

16 Ubral — “The Stone Between Spears” Generator

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

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

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

2. Hearth-aunt who holds the guest-cup and the house’s temper.
3. Hill guide with a thorn-staff and ten quiet shortcuts.
4. Feud-broker who knows the weight of a life in cattle and coin.
5. Reiver band—light on tack, heavy on nerve, laughing in the rain.
6. Watch-fire warden whose braziers speak faster than riders.
7. Wergild counter—keeps tallies, ends grudges, starts others.

- 8. Dwarf road-warden of Khaz-Vurim; toll first, friendship later.
- 9. Oath-singer whose verses bind hands and open gates.
- 10. Lowland factor buying iron blooms and selling trouble.
- J Bride-carrier (peaceweaver) who walks between bloodlines with a knife and a smile.
- Q Lady of the Tor—clan-chief in cloak and mail; her nod is winter or spring.
- K Council of Cairns—greybeards and granite wills; they do not hurry.
- A Stone-Speaker of Vurim—dwarf envoy whose word moves roads and rates.

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

- 2. Upland mist—you can hear horns but not edges.
- 3. Feud rekindled—a cousin spits on guest-law; knives wake up.
- 4. Bridge dropped—your pursuers fall... and your route with them.
- 5. Black-rent demand—“privateering on land”; pay or be “escorted.”
- 6. Wergild breach—silver short by a head; tempers long by a spear.
- 7. Snow-squall seals the notch; tents turn to coffins if you dally.
- 8. Dwarf toll hike at the Steps; papers right, purses wrong.
- 9. Cattle scatter—bells ringing downslope; your cover story with them.
- 10. Watch-fire false alarm—beacons run ridge to ridge; levies seize the road.
- J Bride-theft turns a wedding into a war-party; you’re between both.
- Q Royal incursion from a neighbor; “lawful” arrests in the uplands.
- K Clan muster—horns call men from steading to spear; all traffic stops.
- A Hill-fall—rain liquefies a slope; trail, proof, and bodies slide together.

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

- 2. Guest-right token—one hearth owes you food, bed, and steel at dawn.
- 3. Guide’s braid—lawful passage on named sheepwalks (once).
- 4. Ford-tithe remission—cross Wergild Ford free for a season.
- 5. Feud-peace charter—two clans sheath blades until next harvest.
- 6. Bloom allotment—claim on a week’s iron from a hill bloomery.
- 7. Watch-code sheet—today’s beacon order from Three-Fires Ridge.

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8. Vurim pass-ring—dwarf road priority for one train of carts.
 9. Bride-price escrow—you hold the purse; both sides must humor you.
 10. Hill-fort shelter writ—Grey Tor opens its gates during storm or pursuit.
- J Oath-release bracelet—one binding vow ends cleanly, witnessed.
- Q Council audience—the Cairns hear you out alone; precedent sticks.
- K Road-ward commission—collect tolls on a stretch of pass (for now).
- A Stone-Speaker's clause—temporary exception to dwarf toll or law, spoken and sealed.

Quick use notes

- Draw until you have all four suits: Spade = place, Heart = actor, Club = pressure, Diamond = leverage. Highest rank sets the main Clock (2–5→4, 6–10→6, J/Q/K→8, A→10).
- Diamonds are codified outcomes (oaths/rights/tokens) that change position rather than call for a roll.
- If any A appears, echo upland motifs—horns, heather, stone—in later scenes for cohesion.
- If any A appears, echo stone & horn motifs—cairns that watch, horns that carry, and stone that remembers every footfall.

17 Valewood — “Empire Under Leaves” Generator

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

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

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

2. Pathweaver (Lethai-ar guide) who knots safe routes into cord.
3. Fox-headed courier with a promise braided into his tail.
4. Owl-sister whose pupils show yesterday; her hands show yours.
5. Antler-masked hunter sworn to keep cities sleeping.
6. Moss-scribe who writes deeds in lichen and reads stone like vellum.
7. Lark-keeper; her caged bird sings warnings strangers can’t hear.

- 8. Green Neighbor (fae courtier) wearing a borrowed smile and boots.
- 9. Warden-coterie of beast-kin (badger, stag, lynx) with one law: no digging deep.
- 10. Echo-legionary—imperial shade bound to a patrol that never ends.
- J Shardwright (ancient artisan) who can wake a star-road with a chisel.
- Q Hazel Queen of the Lethai-ar, sovereign in leaf and law.
- K Alder King of the Twilit Court, sovereign in shadow and debt.
- A The Huntsman Between, antlers of moonlight; shortcuts owe him.

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

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

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

- 2. Way-cord—knot points to the true next turn (once).
- 3. Dew-mirror—see a thing as it is, not as sung, for one scene.
- 4. Hazel token—lawful crossing of a warded hedge without snag.
- 5. Honey-right—eat and speak safely at any bee-stone ring.
- 6. Name-bead—a kept promise warms; a broken one chills and glows.

7. Wind-veil sprig—mute the sweet wind's lies for a short walk.
 8. City-key shard—wake one gate or stair in a phasing ruin.
 9. Green truce-bough—hunt, cut, or camp without offense in a named copse.
 10. Oathsap ampoule—seal a pact even echoes respect.
- J Shardwright's favor—repair or light a length of star-road.
- Q Audience at Hazel Hall—one whisper exits as policy.
- K Alder Writ—levies defer, wardens guide, scribes stop arguing.
- A Valeheart Clause—temporary exception to any local rule, spoken in leaves.

Quick use notes

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

18 Vhasia — “The Fractured Sun” Generator

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

2. Wayside shrine where pilgrims tack petitions to a scorched sun-disc.
 3. Vine-terraced clos above a millstream; watchmen nap in warm shade.
 4. Bastide market square, neat as a canray board, gates shut at dusk.
 5. Royal Forest ride—antler posts mark the king’s old law.
 6. Pont-du-Tithe: toll-bridge flanked by chapels and crossbows.
 7. Great Fairground outside a chartered town; counting sheds ring like bells.
 8. Salt pans and wind-pumps on the estuary; gulls own the law.
 9. Siege-scarred château: hoardings up, cistern low, banners confused.
 10. Cathedral works-yard; cranes creak, stones fly, faith is scaffolding.
- J Parlement Hall hung with faded sunburst tapestries; clerks whisper.
- Q Queen’s Causeway across a river fen—cart wheels vanish in spring.
- K The Sun Palace at Lence: shuttered mirrors, gardens gone to bramble.
- A King’s High Road, mile-stones chipped of crowns; armies love it anyway.

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

2. Road warden with a dented badge and an honest horn.
3. Vintner-guild syndic who counts saints’ days as credit terms.
4. Abbess-chatelaine: runs a fortress-convent with iron accounts.
5. Routier (free-company) captain who prefers ransoms to pay.
6. Constable of a duchy, splendid kit, thin purse, thick pride.
7. Parlement clerk who can drown foes in procedure or fish them out.

8. Salt-farmer (gabelle lessee) with hired cudgels and a better map.
9. Trouvère with a scandalous lay about the last Sun-king.
10. Marshal in exile—the Sun-court’s old hammer, now for hire.
 - J Heretic “perfect” preaching peace while hauling hidden daggers of fact.
 - Q Queen-Mother in a riverside keep; gives favors like dowries.
 - K The Two Crowns—rival dukes each “crowned” in different cathedrals.
 - A The Last Dauphin, a rumor with a birthmark; armies march for whispers.

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

2. Chevauchée: a fast raid puts the countryside to smoke; refugees flood roads.
3. Interdict falls on a county; bells are silent, tempers loud.
4. Forest law invoked—your venison becomes a hanging matter.
5. River in spate; the ferry master chains his boat and prays.
6. Coin debasement rumor; markets seize, soldiers demand silver.
7. Parlement stays proceedings; your siege must wait on parchment.
8. Free-company mutiny unless arrears are met—by you.
9. Relic dispute—two abbeys claim the same saint; mobs form.
10. Harvest blight; grain stores locked, bakers guarded by pikes.
 - J Tournament “accident” masks an assassination; you’re named as witness.
 - Q Royalist restoration plot—sunburst badges appear on doorposts overnight.
 - K Feudal call-up: lords demand your troop levy with three days’ bread.
 - A Winter campaign—roads to soup, hooves to ice, timetables to lies.

Diamonds — Rewards/Leverage (charters, patents, safe-conducts, rights)

2. Safe-conduct sealed by a duke or abbey; honored on one road, once.
3. Burgess charter for a market ward; walls and watch become your friends.
4. Bridge farm: take the tolls at Pont-du-Tithe for a season.
5. Paréage—shared rule charter with a monastery; split justice, keep rents.
6. Wardship over a minor heir; lands (and knights) obey you “for now.”

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7. Gabelle lease—salt-tax rights along the estuary; lucrative, hated.
 8. Letters patent to raise a company under your banner.
 9. Remission of feudal dues for a named village; they'll march when asked.
 10. Low-justice grant (stocks, fines, gallows) in a troublesome hamlet.
- J Confiscation writ against a royalist estate if you can seize it.
- Q Private audience with the Queen-Mother; one secret exits as policy.
- K Sunburst Warrant from the fallen court—most still obey it if shown boldly.
- A General Pardon (temporary): absolves rebels who switch sides to yours.

Quick use notes

- Draw 4 to seed: Spade = place, Heart = actor, Club = pressure, Diamond = leverage. Highest rank sets the main Clock (2–5 → 4, 6–10 → 6, J/Q/K → 8, A → 10).
- Diamonds = codified outcomes (rights/papers/charters) that shift position rather than call for a roll.
- If any A appears, echo the broken-sun motif: a blotted medal, a sunburst scratched off a milestone, a loyalist hymn under someone's breath.
- If any A appears, echo sun & shard motifs—medals that crack, light that fractures, and oaths that splinter like glass.

19 Vilikari — “Laurels & Longhouses” Generator

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

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

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

2. Hearth-Mother with the guest-cup and the wergild chest key.
3. Shield-Brother of a comitatus; oaths braided into his hair.
4. March Notary (Utar-trained) who writes three scripts without blinking.
5. Horse-Reeve who rations pasture between plows and warbands.
6. Ykrul Envoy riding under safe-conduct; speaks debts in proverbs.
7. Old Legionary turned drill-master for Vilikari levies.

8. Ecktorian Factor of Vilikari blood; coins flow where her ledger points.
9. Kahfagian Pilot with a lantern-law chit and a clan tattoo.
10. Acasian Marcher-Lord—iron-nail crown, Vilikari law in his pocket.
- J War-Maiden whose oath-braid names the dead and the owed.
- Q Queen of the Marches—consort-regent; smiles like precedent.
- K Federate King (Rex-Dux)—sworn to imperial forms, sung by his own.
- A Elder of Elders—thing-council speaker whose nod can unmake a clan.

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

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

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

2. Foedus Renewal Seal—settlement and stipends confirmed for a season.
3. Mallus Bench-Right—hold court under an oak and be obeyed.
4. Stipend Arrears paid in salt and grain; portable, persuasive.
5. Roman-Name Patent—citizenship-style privilege; doors open, bows deepen.
6. Staple Stall-Right—customs favor on a frontier market line.

7. Hostage Treaty—exchange fosters; grudges trade for leverage.
 8. Remount Allotment—fresh horses from royal paddocks, no questions.
 9. Wergild Table recognized by both codes; vengeance priced and paid.
 10. Bridge Farm (imperial) for a season—funds and friends accrue.
- J Purple-Border Warrant—wear the stripe; officials defer on sight.
- Q Private Audience with the Queen of the Marches; whisper becomes policy.
- K Dux Commission—command a mixed unit with pay authority.
- A Great Law Day—proclaim a new concord; one temporary exception to old law stands.

Quick use notes

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

20 Viterra — “The Last Kingdom” Generator

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

2. Fen causeway stile with a toll-rod and a patient line of eel carts.
 3. Hedgerow muster-green in the Dales; bows strung under apple trees.
 4. Beacon hill above the Highlands; watch-fire grate and slate steps.
 5. Belworth ferry-stairs with wet ledgers and a nervous horn.
 6. Old iron-bloom quarry turned drill yard; hammer echoes carry.
 7. Parish-stone maze where three maps disagree by a field.
 8. Fairport tideworks at the river mouth; Dolmis swell under the planks.
 9. Valora law quarter—archives, oath-rooms, and the Hall of Dawning nearby.
 10. Tarlington counting fields beside the mustering ground; quiet efficiency hums.
- J River dike crown: ring of turf and timber; brotherhood bells for flood watch.
- Q The Queen’s Progress encampment—canvas palisade, fresh standards, full schedule.
- K Hall of Dawning tilt-yard at first light; Dawn-knights run clean drills.
- A Queen’s Highway mile-stone above the Dolmis road; customs writ posted.

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

2. Fen reeve with a tally-rod; speaks for the dike guilds.
3. River-carter syndic who moves grain faster than rumor.
4. Parish surveyor with three maps and one opinion.
5. Quartermaster of the Dawn (logistics first, lances second).
6. Dales levy serjeant—longbow calm, cider breath.
7. Two-altars cleric-pair (Light circuit-preacher vs Everflame canon lawyer).

8. Fairport shipwright with Dolmis cousins and a quiet skiff.
9. Fenwood comptroller who can conjure wagons with a signature.
10. Queen’s Justiciar—law on the road, polite as a gallows.
 - J Border routier-captain who reads ledgers as well as ambushes.
 - Q The Newly Crowned Queen of Viterra—patient sums, sharp promises.
 - K The Crown in Council (Fenwood, duchy envoys, guild voices) weighing grain vs. glory.
 - A Tarling-blood rumor—a lost sigil surfaces; old loyalties twitch.

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

2. Dike breach in a black-rain; carts bog and tempers sink.
3. Feast-day clash: Light vs Everflame processions collide over tithes.
4. “Quiet tolls” sprout on the Queen’s Highway; escorts sniff a trap.
5. Counting-house audit freezes your cargo until dawn.
6. Border-lace snarl: overlapping titles spark arrests mid-parish.
7. Isle refusal: Theona’s moot withholds levy; quay rumors harden.
8. Delta spat: Fairport vs Marcott customs—barges stack three deep.
9. Routier arrears: free-company flips unless someone pays.
10. Salt pinch—import prices spike; bakers barricade.
 - J Dawn recall: your escort is pulled to a flood-girded parish.
 - Q Aberielist intrigue: a royalist ring stirs against the new crown.
 - K Levy call-up: dalesmen muster; your wagons conscripted “for the realm.”
 - A Dolmis gale train: bora-like winds slam the coast; schedules drown.

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

2. Ferry priority at a named Belworth crossing (once).
3. Dike-work allotment—brotherhood labor on your timetable.
4. Market day license in Valora’s square.
5. Dawn escort letter (four lances at first light).
6. River-carter line—guaranteed haul on the grain artery.
7. Parish-map correction—move a border a hedgerow over.

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8. Fairport customs seal for Dolmis-bound cargo.
 9. County Thing ruling in your favor; local teeth, real bite.
 10. Salt allotment from a guarded depot (winter only).
- J Wardship of a minor fen-keep; men-at-arms “for now.”
- Q Private audience with the Queen; one secret exits as policy.
- K Fenwood ducal warrant to enforce Highway customs.
- A Coronation writ—temporary amnesty & tax-remission for those who align now.

Quick use notes

- Draw until all four suits appear: Spade=place, Heart=actor, Club=pressure, Diamond=leverage. Highest rank sets the main Clock (2–5→4, 6–10→6, J/Q/K→8, A→10).
- Diamonds are codified outcomes (licenses, writs, charters): they change position rather than call for a roll.
- If any A appears, echo law & ledger motifs—writs that weigh, ledgers that remember, and justice that keeps its sums.

21 The Ways Between — “Spiritways & Veilways” Generator

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

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

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

2. Lost pilgrim who thinks they’re going home but has forgotten where home is
3. Toll-taker who accepts payment in memories you didn’t know you had
4. Wayward spirit guide whose directions are always technically correct but morally questionable
5. Dream-merchant carrying a sack of nightmares and one perfect dream for sale
6. Child-ghost who knows shortcuts but charges in riddles
7. Wounded traveler bleeding metaphor; their pain manifests as thorns along the path

8. Merchant who sells maps to places that don't exist yet
 9. Guide-dog made of shadow and starlight; follows those who walk with purpose
 10. Pilgrim who moves backwards through time; their footsteps erase recent history
- J Ferryman of souls who also carries the luggage of the living
- Q The Road's Own Child — born from two paths crossing, raised by waymarks
- K Keeper of the Dead-roads — ensures proper passage for those who should not be walking
- A The Wayfinder — entity that exists only in the moment of choosing between paths

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

2. Path loops back to show you your own funeral preparations
 3. Reality thins — you can see the dreams of sleeping travelers
 4. Waymark points in the wrong direction; trust leads to places that never were
 5. Dream-bleed seeps through — your waking memories become someone else's nightmares
 6. Toll demanded in a currency you didn't know you carried
 7. Path splits and each version remembers you differently
 8. Gravity shifts to emotional weight — burdens become physically heavy
 9. Time-sickness — you arrive before you left, creating paradox shadows
 10. The road remembers your lies and demands truth-payment
- J Crossroads judgment — the path you choose judges the paths you didn't
- Q Memory-thief waits at the rest stop; pays in counterfeit recollections
- K The Path That Should Not Be — opens only for those who are already lost
- A Convergence Point — all travelers arrive simultaneously, but none can remember how they got there

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

2. Waymark that always points toward your next important choice
3. Token of passage — road recognizes you as one who belongs
4. Dream-catcher that filters nightmares from your rest
5. Truth-compass that points to what you most need to know, not what you want to hear

6. Memory-anchor that keeps you from losing yourself in the deeper paths
 7. Safe-haven waystone — one guaranteed rest stop with no complications
 8. Guide-light that burns with the color of your truest intention
 9. Path-shortener — cuts distance by cutting through metaphor instead of space
 10. Debt-clearing — the road forgives one obligation you thought you owed
- J Crossroads boon — choice of three paths, each leading exactly where you need to go
- Q Way-wisdom — understand the language of paths and road-signs for one journey
- K Passage of Grace — walk safely through any dangerous crossing for one night
- A The Road's Own Name — power to call the path you walk by its true name and command its nature

Special Rules for The Ways Between

- **Dream-Logic Navigation:** Any Ace adds a metaphysical requirement (sacrifice, taboo, or transformation) that must be fulfilled to pass.
- **Memory Currency:** Diamonds can be traded for information about other travelers or previous paths taken.
- **Time-Drift:** Any 2-4 indicates the path moves through time as well as space; arrival may be before departure.
- **Reflection Points:** Any face card means the path shows reflections of alternate choices or possible selves.

Quick Use Notes

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

Integration Options for The Ways Between

High-Level Spell: Wayfarer’s Passage

Cost: 20 XP, 1/campaign

Requirements: Wits 5, Arcana 4, Spirit 3+

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

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

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

Prestige Background: Keeper of the Crossroads

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

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

Perk (choose 1, once/session):

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

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

Hooks (GM on CP spend in keyed scenes):

- A path you redirected curses your judgment; future navigation rolls at -1 DV.
- The crossroads itself becomes a character, demanding a sacrifice for continued service.
- Another Keeper challenges your authority; paths begin to shift allegiances.

Invite: "The roads remember your name."

Mid-Tier Talent: Dream-Road Walker

Cost: 7 XP

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

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

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

Cultural Talent: Child of the Crossroads

Cost: 5 XP (counts as racial talent)

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

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

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

Ritual Magic: Calling the Long Road

Art: Umbramancy/Veil (DV 3)

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

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

Asset Integration: Roadwarden's Charter

Type: Major Off-Screen Asset (12 XP)

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

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

Magic Item: Compass of True Directions

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

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

Follower Integration: Wayward Guide

Cap: 4

Specialty: Navigation through metaphysical territories

Effect: Adds +2 assist dice to any travel roll involving non-physical navigation (dream-paths, metaphorical journeys, time-drift corridors).

Risk: 2+ CP spent on travel actions may cause the guide to become lost in the deeper paths, requiring a rescue mission.

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

Spades — Places (flex to any biome)

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

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

2. Forager child (goat-herd/berry-picker) with truer maps than yours.
3. Guide with three routes and one price (changes daily).
4. Warden patrol—local badges, local laws, local patience.
5. Caravan crew—drovers/porters/yam post hands trading speed for coin.
6. Pilgrims bound for a tucked-away shrine or stone.
7. Poachers & trappers who know every snare and shortcut.

- 8. Hermit-healer with dogs/geese and opinions about weather.
- 9. Prospectors (salt/amber/iron/fungus) chasing rumors and glint.
- 10. Roving war-band—reavers or “escorts,” depending on your purse.
- J Monster-hunter/rite-keeper wearing yesterday’s trophies.
- Q Quartermaster on inspection—ledgers first, hospitality second.
- K Claimant chief—papers and spears to match.
- A The Stranger—spirit-touched nomad/emissary; rules bend near them.

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

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

Diamonds — Rewards/Leverage (position changers)

- 2. Cache token—key to a hidden food/fuel stash (once).
- 3. Right-of-way pass—recognized marker for a named trail or crossing.
- 4. Warden’s favor—escort letter; “they’re with us.”
- 5. Weather window—good forecast and a narrow gate to use it.
- 6. Water/fuel deed—lawful draw at a scarce source.
- 7. Route song / map scrap—navigation advantage that actually works.

8. Remount/boat hire—fresh legs or hulls waiting at a post.
 9. Truce cord—taboo exemption at a site (one scene).
 10. Toll waiver—ferry/bridge/reef gate honors this chit.
- J Rescue debt—locals owe you (or you them); trade it for labor or intel.
- Q Private audience—keeper/shrine-warden/spirit of place hears you alone.
- K Road-warden commission—temporary authority over a stretch of wilds.
- A Earth's Exception—one temporary rule-bend (cross during storm, pass uncounted, beasts ignore you).

Quick use notes

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

Fast reskin palette

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

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

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

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

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

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

23 Ykrul (Orcs) — “Wolf Standards, Winter Camps” Generator

Mapping

Spades = Places; **Hearts** = People/Factions; **Clubs** = Complications/Threats; **Diamonds** = Rewards/Leverage. Draw until all four suits appear. Highest rank sets the primary clock (2–5⇒4 • 6–10⇒6 • J/Q/K⇒8 • A⇒10). Diamonds are *codified outcomes*: play them to change position without a test.

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

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

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

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

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

2. **White squall**—dry snow, lost horizons.
 3. **Rasputitsa**—road becomes porridge; wheels are lies.
 4. **Remount sickness**—cough in the string; swaps get awkward.
 5. **Salt shortage**—meat spoils; tempers thin.
 6. **Hostage protocol** invoked; someone must sit the tent.
 7. **Feud spark**—a name spoken wrong reopens an old cut.
 8. **Grassfire** runs with the wind faster than horses.
 9. **Foedus recall**—treaty terms re-read; your papers disagree.
 10. **River break-up**—ice goes; ferries don’t.
- J **Raid shadow**—another banner follows at a patient distance.
- Q **Kurultai summons**—camps converge; travel becomes politics.
- K **Muster of the Wolf**—levy raised; every road a checkpoint.
- A **Sky omen**—three suns or none; routes rewrite themselves.

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

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

Quick Use Notes

Draw until you have all four suits: **Spades**=place, **Hearts**=actor, **Clubs**=pressure, **Diamonds**=leverage. Highest rank sets the main clock (2–5⇒4 • 6–10⇒6 • J/Q/K⇒8 • A⇒10). If any *A* appears, add a sky omen you can echo later (sun-dogs, silent thunder, a wind that runs beside the riders). When a **Diamond** is played, move the fiction—remounts appear, fords lower, banners part crowds—no roll.

24 Zakov — “Salt & Serpent” Generator

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

2. Salt-cracked wharf where the tide brings back what the law forgets.
3. Bone-yard beach—wrecks and corpses tangled in kelp and rope.
4. Smuggler’s Gate—an alley behind the Fish Market, always unlocked.
5. The Shallows—reef-ridden cut only the locals dare.
6. Dregs Quarter—shanties on stilts, boats tied to doorframes.
7. The Iron Pier—gangplank to the *Red Wake*, a corsair flagship.
8. Crow’s Roost—a tavern built into the hull of a beached galleon.
9. Black Bazaar—tents under tarps, goods that scream if you listen.
10. Salt Marsh Maze—only the lost know the way through.

J The Sunken Quarter—half the city is underwater at high tide.

Q The Crimson Docks—where contracts are signed in blood.

K The Anchorhead—a floating fortress of the Pirate Syndicate.

A The Serpent’s Spine—a reef pass that leads to the city’s secret heart.

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

2. Dock-rat pickpocket with a map tattoo and no fear.
3. Fence who deals in stolen names and secondhand loyalties.
4. Tavern-keeper who remembers every face—and sells the list.
5. Corsair lieutenant with a letter of marque signed in blood.
6. Dock-master who “loses” ships that owe the Syndicate.
7. Smuggler captain with a false manifest and a quicker blade.
8. Poison-tongue broker who trades secrets like coin.
9. Exiled admiral now running a black-market shipyard.

10. Pirate Queen of the Shallows—rules with charm and cutlass.

J The Silent Syndicate—no names, just favors and faces.

Q The Kraken’s Tongue—an oracle who speaks in riddles and tides.

K The Salt Prince—nominal ruler of Zakov, real power in the shadows.

A The Drowned Admiral—legend says they still give orders from the deep.

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

2. Tide turns early—your ship is now ashore on the wrong side.

3. Rival syndicate burns a warehouse—your goods inside.

4. Cursed cargo—something in the hold is *watching*.

5. Storm warning—ships flee, prices soar, lawmen vanish.

6. Double-cross—you’re holding a fake shipment and real enemies.

7. The Salt Prince’s Levy—every ship pays a tithe or gets sunk.

8. Plague ship—quarantine flags ignored, sickness spreads.

9. Blood feud erupts between two pirate crews—collateral damage.

10. The Kraken rises—reefs shift, ships vanish, sailors scream.

J A contract is voided—your protection means nothing now.

Q The Syndicate splits—Zakov becomes a warzone overnight.

K Naval blockade—no ships in or out without a fight.

A The tide forgets to return—half the city is cut off, drowning in secrets.

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

2. Smuggler’s token—pass one checkpoint unseen.

3. Forged manifest—your cargo is now “clean.”

4. Safe berth in the Bone-yard—no questions, no law.

5. Corsair’s charter—raid with impunity for one moon.

6. Salt Prince’s writ—levies can’t touch you (yet).

7. Black-market ledger—names, debts, and where they sleep.

8. Salvage rights on a named wreck—first claim, no questions.

9. Stolen lighthouse key—redirect ships where you will.

10. Syndicate debt-marker—you’re owed a favor.

J Pirate Queen’s blessing—safe passage through the Shallows.

Q Kraken’s favor—tides part for your ship, once.

K Salt Prince’s coin—bribe any official, silence any witness.

A The Serpent’s Mark—the reef itself will guide you home.

Quick Use Notes

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

24.1 NPC Generation Deck

In Fate’s Edge, every character should feel like a living, breathing person with their own desires, convictions, and contradictions. This NPC Generation Deck provides a quick yet meaningful way to create compelling non-player characters that will populate your world with depth and intrigue.

The deck is divided into four core categories that define the essential aspects of any character’s personality and motivation. Each category offers twelve distinct options, allowing you to draw one card from each suit to rapidly assemble a complete character profile. The combinations are designed to spark narrative possibilities and create characters who feel authentic rather than archetypal.

Ambition defines what the character actively seeks to achieve or obtain. This is their driving goal, the thing that motivates their current actions and decisions.

Belief represents the core principle or philosophy that guides their worldview. This is what they hold as fundamentally true about the world and their place in it.

Attitude describes how they present themselves and interact with others in their day-to-day behavior. This is their social mask and default approach to relationships.

Twist provides an element that contradicts or complicates the other three traits, creating internal conflict and narrative tension. This is where you’ll find the character’s hidden depths, unexpected vulnerabilities, or surprising contradictions that make them memorable.

When generating an NPC, draw one card from each category and consider how these elements interact with each other. The tension between a character’s public ambition and private beliefs, or the contrast between their surface attitude and hidden twist, will naturally suggest story hooks, potential conflicts, and opportunities for character development. This system ensures that even minor NPCs have the potential for complexity and narrative significance.

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

Table 24.1: NPC Generation Deck - Core Traits

25 Travel Reference

25.1 Core Travel Procedure

For each leg of a journey, draw 3–4 cards using the decks for your destination and controlling authority.

- Spade from the destination deck: sets the scene (place).
- Heart from the destination deck: introduces the local actor or faction.
- Club from the Wilds (general hazards) or destination (if strongly policed): brings pressure.
- Diamond from the authority that gates the route: papers, escorts, rights, or exceptions.

Set a travel clock by the highest rank:

- 2–5 \Rightarrow 4 segments
- 6–10 \Rightarrow 6 segments
- J/Q/K \Rightarrow 8 segments
- A \Rightarrow 10 segments

On success, advance to the next leg; on failure, mark delay, debt, or diversion and resolve a consequence in the fiction.

25.2 Mode Rules

25.2.1 Sea Legs

(Amaranthine/Dolmis/Aberderrin). If Theona or Valewood 9s show up anywhere in the seed, add an omission or taboo to the leg (a missing step, an unsaid name).

25.2.2 Passes Underways

(Aeler). Any A may convert a surface route to an under-route. Diamond from Aeler always codifies outcomes—no roll—for sealed doors, breath time, and escorted segments.

25.2.3 Rivers

Bridges, booms, and law in Ecktoria/Viterra; reed-mazes and bell-lines in Mistlands/Linn waters.

25.2.4 Frontier Blends

When origin and destination disagree on law, draw two Diamonds (one from each law) and choose which you will be judged by at the end of the leg.

25.3 Regional Routes

25.3.1 Amaranthine Coastway

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

- Draw Spade+Heart from the port you are entering.
- Draw Club from the Wilds (gales, quarantine, harbor booms).
- Draw Diamond from the port's deck (permits, berths), or Kahfagia if convoy/lantern law applies.

Note: Silkstrand is Acasia's sole metropolis and a major trading hub; even land caravans risk the marches to reach it.

25.3.2 Astroegro Straits

Thepyrgos controls the hinge between seas.

- Draw Spade+Heart and Club from Thepyrgos (stairs, boom, synod).
- Draw Diamond from Thepyrgos (harbor pass, crane allotment).
- Switch to Dolmis/Amaranthine modules once the boom is lowered.

25.3.3 Dolmis Circuits

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

- Spade+Heart from destination; Club from Linn or the Wilds; Diamond from Theona when island custom matters.

25.3.4 Aelerian Passes Underways

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

- Spade+Heart and Club from Aeler; Diamond from Aeler (Underway Pass, Key-Writ, Breath Time).

25.3.5 Shadow Corridors

Thin Shore (Valewood east coast): risky misted corridor north–south toward Zakov.

- Spade from Valewood, Heart from Mistlands (or Valewood), Club from Mistlands (wraiths, bell-line failures), Diamond from either Mistlands (Ward-salt, Lantern Writ) or Valewood (Way-cord, Truce-bough) depending on which law you invoke.
- Rule of 9s: any 9 in the seed adds an omission.

Green Gate hops (Aelinnel): tide-timed arches.

- Spade+Club from Aelinnel (tides, geasa), Diamond from Aelinnel (Tide-path Key, Host-rights).

25.3.6 River Roads

Belworth: forms the boundary between Vhasia and Viterra. Twin ports at the mouth (Marcott and Fairport); at mid-reach Tarlington Falls requires lift/portage up to the plateau town. The Lence joins here from Vhasia. Use Viterra for east-bank audits/bridges, Vhasia for west-bank politics.

Yloka: raids run down from the north into the Aberderrin and Dolmis—overlay Linn Clubs and draw destination for Spade+Heart.

Acasian rivers: hazardous but profitable approaches to Silkstrand; use Acasia Clubs (feuds/levies/curse) and Diamonds (condotta, bridge rights).

25.3.7 Steppe Frontiers (Violet Steppes & Meadows)

Ykrul ↔ Vilikari ↔ Ecktoria/Acasia borders.

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

25.4 Gateways Control Points

25.5 Special Rules & Taboos

25.5.1 Theona Valewood 9s

Whenever a 9 appears in a seed involving Theona or Valewood, add an omission: a missing step, an unsaid name, an unseen guest. If the 9 is a Diamond, you may break the taboo once—someone will come to collect.

25.5.2 Aeler Aces

An A can rewire routes beneath the mountains. You may swap your Spade to Aeler (keeping the other seed cards) and continue under-vault procedures.

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

25.5.3 Echoing Omens

Any A adds a motif you can echo later (ash on the wind, a bell heard underground, a landmark that returns elsewhere). Make the world feel like it remembers.

25.6 Worked Itineraries

25.6.1 West-to-East Coastal Haul (Kahfagia → Viterra)

Leg 1: Kassamira → Ecktoria

Seed: Ecktoria Spade (Aqueduct arcades), Ecktoria Heart (Coin-house factor), Wilds Club (gale), Kahfagia Diamond (convoy letter).

Clock: 6. Read: cross under coin-house eyes with convoy priority; bad weather strains schedules.

Leg 2: Ecktoria → Silkstrand

Seed: Acasia Spade (Three-Queens Bridge), Acasia Heart (Dyers' Guildmistress), Acasia Club (loom strike), Acasia Diamond (Exchange pass).

Clock: 6–8 depending on unrest.

Leg 3: Silkstrand → Marcott

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

Leg 4: Marcott → Fairport

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

Clock: 6.

25.6.2 Acasia → Mistlands (Forgotten Pass + Under-Gate)

Leg 1: Silkstrand → Aeler Gate

Seed: Aeler Spade (Avalanche gallery), Aeler Heart (Geometer), Aeler Club (Engineer requisition), Aeler Diamond (Underway Pass).

Leg 2: Gate → Mistlands

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

25.6.3 Thin Shore → Zakov Corridor**Leg 1: Payden's Port → Thin Shore**

Seed: Valewood Spade (Green lane), Mistlands Heart (Protectorate clerk), Mistlands Club (bell failure), Mistlands Diamond (Lantern writ).

Leg 2: Thin Shore transit

Seed: Valewood Spade (Unfound stile), Valewood Heart (Path-warden), Valewood Club (Sweet wind), Valewood Diamond (Way-cord).

Rule of 9s applies.

25.6.4 Frontier Mediation (Ykrul ↔ Vilikari)**Leg: Foedus Stone parley**

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

Blend: also draw a Ykrul Diamond (Paiza). Choose which law saves your schedule.

25.7 Pace, Clocks, and Consequences

- Road/river leg: 6-segment clock; +2 segments if crossing a law boundary (new passports, new prayers).
- Sea strait/mountain pass: 8-segment clock; −2 segments if you spend a Diamond that codifies priority (pilotage, pass, convoy).
- Shadow corridor: 6-segment clock; on any A, add a free omen to echo later.
- Failure defaults: delay (lose time; an enemy advances), diversion (alternate route; new Club), or debt (promise, fine, or favor owed to the authority that controls the gate).

26 Resource Management

26.1 Supply Clock

The Supply Clock is a shared condition for the entire party, representing food, water, and basic gear.

26.1.1 States

Full Supply (0 filled) The party is well-equipped.

Low Supply (2 filled) Minor narrative complications: bland food, damaged arrows, thinning waterskins.

Dangerously Low (3 filled) Each character gains Fatigue.

Out of Supply (4 filled) Severe penalties; starvation, dehydration, failing gear.

26.1.2 Filling the Clock

- Harsh travel or lost pack animals (GM fiat)
- GM spends 2+ Complication Points
- The party chooses to travel light for advantage

26.1.3 Emptying the Clock

- Reaching civilization resets to Full
- Foraging/hunting: group Survival check clears 1 segment
- Downtime in safety removes 1 segment

26.2 Fatigue

Fatigue represents exhaustion, hunger, and strain.

26.2.1 Effects

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

2 Fatigue Worn down. On each roll, re-roll one success.

3 Fatigue Failing fast. On each roll, re-roll two successes.

4 Fatigue Collapse/KO/Spiritual break. You fall out of the scene until treated or rescued.

26.2.2 Clearing Fatigue

A night's rest with adequate Supply removes 1 level. You cannot clear Fatigue if the party's Supply clock is Dangerously Low or Empty.

26.3 Gear Condition

Gear does not have hit points. It suffers only when drama demands it.

26.3.1 Compromised Items

- Introduced via Complication Points or narrative consequence
- A Compromised item gives -1 die on relevant rolls

26.3.2 Breaking Point

If a Compromised item suffers another setback, it breaks entirely.

26.3.3 Repair

Field Repair Temporary; Craft or Survival check removes penalty for one scene

Proper Repair Permanent; requires tools, materials, and downtime

26.4 Asset and Follower Management

26.4.1 Followers (On-Screen)

Cost Cap^2 XP

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

Cap 1-5 (5 is exceptional)

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

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

Off-Screen Capability Once per downtime, a Cap 5 follower can solve one significant problem but generates 1 CP for party. The GM must describe how the follower's action creates story consequences for the CP generated.

26.4.2 Follower Assist

- Assist dice come from the helper, not the leader.
- Total Assist on any roll (from any sources) remains hard-capped at +3. Exception: The "Exceptional Coordination" Talent allows one follower to provide +4 assist dice.
- Slot Limit: Only one follower may assist a given action.

26.4.3 Loyalty & Bonds (Optional)

- Track a simple Loyalty tag per follower: Wary / Steady / Devoted.
- Devoted followers can once per arc convert one GM Complication targeting them into a lesser setback.
- Wary followers cost +1 XP to Maintain.

26.4.4 Stress, Harm, & Loss (GM Tools)

- **Pin:** The follower is separated/boxed out.
- **Wound:** The follower is Injured: until treated off-screen, their Cap counts as 1 lower.
- **Burn:** Mark Neglected immediately.
- **Seize:** Escalate to Compromised.
- **PC Choice Lever:** The GM should offer the player a save.

26.4.5 Off-Screen Assets

Minor (4 XP) Safehouse, small charter

Standard (8 XP) Noble title, guild section, spy ring

Major (12 XP) City license, regional network

26.4.6 Asset Activations

- **Off-Screen Activation:** A player may activate an off-screen asset at the very start of a campaign or during Downtime. It costs 1 Boon or 2 XP to activate.
- **Off-Screen Effects:** Use each Asset's listed Off-Screen effect once per session for free.
- **On-Screen Activations:** To reshape the current scene, spend 1 Boon.
- **Plausibility Test:** The Asset must have scope and reach.

26.4.7 Condition Tracks

Maintained Full capability; no penalties

Neglected -1 die when used (assist or leverage). Narratively: slower, sullen, short-staffed

Compromised Unavailable. Narratively: captured, burned, seized, defected

26.4.8 Maintenance and Repair

- After a story arc or 2-3 sessions of heavy use, the GM may flag the resource as at risk
- To keep it Maintained, the player must either:
 - Spend downtime repairing/servicing it, or
 - Pay XP immediately (representing replacement parts, masterwork upkeep)
 - If neglected, the gear becomes Compromised (-1 die penalty) and may eventually break
 - Superior and Artifact gear do not require upkeep, but if Compromised through Complications, only narrative quests can repair them

26.4.9 Bond-Driven Resource Generation

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

Requirements:

- **Mutual Bond:** Player shares a bond with the ally they're aiding
- **Intricate Description:** Player describes how their bond motivates their action
- **Significant Aid:** Meaningful assistance (not just +1 die)
- **Fiction First:** The bond must genuinely drive the choice to help

Examples:

- "Remembering how they saved me before, I throw myself in front of the attack meant for them!"
- "Thinking of our shared past, I use my last resource to shield them from harm."
- "Drawing on our mutual experiences, I rally others to keep fighting alongside them."

Limitations:

- Once per bond per session
- Must be a meaningful sacrifice or risk
- GM approval for "significant action"
- Cannot be used for basic assistance rolls

26.5 Over-Stack

- Structural advantages: active buff/tag, favorable venue/pennant, Follower Initiative unused, on-screen Asset activation, opponent disadvantaged by fiction, ritual prep that applies now.
- Trigger: If the party enters a scene with 3 structural advantages, apply Over-Stack once for that scene: either start one named rail at +1 or the GM banks +1 CP for the first Deck Twist.

27 Character Advancement

27.1 Player Archetypes

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

27.1.1 The Solo

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

Typical XP Spread 70–90% Self; 0–10% On-screen help; 0–20% Off-screen.

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

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

27.1.2 The Mixed Player

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

Typical XP Spread 50–65% Self; 15–25% On-screen help; 15–25% Off-screen.

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

Risks Upkeep pressure; helper can be targeted when the GM spends 2+ Complication Points.

27.1.3 The Mastermind

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

Typical XP Spread 25–40% Self; 35–55% On-screen help; 20–40% Off-screen.

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

Risks Dependency on assist lanes; followers can be endangered on 2+ Complication Point spends; upkeep pressure.

27.2 XP Costs

27.2.1 Attributes and Skills

Attributes New rating \times 3 XP

Skills New level \times 2 XP

Followers (On-Screen) Cap² XP

27.2.2 Off-Screen Assets

Minor 4 XP

Standard 8 XP

Major 12 XP

27.3 Tiers of Reputation

Though there are no levels, XP spent creates soft "tiers" that shape world response:

Tier I – Rookie (0–40 XP): Local reputation; prestige locked.

Tier II – Seasoned (41–90): Regional notice; prestige abilities may be unlocked.

Tier III – Veteran (91–150): National influence; second follower slot suggested.

Tier IV – Paragon (151–220): Movers and shakers; rivals emerge to challenge.

Tier V – Mythic (221+): Legendary status; kingdoms and cults respond.

27.4 Prestige Abilities

27.4.1 General Talents

- **Battle Instincts** (Cost: 6 XP): Once per scene, re-roll a failed defense roll.
- **Silver Tongue** (Cost: 4 XP): Gain +1 die when persuading or deceiving through speech.
- **Iron Stomach** (Cost: 3 XP): Immune to mundane poisons and spoiled food; halve Complications from toxic sources.
- **Exceptional Coordination** (Cost: 8 XP): One follower can provide +4 assist dice.

27.4.2 Racial or Cultural Talents

- **Stone-Sense** (Dwarves, Cost: 5 XP): Detect flaws in stone or earth; gain +1 die on Engineering or Craft rolls underground.
- **Backlash Soothing** (Wood Elves, Cost: 6 XP): Once per session, reduce a magical Backlash Complication by 2 points when in natural terrain.
- **Blood Memory** (Ykrul, Cost: 5 XP): After a battle, meditate to gain one temporary Skill die reflecting a foe's tactics for the next scene.

27.4.3 Prestige Abilities

- **Echo-Walker's Step** (High Elf, Cost: 20 XP; Req: Wits 5, Arcana 4): 1/arc, *observe* a perfect echo of a past event at your location (no retconning). GM immediately banks +2 CP; scenes touching that memory carry an omen. Grants DV 1 on one action that uses the revealed truth.
- **Warglord** (Ykrul, Cost: 18 XP; Req: Body 5, Command 3): Once per campaign, unify scattered warbands into a single host for a season. Start a *Logistics* clock and a *Grudge* clock; either one filling fractures the host.
- **Spirit-Shield** (Aeler, Cost: 15 XP; Req: Spirit 4, Insight 3): 1/session, erase up to 3 CP from an ally's *current* roll; you immediately mark Fatigue +1 and the GM banks +1 CP as backlash.

27.5 Cultural Talent Examples

27.5.1 Humans

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

Guild Ties (7 XP, Presence 2+) Call in favors from a guild or order once per session.

Banner-Bearer (15 XP, Presence 4+, Leadership 3) Inspire an allied unit: once per battle, erase 2 Complications for the group.

27.5.2 Dwarves (Aeler)

Stone-Sense (5 XP, Dwarf only) Detect flaws in stone; +1 die to underground Craft/Engineering rolls.

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

Forge-Patriarch (18 XP, Body 4+, Craft 4) Found a forge-citadel; gain loyal smiths and engineers who count as On-Screen specialists (Cap 5).

27.5.3 Wood Elves

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

Ranger's Step (9 XP, Wits 3+, Stealth 2) Move unseen in forests; treat terrain penalties as one step lower.

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

27.5.4 High Elves

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

Weave Anchor (8 XP, Wits 3+, Arcana 3) Reduce magical Backlash by 1 when casting Intricate spells.

Echo-Walker's Step (20 XP, High Elf only; Wits 5, Arcana 4) Step briefly into the Ways Between; once per arc, turn a Complication into a boon.

27.5.5 Ykrul

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

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

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

28 Magic System

28.1 Design Philosophy

Magic in Fate's Edge is not a tool of convenience but a dangerous negotiation with the fabric of reality. It is powerful, flexible, and transformative—yet every attempt to shape it carries risk. The dice never merely ask "does it work?" but always whisper "what is the cost?"

28.2 The Nature of Magic

- **Volatile by Design:** Magic is not fully understood, even by its most adept practitioners. Every working pushes against boundaries that resist being bent.
- **Risk Embodied:** Each spell generates Complication Points. These points do not vanish; they manifest as Backlash, unpredictable consequences that ripple outward.
- **Narrative Weight:** Casting is always a story moment. Even a "successful" spell alters the scene in ways the caster did not intend.
- **Thematic Consequence:** Backlash is not arbitrary; it aligns with the opposing or uncontrolled element of the Art invoked (flame flares out of control, shadows linger too long, storms roll beyond command).

28.3 The Eight Elements of Magic

The fundamental metaphysical system that underlies all magical practice in Fate's Edge divides magic into eight distinct elements, each with its own nature and resonance.

28.3.1 Physical Elements

Earth

Nature: Solidity, stability, foundation

Domain: Stone, soil, metal, structure

Manifestation: Shaping, sensing, moving earth and stone

Backlash Theme: Rigidity, collapse, awakening

Fire

Nature: Energy, transformation, destruction

Domain: Flame, heat, light, change

Manifestation: Ignition, heating, burning, purifying

Backlash Theme: Uncontrolled spread, scorching, consuming

Air

Nature: Movement, speed, freedom

Domain: Breath, sound, motion, flight

Manifestation: Moving objects, creating drafts, amplifying sound

Backlash Theme: Whipping, dispersal, loss of control

Water

Nature: Fluidity, healing, adaptability

Domain: Liquids, tides, rain, flow

Manifestation: Calming, directing, purifying water

Backlash Theme: Stagnation, flooding, contamination

28.3.2 Metaphysical Elements

Fate

Nature: Destiny, inevitability, long-term consequences

Domain: Time, prophecy, causality, *anti-magic*

Manifestation: Seeing future threads, influencing destiny, sealing oaths

Backlash Theme: Paradox, temporal loops, unintended consequences

Life

Nature: Vitality, creation, spark of existence

Domain: Health, growth, repair, birth

Manifestation: Healing, growth, vitality enhancement

Backlash Theme: Overgrowth, fever, untidy healing

Luck (Fortune)

Nature: Chance, unpredictability, probability

Domain: Randomness, breaks, windfalls

Manifestation: Influencing chance, creating opportunities

Backlash Theme: Side-coincidence, misfire elsewhere, ironic reversals

Death/Dreams (Obishaal)

Nature: Endings, thresholds, subconscious, *Ways Between*

Domain: Sleep, death, spirits, doorways

Manifestation: Communication with the dead, dream manipulation, passage

Backlash Theme: Hauntings, nightmares, thin walls, threshold opens

28.4 Magical Arts and Personal Expression

Your *Art* is the narrative method by which your **Weave** and **Cast** work (sigils, sung names, lantern-law, bone charms, contracts, salt-thread, etc.).

28.4.1 Declaring an Art

When you gain **Arcane Initiate**, write a one–two line **Art** describing:

- **Gesture & medium** (ink, chord, breath, light, bone, law).
- **Typical Elements** you lean on (pick 2 you're often aligned to).

28.4.2 Art in Play

- **Spotlight bump (1/scene)**: if your Art is *clearly honored in fiction* (right tools/time/setting), gain +1 die on your **Cast**. This counts toward the +3 dice cap.
- **Off-style strain**: if you're forced to work wildly *against* your Art (no tools, hostile locus), the GM may set a worse **Position** or require you to accept extra **Backlash** choices on a Partial.

28.4.3 Examples

- *Sealwright's Chant* — lantern, chain, chalk; Elements: Earth/Fire; *I sing hinges into hearing.*
- *Salt-Thread Scribe* — salt, silk, breath; Elements: Water/Luck; *Knots remember routes and debts.*
- *Name-Caller* — true names, oaths, bells; Elements: Fate/Air; *Words stand up when I say them.*

28.5 Casting Procedure

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

28.5.1 Channel

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

28.5.2 Weave

On the following turn, the caster rolls Wits + (Art) to shape Potential into a defined effect. The Description Ladder applies: Basic/Detailed/Intricate descriptions reduce or redirect Complication Points.

28.5.3 Backlash

Complication Points spent by the GM manifest as uncontrolled consequences. These are thematic to the Art and scale with the number of points spent: minor nuisances at low levels, dangerous disasters at high levels.

Mitigation: Boons do not reduce CP unless a Talent/Asset explicitly says "Mitigate CP."

28.6 Freeform Spellcasting

Use this flow for improvised magic:

1. **Declare:** Describe your Weave and name 1–2 Elements that color it.
2. **Set DV:** GM sets by scope and situation (see DV Guidance table).
3. **Roll Weave:** Wits + Art; 6+ = success, 1 = CP.
4. **Apply Outcome:** Use standard Outcome Matrix.
5. **Backlash:** On Partial/Miss (or two 1s on a Hit), color the cost by chosen Element or its opposite.

28.6.1 DV Guidance

DV 2	Small/local	One target, Near band, short veil, fragile barrier, simple shove/cleanse. Aligned Realm/tools may bump Effect to <i>Standard</i> .
DV 3	Scene-scale	Small zone multi-target, sturdy barrier [2/4], move one band, strong veil/reveal, oath ping. Opposed Realm may drop Effect to <i>Limited</i> .
DV 4	Big swing	Zone control, Far reach, complex transport, high-quality ward, reshape Position broadly. Expect backlash if rushed.
DV 5+	Set-piece/ritual	Battlefield rewriting, clause-level edits of reality, defying entrenched wards. Wants prep, aids, or locus.

28.6.2 Backlash by Element

- **Earth** → rubble, pin, heavy footing; **vs Air** → sound carries, you're exposed.
- **Fire** → burns, flares, unwanted attention; **vs Water** → slick, shorted gear, sodden scrolls.
- **Air** → scatter, drop, vertigo; **vs Earth** → stuck, cramped, dust choke.
- **Water** → leak, flood, cold drag; **vs Fire** → smoke, sputter, dim.
- **Fate** → options close, "only one way"; **vs Luck** → mischance hits an ally.
- **Luck** → side-effect elsewhere, fragile success; **vs Fate** → your gambit snaps to a fixed, harsher outcome.

- **Life** → overgrowth, fever, hungry repair; **vs Death/Dreams** → numbness, sleep-tug, a door opens.
- **Death/Dreams** → fade, echo, threshold opens/closes; **vs Life** → pain returns, rot sets in, breath drags.

28.7 Ritual Casting (Optional Rule)

- **Ritual Helper Cap:** You may draw on $\text{ceil}(\text{Arcana}/2)$ helpers (max 3).
- **Procedure:**
 1. Declare the Ritual.
 2. Channel Together.
 3. Weave.
 4. Backlash.
- **Relevant skills:** Helpers may use different relevant skills if their procedure is fictionally distinct.
- **CP distribution:** CP from Channel resolves on that roller. CP from Weave is assigned to the primary caster.

28.8 Rites (Pact Magic)

Rites are precise, named effects granted by powerful Patrons. This framework keeps play fast and consistent.

28.8.1 Becoming an Acolyte

- Choose **one** or **two Patrons**. (Two is allowed; see *Cross-Patron Interference*.)
- Start with **2 Low** and **1 Standard** Rite total (split across your Patrons as you wish).
- Track an **Obligation ledger** *per Patron* (segments of debt accrued through use).

28.8.2 Using a Rite

Unless a Rite says otherwise:

1. **Invoke (1 action).** Speak the name, draw the sign, or employ the proper tool. If a roll is required, the GM sets **DV by fiction** (typical scene DV 2–4).
2. **Mark Obligation.** Invoking a Rite usually marks **+1 segment** to that Patron's ledger (some Low rites may be free at GM discretion).
3. **Push It (optional).** Amplify the effect; mark **+1 Obligation**. A given Rite may be Pushed at most **once per scene**.
4. **Backlash (on a 1 or Miss).** The GM inflicts a fitting consequence *or* marks **+1 Obligation**.

28.8.3 Stacking & Caps

- **Same-source scene buffs do not stack.** Take the best version; others are suppressed.
- A **single Rite** can add at most **+3 Obligation segments per scene** *from that Rite* (Invoke + Push + possible Backlash).

28.8.4 Cross-Patron Interference

If you **switch Patrons in the same scene** (e.g., after using Gate, you Invoke Ikasha):

- Immediately mark **+1 Obligation** to the second Patron (jealous attention).
- The GM may color the next moment with minor interference (audible hum, flicker, bystander notice).
- Each further *switch* that scene marks **+1** again.

28.8.5 Clearing Obligation

Between scenes or in downtime, you may clear **1–2 segments** per Patron by:

- **Service** fitting the Patron (tend hinges for the Gate, keep sanctioned watch for the Oath, etc.), or
- Spending **1–2 Boons** to represent offerings, favors, or perfect observance.

At **+3/+6/+9** total segments, foreshadow manifestations (omens, auditors, bailiffs) as your table prefers.

28.8.6 Tags

Rites may include SRD tags such as [WARD], [BANISH], [UNWARD]. **Tags only function when printed on a specific Talent, Ability, or as the result of a Spell.** For Outsiders, use the unified DV/Leash rules.

28.9 Two Sample Patrons

28.9.1 The Sealed Gate — Boundaries, Jurisdiction, Closure

You write borders into the world and prosecute trespass.

Low Rites.

Seal the Threshold. Draw a brief sign across a door/line. Enemies crossing suffer worsened position or stumble. *Invoke:* +1 Obl. *Push:* strengthen the edge (e.g., treat as difficult terrain) (+1 Obl).

Key's Rebuke. Snap a spectral hasp at a reaching hand or tool; stagger or disarm for a beat. *Invoke:* +1 Obl.

Standard Rites.

Circle of Denial [WARD] (affects Outsiders). Mark a ring or arc; Outsiders that *cross* must test *Cross the Ward* (DV = Cap). *Hit*: cross and +DV to Leash; *Partial*: cross and +1; *Miss*: fail to cross this beat. *Invoke*: +1 Obl. *Push*: fortify the circle (+1 Obl).

Writ of Passage. Name one path as *permitted*; allies on that route gain improved position/flow. *Invoke*: +1 Obl. *Push*: extend to one extra ally or carry across one obstacle (+1 Obl).

High Rites.

Banishment Knot [BANISH] (Outsider). Cast out a named Outsider at Near. DV = Cap. *Hit*: +DV to Leash (often filling); *Partial*: +1. *Invoke*: +1–2 Obl (table preference). *Push*: strip one tether/anchor (+1 Obl).

28.9.2 Ikasha — Shadow, Latent Potential, Penumbra

You bank what might happen and cash it when the light looks away.

Low Rites.

Borrowed Shade. Cool or deepen existing dim; allies acting within gain improved position until violence occurs there. *Invoke*: +1 Obl.

Mark of Penumbra. Tag a place/object with a small shadow-glyph; later, blur sound or slip attention at that mark once. *Invoke*: +1 Obl. *Push*: extend the tell-skip to one ally (+1 Obl).

Standard Rites.

Umbra Thread. Tether two shadows you can see; once this scene, you or a willing ally traverse between them as a single Move. *Invoke*: +1 Obl. *Push*: allow one additional traverse or longer reach (+1 Obl).

Deferred Answer. Bank one pointed question/command aimed at you; until you answer, you resist pins and scans more easily. When you cash it, answer honestly or accept a complication. *Invoke*: +1 Obl.

High Rite.

Eclipse Clause [WARD] (affects Outsiders). For one scene, an area is penumbral; ranged targeting beyond Near is impaired; shadow-to-shadow movement is improved. Outsiders crossing the edge use the unified [WARD] crossing (DV = Cap; *Hit* +DV Leash, *Partial* +1). *Invoke*: +2 Obl. *Push*: harden the border for one beat (+1 Obl).

28.10 Pact-Whisperer — Standalone Summoning

Call a spirit fast; bind it with a tiny leash; keep play fiction-first.

28.10.1 Core Procedure

1. **Call (1 action):** A spirit manifests at **Near**. Pick a **Spirit Template**.
2. **Bind (no extra roll):** choose one: spend 1 **Boon** *or* mark 1 **Fatigue**.
3. **Leash (lives on the spirit):** set **Leash** = **Cap** + 2 segments.
Cap 1 → [3] Cap 3 → [5]
4. **Tick Leash** (no rolls) when any happen: the spirit **takes harm**; you **command against its nature**; you **split focus** (you take another significant action while it acts on your order); a rival **contests** it; it **moves from Close to Far**. Crossing a [WARD] uses the rules under §??.
5. **When the Leash fills:** the spirit **acts to its nature once**, then **departs**.

Action economy. Issuing a meaningful command uses **your action**.

Limit: one active spirit at a time (you may Call again after departure).

Downtime: all summons **depart at downtime** unless an ability explicitly says otherwise.

Boon Finesse Once per round, you may spend 1 **Boon** to **clear 1 tick** from your current spirit's Leash. You cannot use this after the Leash has already filled.

Talent gates.

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

28.11 Outsiders (Definition & Caps)

Outsider: any being **not native** to this world/setting—e.g., summoned entities, demons, extraplanar creatures, spirits, some celestials, and similar arrivals-from-beyond.

Cap (for Outsiders).

- **PC-summoned Outsiders:** Cap is set by the summoner's talent (Lesser = **Cap 1**, Greater = **Cap 3**).
- **World/NPC Outsiders:** the stat block lists Cap; if absent, the GM assigns: Lesser = 1, Greater = 3, Elder = 5 (rare).

28.12 Tags for Talents, Abilities, and Spell Results

Tags apply only when printed on a specific *Talent*, *Ability*, or as the *result of a Spell*. They do nothing on their own. Spells are accessible but **risky**; Talents/Abilities provide safer, repeatable access.

28.12.1 [WARD]

Creates a magical **edge/circle/zone** that **challenges Outsiders** (or other targets if the text explicitly says so).

Crossing a [WARD] (when it affects Outsiders).

- Roll a suitable pool (table choice, e.g., Spirit+Lore, Resolve+Lore, Presence+Command).
- **DV = target's Cap.**
- **On a Hit:** the Outsider **crosses** and its **Leash gains +DV segments** (i.e., +Cap).
- **On a Partial:** the Outsider **crosses** and its **Leash gains +1 segment**.
- **On a Miss:** it **fails to cross** this beat.

Non-summoned Outsider. If it has no Leash, create a **temporary Exit Tally = Cap + 2** the first time it is affected; treat Leash gains as ticks on that tally; when filled, it departs after a brief "acts to nature" beat.

Scope. Ward shape, duration, materials, and any advantage/disadvantage are defined by the source Talent/Ability or Spell. **DV for crossing is always the target's Cap.**

Wards can affect anything, but the ability must **explicitly state** what they affect; the unified DV/Leash math in this section applies only when the target is an **Outsider**.

[UNWARD] to remove. Only an ability with **[UNWARD]** (or an explicit counter named in the Ward's text) can dismiss a Ward.

28.12.2 [BANISH]

Drives a visible **Outsider** toward departure.

- Target a visible Outsider in range; roll the pool the source lists.
- **DV = target's Cap.**
- **On a Hit:** add **+DV segments** to its **Leash** (or Exit Tally).
- **On a Partial:** add **+1 segment**.
- **On a Miss:** no effect.

If this fills the Leash/Tally, resolve a brief "acts to nature" beat, then the Outsider departs.

28.12.3 [UNWARD]

Unmakes or suppresses a **[WARD]** created by a Talent/Ability or as the result of a Spell.

- **DV:** by fiction (materials, sanctity, prep, locus, opposition).
- **On a Hit:** Ward dismissed/suppressed per text.
- **On a Partial:** weakened or suppressed briefly (about one beat), per GM call.
- **On a Miss:** no effect.

28.13 One-Glance Summary

- **Outsider** = not native (summoned, demons, extraplanar, spirits, some celestials).
- **Unified DV/impact for Outsiders:** [WARD] crossing and [BANISH] use **DV = Cap; Hit** → +DV Leash segments; **Partial** → +1.
- **Leash** lives on summoned spirits (**Cap** + **2** segments). Non-summoned Outsiders get a temporary **Exit Tally = Cap + 2** when first affected.
- **Boon Finesse is core:** once per round, spend 1 Boon to clear 1 Leash tick.
- **Gates:** Tags apply only when printed on a **Talent**, **Ability**, or as the **result of a Spell** and cannot be applied with just an action.
- **Summons depart at downtime** unless stated otherwise.

28.14 The Caster's Burden

Magicians are defined not by what they can do, but by what they are willing to risk. A cautious spellcaster describes carefully, invests in detailed actions, and may survive long. A reckless one courts power at great personal and narrative cost. Both choices shape the story.

28.15 Backlash Severity Table

1–2 CP Minor nuisance or tell; short-lived cost, noise, or reveal.

3–4 CP Noticeable setback: a real hazard, condition, or new pressure clock.

5+ CP Major turn: scene shifts, a new foe/clock enters, or severe condition.

28.16 Global Guardrails

- Duration defaults: buffs 3 beats; areas 1 beat. Sustaining costs 1 Fatigue/beat.
- Stacking: same-Art buffs do not stack; take the best one.
- Diamond line: spells cannot create Diamonds; only position/effect/rails/clock movement.
- Over-Stack: any standing spell advantage counts toward Over-Stack when the party enters a scene with multiple structural edges.

28.17 Deck-Based Spell Seed Generator

When improvising, draw 2–3 cards. Use the suit to pick an Art, rank to set DV and a scope tweak. Face cards add a quirk; Aces add a price.

28.17.1 Suit Arts

♥ Vitalism / Hydromancy: life, vigor, calm, flow, restoration

♣ Geomancy / Discipline: stone, structure, weight, binding

♦ Pyromancy / Transformation: heat, light, change, urgency

♠ Umbramancy / Veil: shadow, silence, misdirection, fear

28.17.2 Rank → DV & Scope

- 2–4: DV 1 (self or tiny area; 1 target; 1 beat sense/edge)
- 5–9: DV 2 (small zone ~10 ft; team-sized buff; 1 rail tick)
- 10, J, Q, K: DV 3 (loud, group-facing, or multi-rail influence)
- Ace: DV 3 + price (component, Fatigue 1, Harm 1, or an Obvious flare)

28.17.3 Face-card Quirks

J Brief mobility or reach boost (leap, glide, slip)

Q Social resonance (hush, awe, dread)

K Durability/impact bump (+1 effect on one hard task)

28.17.4 Backlash Prompts by Suit

♥ (**Vitalism/Water**) overgrowth, exhaustion, stagnation, sympathetic drain

♣ (**Stone/Discipline**) rigidity, slow, echoing calls, guardians notice

♦ (**Fire/Change**) flare, scorch, noise, uncontrolled spread

♠ (**Shadow/Veil**) whispers, self-blindness, cold spots, entities take interest

28.17.5 Generated Example

Drawn: ♦ 10, ♠ J

Name: Ember-Stride (Pyromancy). DV: 3.

Effect: For 1 beat, you dash through a chokepoint with start Controlled and +1 effect on clears; leaves a hot shimmer that Hazard –1 as pursuers hesitate. Obvious.

Backlash: 1–2 CP singe/heat-haze reveals route; 3–4 CP smolder opens a Fire(4) clock; 5+ CP flare alarms watchers (start Crowd +1 and Hunt +1).

28.18 Play Examples

28.18.1 Example 1: Combat Casting

Situation: Lyra the Pyromancer faces bandits in a narrow alley. Channel Phase: Lyra rolls Wits + Arcana (5 dice): 8, 6, 4, 1, 1 = 3 successes, 2 CP GM spends 1 CP: A nearby barrel starts to smolder (minor environmental hazard) Weave Phase: Next round, Lyra Weaves Cinder-Fist with Detailed description (re-rolls 1s): Wits + Pyromancy (5 dice): 9, 7, 5, 3, 6 = 4 successes Effect: Her flaming fist grants +1 effect on melee attacks for 3 beats GM spends remaining 1 CP: The smoldering barrel bursts into flame, creating a small Fire(4) clock as a hazard

28.18.2 Example 2: Utility Casting

Situation: Theron the Geomancer needs to sense what lies beneath a suspicious floor. Channel Phase: Theron rolls Wits + Arcana (4 dice): 10, 6, 1, 1 = 2 successes, 2 CP GM spends 2 CP: The stone whispers of ancient pain, imposing a brief distraction (−1 die on next action) Weave Phase: Theron Weaves Stone-Sense with Intricate description (re-rolls all 1s and adds flourish): Wits + Geomancy (4 dice): 7, 5, 4, 3 = 3 successes Effect: He senses a hidden chamber beneath, granting Controlled position for accessing it

28.18.3 Example 3: High-Stakes Ritual

Situation: The party needs to heal a critically wounded ally during a siege. Channel Phase: Elena rolls Wits + Arcana (6 dice): 9, 8, 6, 4, 1, 1 = 4 successes, 2 CP GM spends 1 CP: The life force drawn causes nearby plants to wither Weave Phase: Elena Weaves Mend Flesh with Detailed description: Wits + Vitalism (6 dice): 10, 7, 5, 3, 2, 1 = 4 successes, 1 CP Effect: She steps down the ally's Severe injury to Moderate GM spends remaining CP: The life drawn from surroundings creates an unsettling stillness—small creatures flee the area, and an ominous quiet falls over the battlefield

29 Combat and Conflict

29.1 Core Philosophy

Combat is violent conflict resolved through the standard consequence mechanics. Every combat action generates potential for both triumph and complication, with consequences that cascade through the same economy as all other challenges.

29.1.1 Resolution Procedure

1. **Declare Action:** Player states intent and approach (Attribute + Skill)
2. **Set Position:** GM sets Controlled, Risky, or Desperate based on tactical situation
3. **Roll Dice:** Roll pool = Attribute + Skill (takes 1 Player Turn)
4. **Count Results:** 6+ = Success, 1 = Complication Point (CP)
5. **Apply Outcome:** Use standard Outcome Matrix
6. **Manage Consequences:** GM spends CP or draws from Consequences Deck

29.2 Position States

Controlled Advantageous position, minor consequences (flanking, higher ground, surprised foe)

Risky Even odds, moderate consequences (evenly matched, contested terrain)

Desperate Disadvantaged, severe consequences (outnumbered, wounded, poor positioning)

29.3 Combat-Specific Consequence Types

Hearts Morale, fear, command/control breakdown, psychological pressure

Spades Physical harm, positioning changes, weapon status, tactical wounds

Clubs Resource depletion, gear damage, fatigue, ammunition/supply issues

Diamonds Environmental hazards, reinforcements, tactical setbacks, terrain changes

29.4 Harm Integration

Harm tracks directly tie to CP economy:

Minor (-) Generate 1 CP on next 2 rolls

Moderate (=) Generate 1 CP on next roll, -1 die to relevant actions

Severe () Generate 2 CP on next roll, -2 dice to relevant actions

Critical (†) Generate 3 CP on next roll, out of action until treated

29.5 Tactical Clocks

Persistent combat conditions are tracked through clocks:

- **Mob Overwhelm (6):** Enemy numbers become advantage
- **Fatigue Spiral (4):** Exhaustion affects performance
- **Morale Collapse (6):** Fear undermines effectiveness
- **Environmental Collapse (8):** Terrain/fire/building failure

29.6 Position Dynamics

Position can shift during combat based on CP spending:

- **1 CP:** Shift position one step (GM choice)
- **Player Spending:** 1 CP to improve position one step
- **Narrative Triggers:** Flanking, reinforcement arrival, environmental changes

29.7 Magic Combat Integration

Spellcasting in combat feeds the same consequence economy:

- **Channel/Weave Backlash** CP applies to tactical situation
- **Spells** can shift position, create tactical clocks, or generate combat consequences
- **Magic consequences** cascade through existing combat systems

29.8 Asset/Follower Combat Integration

- **Follower Risk:** 2+ CP spent in combat can endanger assisting followers
- **Asset Compromise:** Combat in certain locations can damage relevant assets
- **Offensive Activation:** 1 Boon activates asset for combat advantage
- **Initiative Actions:** Followers can take combat-relevant independent actions

29.9 Outcome Matrix Application

Same as standard resolution, but consequences are combat-specific:

Clean Success Intent achieved with no tactical complications

Success & Cost Intent achieved, but GM spends CP for combat consequences

Partial Progress with tactical fork (accept cost OR concede ground)

Miss No progress; GM spends CP for combat consequences. Award one Boon.

29.10 Social Conflict

29.10.1 Persuasion and Influence

Social conflicts use the same core mechanics but with different skills:

- Sway for negotiation and formal discourse
- Deception for lies, misdirection, and manipulation
- Performance for oratory, entertainment, and emotional appeal
- Insight for reading opponents and detecting deception

29.10.2 Social Position

Controlled You have leverage, information, or social advantage

Risky Even social ground; standard interaction

Desperate You're at a disadvantage; opponent has leverage

29.10.3 Social Consequences

Complication Points in social conflicts might manifest as:

- Rumors spread that harm reputation
- Allies become suspicious or hostile
- Obligations or concessions must be made
- Social standing or access is compromised

29.11 Mass Combat Rules

29.11.1 Army Scale Combat Framework

In Fate's Edge, armies are treated as specialized followers with unique capabilities and limitations. This framework allows for engaging mass combat without overwhelming complexity.

Army as Cap 5 Followers

Army Type	Specialties	Capabilities
Infantry Regiment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melee Combat • Formation Fighting • Siege Operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • +5 dice to melee actions • Can assault fortifications • Provides +2 dice to allied melee actions
Cavalry Squadron	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mounted Combat • Rapid Movement • Flanking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • +5 dice to mounted actions • Can reposition freely • Provides +2 dice to flanking actions
Archery Corps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ranged Combat • Area Suppression • Defensive Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • +5 dice to ranged actions • Can target multiple enemies • Provides +2 dice to defensive actions
Siege Engineers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Siegecraft • Engineering • Construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • +5 dice to siege actions • Can build fortifications • Provides +2 dice to engineering actions

29.11.2 War Clocks System

Large-scale conflicts are tracked through persistent war-level clocks that represent ongoing conditions and pressures.

Supply Lines Clock (8 segments)

Tracks the flow of resources to the army:

- **0-2 segments:** Adequate supply, no penalties
- **3-5 segments:** Stretched supply lines, -1 die to all actions

- **6-7 segments:** Critical shortages, -2 dice to all actions, Fatigue 1 per day
- **8 segments:** Supply collapse, army becomes ineffective, begins retreat

Advancement Triggers:

- Enemy raids on supply convoys (+1)
- Extended campaign duration (+1 per week)
- Difficult terrain or weather (+1)
- Political interference (+1)

Morale Clock (6 segments)

Tracks troop effectiveness and willingness to fight:

- **0-1 segments:** High morale, +1 die to all actions
- **2-3 segments:** Standard morale, no modifiers
- **4-5 segments:** Low morale, -1 die to all actions, desertion risk
- **6 segments:** Collapse, army routs or surrenders

Advancement Triggers:

- Heavy casualties (+1)
- Loss of key leaders (+1)
- Defeat in battle (+2)
- Extended combat without rest (+1 per week)

Strategic Position Clock (8 segments)

Tracks control of key locations and tactical advantages:

- **0-2 segments:** Superior position, +1 die to all actions
- **3-5 segments:** Balanced position, no modifiers
- **6-7 segments:** Disadvantaged position, -1 die to all actions
- **8 segments:** Strategic collapse, forced retreat or surrender

Advancement Triggers:

- Loss of key fortifications (+2)
- Enemy control of supply routes (+1)
- Superior enemy numbers (+1)
- Failed tactical maneuvers (+1)

29.11.3 Command Actions and Leadership

Lead Action for Armies

Requirements: Presence + Command skill, appropriate position

Effect: Coordinate up to three army units for a combined action:

- **Controlled Position:** All units gain +1 die, one unit can act as Cap 6
- **Risky Position:** All units act normally, one unit can act as Cap 5
- **Desperate Position:** All units act at -1 die, one unit can act as Cap 4

Complications:

- 1-2 CP: Communication breakdown, one unit acts independently
- 3-4 CP: Command structure compromised, -1 die to all units next player turn
- 5+ CP: Complete command collapse, all units act independently with -2 dice

Tactical Maneuvers

Maneuver	Requirements and Effects
Flanking Attack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires cavalry or mobile infantry • Successful opposed roll (Wits + Tactics vs. opponent's Wits + Tactics) • Success: Enemy position shifts from Controlled to Risky, or Risky to Desperate • Complications: Units become exposed, -1 die to defensive actions
Defensive Formation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires disciplined infantry • Successful opposed roll (Wits + Tactics vs. opponent's Wits + Tactics) • Success: Allied units gain start Controlled for defensive actions, +1 die to defense • Complications: Reduced mobility, -1 die to offensive actions

Combined Arms Assault	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requires coordination of 2+ different unit types• Successful Lead action with all participating units• Success: All units gain +2 dice for one action, +1 effect• Complications: Units become entangled, -1 die to all actions until reorganized
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29.12 Environmental Combat

29.12.1 Environmental Hazards and Clocks

Environmental factors create dynamic combat scenarios that evolve over time.

Fire Hazard Clock (6 segments)

- **0-1 segments:** Minor fire, no immediate danger
- **2-3 segments:** Spreading fire, -1 die to actions in affected area
- **4-5 segments:** Intense fire, Harm 1 to anyone in area per player turn
- **6 segments:** Inferno, area becomes impassable, Harm 2 to anyone caught

Advancement:

- Flammable materials present (+1)
- Strong winds (+1)
- Failed suppression attempts (+1)

Suppression Actions:

- Water/chemical suppression: Body + Athletics (DV 2), success reduces clock by 1
- Firebreak creation: Wits + Survival (DV 3), success reduces clock by 2
- Magical suppression: Wits + (Appropriate Art) (DV 2), success reduces clock by 1-3

Flood Hazard Clock (8 segments)

- **0-2 segments:** Rising water, difficult terrain
- **3-5 segments:** Deep water, swimming required, -1 die to actions
- **6-7 segments:** Strong current, risk of being swept away
- **8 segments:** Catastrophic flood, area submerged, automatic Harm 2

Advancement:

- Heavy rainfall (+1)
- Dam/levee failure (+2)
- Poor drainage (+1)

Survival Actions:

- Swimming: Body + Athletics (DV 2), failure results in being swept 1 zone
- High ground seeking: Wits + Survival (DV 3), success grants Controlled position
- Rescue attempts: Presence + Command (DV 2), success saves endangered allies

29.12.2 Terrain Effects

Choke Points

Narrow passages that limit movement and tactical options:

- Only 2 characters can engage in melee at once
- Ranged attackers have -1 die due to limited targets
- Flanking becomes difficult (-2 dice to flanking attempts)
- Successful choke point control grants +2 dice to defensive actions

Elevated Positions

Higher ground that provides tactical advantages:

- Characters on high ground gain start Controlled vs. opponents below
- Ranged attacks from high ground gain +1 effect
- Melee attackers from below suffer -1 die
- Moving to or from elevated positions requires successful Athletics roll

Cover and Concealment

Environmental features that provide protection:

- Light cover: +1 die to defense rolls, start Controlled vs. ranged attacks
- Heavy cover: +2 dice to defense rolls, -1 die to attacker's actions
- Concealment: Start Controlled vs. detection, -1 die to attacker's perception
- Moving between cover positions requires successful Stealth roll

29.13 Siege Warfare

29.13.1 Extended Combat Scenarios

Siege warfare creates persistent conditions that affect both attackers and defenders over extended periods.

Siege Conditions Clock (10 segments)

Tracks the overall progress and strain of siege conditions:

- **0-2 segments:** Initial siege, minor inconveniences
- **3-5 segments:** Established siege, supply concerns begin
- **6-8 segments:** Prolonged siege, significant strain on defenders
- **9-10 segments:** Critical siege, imminent collapse or breakthrough

Advancement Triggers:

- Successful siege engineering (+1)
- Defender supply depletion (+1)
- Disease outbreak (+2)
- Reinforcements arrival (-1 to +2 depending on side)

29.13.2 Resource Management During Siege

Rapid Supply Clock Filling

During sieges, the Supply Clock fills more rapidly:

- **Daily Filling:** +1 segment per day without resupply
- **Critical Shortages:** +2 segments if supply line is cut
- **Rationing:** +1 segment per day when on half rations

Mitigation Actions:

- Foraging: Wits + Survival (DV 3), success slows supply depletion by 1 day
- Supply smuggling: Presence + Subterfuge (DV 4), success adds 2 segments to supply
- Local procurement: Presence + Sway (DV 2), success adds 1 segment to supply

Fatigue Accumulation

Characters gain Fatigue more rapidly during extended sieges:

- **Daily Accumulation:** +1 Fatigue per day without adequate rest
- **Combat Conditions:** +1 additional Fatigue per combat encounter
- **Poor Conditions:** +1 additional Fatigue per day in unsanitary conditions

Recovery Actions:

- Rest and recuperation: Requires safe conditions and adequate supply
- Medical treatment: Wits + Medicine (DV 2), success removes 1 Fatigue
- Magical healing: Wits + Vitalism (DV 2), success removes 2 Fatigue

29.13.3 Siege-Specific Actions

Siege Engineering

Action	Requirements and Effects
Construct Siege Tower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires engineering expertise and materials • Wits + Engineering (DV 4) over 3 days • Success: Provides +2 dice to assault actions, start Controlled for wall climbing • Complications: 1-2 CP causes delays, 3+ CP causes partial collapse
Dig Approach Trench	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires significant workforce and time • Body + Engineering (DV 3) over 5 days • Success: Provides cover for assault troops, -2 dice to defender's ranged attacks • Complications: 1-2 CP causes work delays, 3+ CP results in cave-in or enemy counter-mining

Build Battering Ram	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires carpentry skills and sturdy materials • Wits + Craft (DV 3) over 2 days • Success: +2 effect on door/gate breaking actions • Complications: 1-2 CP causes minor damage, 3+ CP results in ram destruction
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Defensive Preparations

Action	Requirements and Effects
Reinforce Walls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires building materials and labor • Body + Engineering (DV 3) over 2 days • Success: +2 dice to defense against siege weapons, reduces breach damage by 1 level • Complications: 1-2 CP causes work delays, 3+ CP results in structural weakness
Prepare Boiling Defenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires fuel and projectiles • Wits + Warfare (DV 2) as immediate action • Success: +1 effect on defense against climbers, start Controlled vs. assault • Complications: 1-2 CP causes minor burns to defenders, 3+ CP results in friendly fire

Dig Defensive Ditches	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requires significant excavation effort• Body + Engineering (DV 3) over 3 days• Success: -1 die to attacker's approach, +1 effect on defense against cavalry• Complications: 1-2 CP causes flooding or collapse, 3+ CP creates liability for defenders
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29.14 Magic Duels

29.14.1 High-Stakes Magical Combat

Magical duels require special considerations for pacing, risk management, and dramatic tension.

Counterspelling Mechanics

Interrupting Spellcasting:

- Opposed roll: Wits + Arcana (caster) vs. Wits + Arcana (counter-speller)
- Success: Interrupts Channel phase, caster takes 1 CP
- Critical success: Completely disrupts spell, caster takes 2 CP
- Failure: Counter-speller takes 1 CP, original casting proceeds

Defensive Magic:

- Shield spells: Can be maintained as ongoing effects (1 Fatigue/round)
- Ward creation: Wits + Geomancy/Thaumaturgy (DV 3), creates lasting protection
- Spell absorption: Requires specific talents, converts incoming magic to beneficial effect

Backlash Cascade Effects

In magical duels, multiple sources of CP can create cascading consequences:

- Each 1 rolled during Channel generates immediate CP for opponent to spend
- Failed Weave actions generate CP that can be spent by either participant
- Environmental magical effects can generate additional CP sources
- Spell collision (two spells affecting same target) creates 1 CP for each caster

Cascade Management:

- Players can spend Boons to mitigate incoming CP during cascade
- Talents like "Backlash Soothing" can reduce cascade effects
- Environmental control can limit cascade opportunities

29.14.2 Environmental Magic in Combat

Terrain-Altering Spells

Spell Type	Effects and Complications
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Wall of Stone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates barrier (10 ft square per success) • Provides full cover, +3 dice to defense for protected allies • Complications: 1-2 CP causes unstable construction, 3+ CP results in collapse • Duration: 3 player turns + 1 player turn per additional success
Fog Cloud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates concealment area (20 ft radius per success) • -2 dice to ranged attacks, start Controlled vs. visual detection • Complications: 1-2 CP causes fog to drift unpredictably, 3+ CP creates dangerous density • Duration: 2 player turns + 1 player turn per additional success
Entangle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrains targets in area (15 ft radius per success) • Opposed roll to move (Body + Athletics vs. spell effect) • Complications: 1-2 CP affects allies, 3+ CP creates permanent vegetation • Duration: 2 player turns + 1 player turn per additional success

Area Control Spells

Spell Effect	Combat Applications
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Zone of Truth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 20 ft radius area where lies are detected• Social actions gain start Controlled• Deception attempts automatically generate 1 CP• Duration: 5 player turns, 1 Fatigue/round to maintain
Haste/Slow	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Doubles or halves movement rate for affected targets• Hasted allies gain +1 die to actions, Slowed enemies -1 die• Requires concentration (1 Fatigue/round)• Duration: 3 player turns + 1 player turn per additional success
Fear Aura	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 15 ft radius fear effect• Enemies suffer -1 die, start Desperate for attacks• Allies gain +1 die, start Controlled for defense• Duration: 2 player turns + 1 player turn per additional success

29.15 Combat Quick Reference

29.15.1 Position Effects Summary

Position	Advantages	Disadvantages	CP Risk
Controlled	+1 die to actions Start Controlled	Limited tactical options May become predictable	Low
Risky	Standard action options Balanced engagement	Moderate consequences Pressure from opponents	Moderate
Desperate	High-stakes potential Opportunities for heroics	Severe consequences Outnumbered/disadvantaged	High

29.15.2 Harm Integration Quick Reference

Harm Level	CP Generation	Dice Penalty	Recovery
Minor (-)	1 CP on next 2 rolls	None	Natural rest or basic treatment
Moderate (=)	1 CP on next roll	-1 die to relevant actions	Medical treatment (DV 2)
Severe (>)	2 CP on next roll	-2 dice to relevant actions	Extended medical care (DV 3)
Critical (†)	3 CP on next roll	Out of action until treated	Major medical intervention (DV 4)

29.15.3 Tactical Clocks Summary

Clock Name	Segments	Effects	Triggers
Mob Overwhelm	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enemy numbers become advantage • -1 die per 2 segments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforcements arrive • Flanking successful
Fatigue Spiral	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhaustion affects performance • +1 Fatigue per segment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended combat • Environmental strain
Morale Collapse	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear undermines effectiveness • -1 die to social actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ally incapacitation • Horrific injuries

Environmental Collapse	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terrain/fire/building failure • Hazard clock advancement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spell effects • Structural damage
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29.15.4 Follower Combat Integration

Risk Management

2+ CP Spent in Combat:

- Follower may be endangered instead of PC
- GM chooses which follower if multiple present
- Fictional appropriateness determines eligibility
- Follower takes Exposure +1 or Harm 1

Initiative Actions:

- One per scene party-wide
- Cost: Exposure +1 or Harm 1 on follower
- Options:
 - Scout Signal: Ally starts Controlled or +1 effect
 - Distract Draw: Reduce kinetic rail by -1 tick
 - Fetch Carry: Move object through danger

Asset Compromise

Combat in Specific Locations:

- 1-2 CP: Asset becomes Neglected
- 3-4 CP: Asset becomes Compromised
- 5+ CP: Asset destroyed or captured
- Recovery requires downtime or narrative quest

Offensive Activation:

- Cost: 1 Boon
- Must have scope and reach
- Examples:
 - Safehouse provides escape route
 - Spy network provides intelligence
 - Military asset provides reinforcement

29.15.5 Combat Outcome Matrix

Outcome	Effect	
Clean Success	Intent achieved with no tactical complications	
Success & Cost	Intent achieved, GM spends CP for combat consequences	
Partial	Progress with tactical fork (accept cost OR concede ground)	
Miss	No progress; GM spends CP for combat consequences OR offers tactical bargain	GM spends

29.15.6 Magic Combat Integration

Channel/Weave Backlash

Application to Tactical Situation:

- 1-2 CP: Minor magical mishap (fatigue, minor environmental effect)
- 3-4 CP: Noticeable setback (hazard clock, condition, new pressure)
- 5+ CP: Major turn (scene shift, new foe, severe condition)

Spell Effects on Combat:

- Position shifting: Spells can improve or worsen combat position
- Clock creation: Magic can create or advance tactical clocks
- Consequence generation: Spells generate combat-specific consequences

29.15.7 Environmental Combat Quick Reference

Common Environmental Hazards

Hazard	Effect	Mitigation
Fire	Harm 1 per player turn in area	Water/Suppression actions
Falling Debris	Harm 2, start Desperate	Dodge (Body + Athletics, DV 3)
Poison Gas	Fatigue 1 per player turn	Antidote/Magical cleansing
Extreme Cold	Fatigue 1 per hour	Warmth sources/Protection
Electrical Storm	Harm 1, -1 die to metal weapons	Insulation/Grounding

Terrain Modifiers

Terrain	Advantages	Disadvantages
High Ground	+1 effect ranged, start Controlled vs. below	Difficult access
Narrow Passage	Defensive bonus, control engagement	Limited mobility
Open Field	Mobility, ranged effectiveness	No cover, flanking vulnerable
Urban Environment	Cover options, vertical movement	Complex navigation
Water/Wet	Resistance to fire, mobility challenges	Reduced traction

29.15.8 Mass Combat Summary

Army Effectiveness Ratings

Rating	Size	Dice Bonus	Special Capabilities
Militia (Cap 2)	50-100	+2	Basic training, local knowledge
Regulars (Cap 3)	100-300	+3	Professional training, discipline
Veterans (Cap 4)	200-500	+4	Combat experience, elite equipment
Elite (Cap 5)	300-1000	+5	Superior training, magical support
Legendary (Cap 6)	1000+	+6	Mythic status, artifact support

War Clock Management

During Extended Conflicts:

- Update clocks at the end of each major engagement
- Players can influence clocks through strategic actions
- Critical thresholds trigger narrative consequences
- Clocks can be linked for cascading effects

Victory Conditions:

- Fill 2+ war clocks to critical levels
- Reduce enemy army effectiveness to Militia level
- Achieve strategic objectives (territory control, leadership capture)
- Force surrender through Morale Collapse

30 Lore-Heavy Backgrounds, Skills, & Talents

30.1 Skills

30.1.1 Skill: Utaran Law & Precedent (Intricate)

Scope: Imperial codes, edicts, and forum custom from Ecktoria to the marches. **Approach:** Wits or Presence + Utaran Law. **Effect:** On success in a legal/bureaucratic scene, you may downgrade one *legal* in this leg to *Bureaucratic Delay* (buys time without removing scrutiny). **Crit:** Mint a temporary *Stay of Writ* (Debt Flip: a clerk demands a future favor). **Complications (CP spend):** audit flags, paperwork trail, or offended minor official. **Deck hook:** In Vhasia/Viterra ports, converts *quarantine/levy* Clubs to *inspection* (softer bite).

30.1.2 Skill: Stone-Tongue (Aeler Affinity)

Scope: Read the memory of stone, unworked rock to vault masonry. **Approach:** Spirit + Stone-Tongue (Intricate if you describe the touching rite). **Effect:** Ask the GM 1–3 questions about *who carved/used/strained* this stone. Each extra question risks 1 CP of *haunt* (fatigue, intrusive memory). **Travel rider:** Once per Aeler leg, you may peek at the next leg's or . **Complications:** Disorientation; GM may add a subtle echo/omen to later scenes.

30.1.3 Skill: Monsoon-Reckoning (Southern/Eastern Belts)

Scope: Seasonal winds and their social/economic knock-on effects (Akilan/Ostrilan routes). **Approach:** Wits + Monsoon-Reckoning (Intricate if you read skies, currents, ledgers). **Effect:** Once per sea/river leg, shift a *weather* down one rank (A→10, 10→9, etc.) or convert it to a *Forecast* boon (DV −1 to the next two navigation/planning rolls this leg). **Complications:** If you miss by 2+, GM banks +1 CP and introduces a *false window* later.

30.1.4 Skill: Heraldry & Lineage (Vhasia/Vilikari)

Scope: Houses, devices, marriages, feuds. **Approach:** Presence + Heraldry. **Effect:** Gain *Controlled* position vs titled NPCs; ask 1 specific House-Truth on success. **Crit:** One-use *Letters of Lineage* pass (acts as a local Warrant). **Complications:** Name a feud; someone you slighted takes notice.

30.1.5 Skill: Geasa & Oath-Weaving (Theona/Elven)

Scope: Binding promises, taboos, and loopholes. **Approach:** Spirit + Geasa (Intricate if you state exact terms, witness, and token). **Effect:** Attach a 4-segment *geas* clock to a willing target; define trigger & consequence (GM must honor). **Fail/Complications:** GM gains +2 CP as *oath backlash*, or you catch a minor bind until sunset. **Deck hook:** Theona/Valewood *9s* can satisfy or complicate a *geas* condition.

30.2 Talents

30.2.1 Talent (Prestige): Echo-Walker's Step

Req: Visit a site of deep memory (ruined Lethai-ar city, great betrayal, etc.). **Use:** 1/arc, enter an echo of a past event at your location. Observe perfectly; you may handle ephemeral objects. **Cost/Complications:** GM immediately banks +2 CP; a figure in the echo may *notice* you (complication tag). **Synergy:** Treat the next *mystery* in this arc as already *Known* for DV purposes (DV -1).

30.2.2 Talent (Mid): Margravine's Warrant (Acasia)

Req: Complete a job for a petty ruler. **Use:** Carry a portable *Warrant* of rank (7–K). Spend to bypass a minor toll, commandeer limited aid, or sway a magistrate in Acasia. **Exposure:** Each use ticks Patron Exposure (3 boxes). At Burned, the warrant is revoked and you're wanted.

30.2.3 Talent (Mid): Pilot's Mirror Glint (Kahfagia)

Req: Survive a hazardous channel using lantern-law. **Use:** 1/session predict an imminent lantern-law shift; bank +1 free success on a pilotage/nav action tied to that shift. **Miss:** GM gains +2 CP; your timing is off with the convoy for this leg.

30.2.4 Talent (Prestige): Speak with the Pale Shepherd (Aelaerem)

Req: Hearthbound tie (homestead/family) and resolve a hearth threat. **Rite:** Ask one question about cycles, loss, or protection; GM must answer plainly (in theme). **Cost:** Significant personal offering; you gain the *Melancholy* tag until next dawn (narrative weight).

30.2.5 Talent (Prestige): Forge-Seal of Khaz-Vurim (Aeler)

Req: Craft a masterwork in a major Aeler forge. **Effect:** *Auto-Controlled* with dwarven craft-guilds; 1/session upgrade a relevant action to *Intricate* when you demonstrate method on-screen. **Downside:** Any deception/shoddy work about craft revokes the Seal (hard loss).

30.2.6 Talent (Prestige): Inspire (Bonded)

Cost: 3 XP. Uses between downtime scale by Tier (Tier I/II/III = 2/3/4).

Prerequisite: a declared **Bonded PC ally** (bond, vow, or crew tie)

Use: 1 action, audible/visible cue, **Near** range

Uses between downtime: Tier I / II / III = 2 / 3 / 4 (or a 3-rank talent track at 2/3/4). Reset on downtime.

Effect (choose your Bonded PC ally in Near who can see/hear you). Apply all:

- **Bonded ally:** +1 **Boon** (PC only; normal Boon limits apply) *and* +1 die on their next roll this scene.
- **You:** +1 die on your next roll this scene.
- **Each other PC in Near (who perceives you):** +1 die on their next roll this scene.

Clarifiers:

- Followers cannot receive Boons and do not benefit from Inspire.
- A PC can benefit from Inspire **once per scene**; later Inspires **replace** any unspent +1 (no stacking).
- All +1 dice count toward the normal **+3 dice cap** (with help, assets, etc.).
- Boons follow the game's **normal limits** (hold/carry). There is no special expiration.

30.3 Backgrounds

Each background below packages a cultural role with a signature *Talent*, a per-session *Perk choice*, keyed *Scene Keys*, and CP-driven *Hooks*. They integrate with the Description Ladder (sell the fiction to reach *Intricate*), travel clocks (), and the suit logic: =place, =actor, =pressure, =leverage.

30.3.1 Sepulcher Adept (Aeler)

Requires Asset: Aeler Crypt Access *or* Oath-Pennant Keeper. [enhanced,sharp corners,boxrule=.6pt,title=Talent — Whisper of the Unquiet Dead (6 XP)] Once/session, commune with spirits bound to a named crypt/barrow/under-way. Ask **one** direct question; answer is truthful but limited to their death and the stone nearby. If you press further, GM may bank +1 CP as *haunt*. **Perk (choose 1, once/session):**

- Mitigate the first CP from a *spiritual/ancestral* this scene.
- Silence your group's movement for one beat in a sealed stone space.
- Instantly detect necromancy or grave-robbing on a corpse or bier.

Scene Keys: Royal Crypt; Under-Vault Archive; Disputed Burial Site. **Hooks (GM on CP spend in keyed scenes):**

- Ancestral spirit misidentifies you; demands recompense or service.
- Senior Adept deems your rite overreaching; censure or audit follows.
- You learn a truth damning to a living house; secrecy becomes a burden.

Invite: "Consult the stones before acting."

30.3.2 Lantern-Law Advocate (Kahfagia)

Requires Asset: Kahfagian Harbor Charter *or* Pilot's Guild Membership. [enhanced,sharp corners,boxrule=.6pt,title=Talent — Jurisdiction on the Tide (5 XP)] Once/session in a maritime dispute, shift the ruling one step in your favor (guilty→fine, fine→warning) by citing precedent. If contested by counsel, roll Wits/Presence + Utaran Law; on a miss the GM banks +1 CP and flags a future audit. **Perk (choose 1, once/session):**

- Predict the next beacon shift for a lane; gain one-beat advantage on pilotage.
- A minor port official (Cap 2) backs your claim on a procedural technicality.
- Halve a customs levy/toll through flawless paperwork.

Scene Keys: Admiralty Court; Fog-bound Harbor; Pilot's Guildhall. **Hooks (GM on CP spend in keyed scenes):**

- Rival cites deeper bylaw; your edge is nullified this scene.
- Your precedent is weaponized by a hostile faction immediately.
- Lanterns malfunction, proving you right but creating a physical Hazard.

Invite: "Quote chapter and verse."

30.3.3 Curse-Breaker of Silkstrand (Acasia)

Requires Asset: Silkstrand Safehouse *or* Archivolt Research Rights. [enhanced,sharp corners,boxrule=.6pt,title=7 — Follow the Unspooled Thread (7 XP)] Once/session when the Curse manifests (looping road, missing ninth, etc.), roll Wits + Lore. On success, reveal one temporary loophole/safe path. On crit, also grant DV −1 to the next two allied actions exploiting it. On failure, GM banks +2 CP as *curse backlash*. **Perk (choose 1, once/session):**

- Anchor a location against the Curse for one scene (normal navigation).
- Identify a person/object currently anchoring a knot of the Curse.
- +1 effect to protect others from indirect Curse fallout.

Scene Keys: Cursed Crossroads; Affected Estate; Archivolt Library. **Hooks (GM on CP spend in keyed scenes):**

- The Curse twists a future success into a failure.
- A cult of the Curse marks you for meddling.
- Break one knot; two tighten elsewhere, opening a harder leg.

Invite: "Trace the fault line."

30.3.4 Voice of the Moot (Linn / Theona)

Requires Asset: Thing-holm Speaking Rights *or* Foster-Bond with a Jarl/Chieftain. [enhanced,sharp corners,boxrule=.6pt,title=Talent — Word-Bond (6 XP)] Once/session, oversee a formal oath between parties. If broken, impose a narrative penalty appropriate to culture (ostracism, ill-sea, loss of face) until amends are made. Roll Presence + Geasa/Heraldry as needed to mediate. **Perk (choose 1, once/session):**

- Calm a heated crowd with proverb/history; set Position to Controlled.
- Call a minor boon from a party bound by your past oath.
- Instantly know if a speaker is under geas/compulsion during parley.

Scene Keys: Thing Gathering; Wedding Feast; Oath-Swearing. **Hooks (GM on CP spend in keyed scenes):**

- A listener exploits an unintended loophole.
- You must judge a case where both sides are right; choose who you lose.
- An old oath conflicts with the new, nullifying both until reconciled.

Invite: "Seek the consensus."

30.3.5 Legate of the Silent Gate (Mistlands)

Requires Asset: Protectorate Commission *or* Bell-Warden Authority. [enhanced,sharp corners,boxrule=.6pt,title= — Breath-Test (8 XP)] Once/session, perform the Aeler rite to diagnose a breach: name the incursion type (wraiths, intruders, miasma) and its approximate strength. On a risky read, the GM may bank +1 CP and demand full protocol (time/favor). **Perk (choose 1, once/session):**

- Command a Cap 3 Protectorate squad to secure a point.
- Sanctify a small area with ward-salt and bells; safe vs wraiths for one scene.
- Decode bell-logs to know quiet/hot watches exactly.

Scene Keys: Weeping Gate; Bell-Line Levee; Breach Site. **Hooks (GM on CP spend in keyed scenes):**

- Local Mistlander challenges Aeler authority.
- New horror exceeds protocol; write a rule on the fly.
- Procedure demands sacrifice (time, person, or asset) for the greater safety.

Invite: "Trust the bells."

30.4 Prestige Backgrounds (Epic)

Each Prestige Background is a destiny-tier role earned in play. Its signature Talent is **once per campaign**. Using it always creates or advances a Front and triggers the listed Epic Hook. Suits: =place, =actor, =pressure, =leverage.

30.4.1 The Cursed Child of Silkstrand

Requires: Personally mitigate or trigger a major Acasian Curse event; deep tie to Silkstrand.

[enhanced,sharp corners,boxrule=.6pt,title=Talent — Laughter That Ends Sieges (20 XP, 1/campaign)] In a moment of absolute desperation, focus the Curse through yourself. **End one large-scale conflict** in sight (siege, battle, storm) as reality *unravels* it: engines fail harmlessly, zeal cools, spells fizzle into nonsense. **No roll.**

Epic Hook — The Curse Hungers: The Curse binds to you. At the start of every session, the GM introduces a minor, personal echo (an omission, loop, or wrong reflection) affecting you or allies. **GM:** bank +2 CP and start/advance a 6-segment *Silkstrand Echo* Front.

Deck hooks: Treat any Valewood/Theona 9 drawn in your scenes as *yours* (the omission centers on you). Spending a local (e.g., Way-cord) can postpone, not erase, an echo.

30.4.2 Stone-Speaker of Khaz-Vurim

Requires: Broker a monumental peace between Aeler holds or with a major power; dwarven culture or unprecedented trust.

[enhanced,sharp corners,boxrule=.6pt,title=Talent — Move the Mountain’s Will (20 XP, 1/campaign)] Call the deep will of the Aelerians to **reroute a geological or political reality**: open a pass weeks early, flood a rival shaft, or cause a hold to ignore a king’s edict. **No roll.**

Epic Hook — The Mountain’s Price: You swear a *Geas of Stone*. The GM assigns a monumental, slow task against your interests. Until completed, you lose dwarven hospitality and stone-magic benefit (treat social Position as *Desperate* with Aeler guilds).

Deck hooks: When used, flip any Aeler played this arc immediately (its Debt Flip is collected now). Start/advance an 8-segment *Geas of Stone* Front.

30.4.3 The Last Dauphin’s Shadow

Requires: Publicly champion, protect, or expose the Sun Court claimant; irrevocably entangled in the cause.

[enhanced,sharp corners,boxrule=.6pt,title=Talent — The Sunburst Warrant (18 XP, 1/campaign)] Issue commands **obeyed as if from the lost Sun-King**: mobilize hidden cells, muster a county levy, or claim noble sanctuary. Choose one concrete objective; it happens, unless physically impossible. **No roll.**

Epic Hook — The Pretender’s Toll: Each use **consumes hope**. GM selects a loyalist asset to be lost, disillusioned, or exposed (spy executed, relic destroyed, populace turns). Start/advance a 6-segment *Candle of the Sun* Front; when it fills, the movement fractures.

Deck hooks: In Vhasia, treat face-card s as predisposed (Controlled Position) but *legal/economic* hits escalate faster (GM may spend 1 CP as 2 CP against you once/scene).

30.4.4 Mist-Seer of the Weeping Gate

Requires: Endure the Direwood and return changed; face a horror beyond common wraiths.

[enhanced,sharp corners,boxrule=.6pt,title=Talent — Bargain with the Deep Mist (20 XP, 1/campaign)] Open parley with the Mist’s sentience. Ask **one true question** or command it to **withhold influence** from a named place/person for a year and a day. **No roll.**

Epic Hook — The Wood Remembers: Pay a *Bargain of Breath*: surrender a fundamental memory/name/sense/skill (permanent, narrative). GM banks +2 CP and starts a 6-segment *Lost Thing* Front keyed to what was given up; scenes that touch it impose DV +1 on you until closure.

Deck hooks: A Mistlands (*Ward-salt* or *Lantern Writ*) can soften—not negate—the next echo of the loss.

30.4.5 Keeper of the Foedus Stone

Requires: Primary mediator preventing a Ykrul/Vilikari (or equivalent) war from breaking.

[enhanced,sharp corners,boxrule=.6pt,title=Talent — The Law That Binds Spears (18 XP, 1/campaign)] At the Foedus Stone (or an ancient treaty site), **impose an absolute truce** between two named factions. For its span, any violent act across the line triggers immediate supernatural calamity on the offender. **No roll.**

Epic Hook — The Balance of Grudges: The hate is compressed, not erased. Begin an 8-segment *Coiled Blood* Front that passively ticks each session (or on Club escalations). When it blows, the rematch is worse—your name is on the blame.

Deck hooks: During the truce, s like *Foedus Seal*, *Paiza*, or *Standard Protection* gain +1 practical scope (broader safe-conduct), but any *hostage* automatically targets your allies first on CP spend.

30.5 Rites and Pact Magic Integration

Lore-heavy characters can integrate Rites and Pact Magic into their backgrounds, creating unique combinations of scholarly knowledge and supernatural power.

30.5.1 Rite-Bound Scholar

Characters who combine academic pursuits with divine or supernatural patronage.

Integration Example: A Curate of the Sealed Gate might use legal and heraldic knowledge to better understand and invoke Rites related to boundaries and jurisdiction.

Synergy Benefits:

- Use relevant Skills to enhance Rite effectiveness (e.g., Heraldry aiding a Writ of Passage)
- Background Perks can mitigate Rite Obligations
- Signature Talents can be used in conjunction with Rite effects

30.5.2 Pact Scholar

Lore-heavy characters can specialize in Pact Magic, using their knowledge to better understand and control summoned entities.

Example Integration: A Sepulcher Adept who also practices Pact Magic might have unique insights into death-related spirits, reducing the risk of summoning or providing better control over Leash mechanics.

Special Considerations:

- Background knowledge can reduce CP costs for specific types of Outsiders
- Lore Skills can be used to identify summoned entities and their weaknesses
- Background Hooks can create unique narrative complications for summoned beings

30.6 Bardic and Warlord Applications

The Inspire talent opens new possibilities for leadership and support characters.

30.6.1 Court Bard

A character who combines musical/performative abilities with deep knowledge of court politics and social dynamics.

Signature Talent: Inspire (Bonded) - Used to rally allies in social and combat situations

Synergy with Backgrounds:

- Heraldry Skill enhances Inspire effects with titled allies
- Utaran Law background provides Controlled position when using Inspire in legal contexts
- Voice of the Moot background amplifies Inspire in group decision-making scenes

30.6.2 Warleader

A military commander who uses both tactical knowledge and inspirational leadership.

Signature Talent: Inspire (Bonded) - Used to coordinate military units and boost morale

Synergy with Backgrounds:

- Margravine's Warrant background provides authority to make Inspire more effective
- Legate of the Silent Gate background enhances Inspire in defensive scenarios
- Stone-Speaker background makes Inspire effects last longer or be more potent

Combat Applications:

- Use Inspire before major combat actions to ensure allies start with advantages
- Combine with mass combat rules to amplify army effectiveness
- Use background Perks to enhance Inspire effects in specific tactical situations

31 Tracking Tools and Resources

Practical tools for implementing enhanced gameplay mechanics without complex bookkeeping.

31.1 Tracking Sheets

Simple, printable tools for managing enhanced game systems.

31.1.1 Faction Loyalty Tracker

Faction	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
Political	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criminal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Military	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supernatural	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Merchant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Usage Notes:

- Mark current loyalty level with ☒
- Update after significant player actions
- Add new factions as needed

31.1.2 Session Investment Tracker

Session	Player 1	Player 2	Player 3	Player 4	Average
Session 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Session 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Session 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Session 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Session 5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Investment Scale:

- 1 Low Investment
- 2 Medium Investment
- 3 High Investment

31.1.3 Momentum Banking Sheet

Session	Segments Under	Earned	Spent	Banked	Carryover
Session 1	2	2	1	1	1
Session 2	0	0	1	0	0
Session 3	3	3	2	1	1

Rules:

- 1 momentum per segment under standard resolution
- Momentum decays after 3 sessions
- Track carryover for long-term planning

31.2 Quick Reference Charts

Essential information for smooth gameplay.

31.2.1 Shared Leverage Pool Reference

Cost	Effect
1 Leverage	Minor assistance/avoidance
2 Leverage	Significant advantage/rewrite
3+ Leverage	Major plot influence

Participant	Action
Players	Contribute 1 leverage each session start
GM	Spend to enhance/balance gameplay
All	Refresh pool each session

31.2.2 Revelation Economy Costs

Points	Information Type	Examples
1	Basic Facts	Names, locations, simple details
2	Strategic Insights	Plans, motivations, weaknesses
3	Major Revelations	Plot secrets, hidden agendas

Budget Management:

- 1 point per clock segment available
- Unused points bank for future sessions
- GM saves points for climax moments

31.2.3 Escalation Economy Reference

Cost	Escalation Effect
1 Point	+1 opposition dice
1 Point	Introduce new threat
1 Point	Complicate situation

Player Cost	De-escalation Effect
1 Leverage	Reduce opposition
1 Leverage	Remove minor threat
1 Leverage	Simplify situation

31.3 Implementation Timelines

Step-by-step guidance for smooth system adoption.

31.3.1 Quick Start Implementation (Sessions 1-3)

Session 1: Foundation

- Introduce Shared Leverage Pool concept
- Set up basic Faction Loyalty Tracker
- Explain Session Investment tracking
- Practice simple Information Trading

Session 2: Engagement

- Implement Complication Bargaining
- Begin tracking Faction Loyalty shifts
- Rate first Session Investment scores
- Use basic Clock Manipulation

Session 3: Integration

- Combine multiple resource systems
- Introduce Cultural Immersion Bonuses
- Practice collaborative spending
- Review and adjust tracking methods

31.3.2 Intermediate Implementation (Sessions 4-6)

Session 4: Momentum

- Begin Momentum Banking tracking
- Implement Revelation Economy
- Use Cross-Deck Synergy recognition
- Introduce Escalation Economy

Session 5: Strategy

- Strategic Clock Manipulation
- Advanced Information Trading
- Complex Complication Bargaining
- Momentum spending practice

Session 6: Mastery

- Full resource integration
- Advanced Escalation Management
- Collaborative resource trading
- Long-term planning with banking

31.3.3 Advanced Implementation (Sessions 7+)

Session 7: Optimization

- Fine-tune tracking systems
- Advanced Cross-Deck Synergy
- Strategic Session Investment
- Momentum preservation techniques

Session 8: Leadership

- Player-led resource management
- Advanced collaborative mechanics
- Mentor new players in systems
- Creative system extensions

Session 9+: Evolution

- Custom house rules development
- System refinement based on experience
- Advanced narrative techniques
- Community sharing of innovations

31.4 Troubleshooting Common Issues

Solutions for typical implementation challenges.

31.4.1 Resource Management Problems

Issue: Players hoard leverage

- Solution: Introduce compelling spending opportunities
- Create time-limited leverage benefits
- Make leverage sharing mutually beneficial
- Use GM spending to demonstrate value

Issue: GM micromanages relationships

- Solution: Focus on major faction shifts only
- Use simple loyalty scale indicators
- Let player actions drive most changes
- Pre-determine key relationship triggers

Issue: Tracking becomes burdensome

- Solution: Simplify to essential elements only
- Use index cards for flexible tracking
- Focus on 3-5 most important factions
- Digital tools for complex campaigns

31.4.2 Player Engagement Issues

Issue: Players don't participate in shared systems

- Solution: Make benefits immediately obvious
- Start with simple collaborative mechanics
- Reward early participation with clear advantages
- Lead by example with GM participation

Issue: Investment tracking feels forced

- Solution: Make it part of session wrap-up ritual
- Use it for group reflection, not judgment
- Focus on positive reinforcement
- Allow players to self-assess honestly

31.4.3 Balance and Pacing Problems

Issue: Clock manipulation breaks pacing

- Solution: Limit player changes to 1 segment per scene
- Allow GM counter-spending for balance
- Use it for dramatic tension, not avoidance
- Negotiate changes rather than impose them

Issue: Too much information too fast

- Solution: Use Revelation Economy strictly
- Make players earn major discoveries
- Balance information with mystery
- Save biggest revelations for climaxes

These resources provide practical tools for implementing enhanced gameplay mechanics while maintaining the flexibility and collaborative spirit that makes Fate’s Edge unique. ““ Session 1 ☐

☐ ☐ ☐

Session 2 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Session 3 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Session 4 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Session 5 ☐

32 Appendices

32.1 Quick Reference Sheets

32.1.1 Core Mechanic: The Art of Consequence

1. **Approach:** Player states intent and method (Attribute + Skill).
2. **Execution:** Roll dice pool of d10s. Each 6+ is a success; each 1 is a Complication Point.
3. **Outcome:** Basic Roll as-is; Detailed re-roll one 1; Intricate re-roll all 1s and add one positive flourish if successful.

32.1.2 Attributes and Skills

Body Strength, endurance, physical force.

Wits Perception, cleverness, reflexes.

Spirit Willpower, intuition, resilience.

Presence Charm, command, social force.

32.1.3 Skill Ratings (0–5)

0 Untrained Rely on raw Attribute.

1 Familiar Basic competence.

2 Skilled Reliable training.

3 Expert Professional mastery.

4 Master Renowned in your field.

5 Legendary Near-mythic talent.

32.1.4 XP Costs

Attributes New rating $\times 3$.

Skills New level $\times 2$.

Followers (On-Screen) Cap² XP.

Off-Screen Assets Minor 4 XP, Standard 8 XP, Major 12 XP.

32.2 Deck of Consequences

Fate's Edge uses two distinct card tools:

Travel Decks (regional, 52-card). *Spade*=Place, *Heart*=Actor, *Club*=Pressure, *Diamond*=Leverage. These power journeys and gates.

Deck of Consequences (scene drama). *Hearts*=social fallout, *Spades*=harm/escalation, *Clubs*=material cost, *Diamonds*=magical/spiritual disturbance.

Guidance: Never mix suit meanings across decks. When a rule references "Spade/Club/Diamond," it means *Travel*. When it says "Hearts/Spades/Clubs/Diamonds," it means *Consequences*.

32.2.1 Using the Deck

After a roll that generates CP, the GM chooses one method for that roll:

1. **Direct Spend:** Translate CP into consequences/rail ticks immediately.
2. **Deck Draw:** Draw up to **min(CP, 3)** cards and synthesize a single twist guided by suit and highest rank.

32.2.2 Consequences Deck Structure

Hearts Emotional / Social fallout (fear, anger, betrayal)

Spades Physical harm / Obstacles (injuries, blockades, fatigue)

Clubs Resource / Wealth loss (gear breaks, expenses rise)

Diamonds Mystical / Narrative twists (omens, curses, chance)

32.2.3 Ranks (1–10, J–K–A)

Ace–3 Minor inconvenience or flavor complication.

4–6 Moderate setback with some narrative teeth.

7–9 Significant consequence altering the course of action.

10–King Major fallout, introducing new problems or lasting scars.

32.3 Magic Casting Loop

1. **Channel:** Wits + Arcana roll to gather Potential.
2. **Weave:** Wits + Art roll to shape spell.
3. **Backlash:** Complication Points spent through Deck of Consequences, themed to the opposing element.

Mitigation: Boons do not reduce CP unless a Talent/Asset explicitly says "Mitigate CP."

32.4 Player Archetypes

Solo Invests in Attributes + Skills. Strong spotlight.

Mixed Balances self with one follower or off-screen assets.

Mastermind Multiple followers + networks, but more narrative liabilities.

32.5 Narrative Time

A Moment A heartbeat; single action.

Some Time A few minutes; quick exchanges.

Significant Time An hour or more; downtime actions.

Days Extended travel or projects.

32.6 GM Guidance at a Glance

- Spend Complication Points to add story problems, not punish.
- Always tie consequences back to thematic domains (Hearts, Spades, Clubs, Diamonds).
- Encourage Intricate actions: reward description with rerolls and narrative control.
- Let Off-Screen assets resolve downtime problems but keep adventures on the table.

32.7 Design Guardrails (So It Feels Fair)

- Telegraph clocks. Name them aloud or show them in fiction.
- Spend CP transparently. "I'm using 2 CP to tick Patrol Sweep."
- Always offer a way out. Boon, asset burn, or devil's bargain.
- Let Fatigue bite. It's your attrition dial; don't be shy.

32.8 Mechanical Constraints

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

32.9 Clock Starters (d6 Prompts)

1. Peril (6): "They triangulate your hideout." Triggers: noise, bribed neighbor, CP spend.
2. Supply (4): "The cold eats your prep." Triggers: storm, lost mule, CP spend.
3. Doom (8): "Blood moon eats the sky." Triggers: daily tick, ritual step, CP spend.
4. Debt (6): "Collector circles." Triggers: downtime passes, flash spend, CP spend.
5. Injury (4): "Cracking ice underfoot." Triggers: sprint, fall, CP spend.
6. Hunt (6): "Rival fixer stalks your routes." Triggers: contact flips, trace, CP spend.

32.10 Sample Play (Clocks + CP + Fatigue)

32.10.1 Scene Frame

Smuggling a witness over the palace wall at night. Active clocks: Patrol Sweep (6) at 3/6, Supply (4) at 1/4.

32.10.2 Beats

1) Scout the south wall Wits+Stealth (5d10): 10, 8, 6, 3, 1 \Rightarrow 3 hits, 1 CP. GM spends 1 CP: "You succeed, but your old rope is Compromised." Patrol Sweep stays at 3/6.

2) Climb with the witness Body+Athletics (4d10): 7, 6, 5, 1 \Rightarrow 2 hits, 1 CP. GM spends 1 CP to tick Patrol Sweep \Rightarrow 4/6 and adds pressure: "Lanterns brighten; footsteps quicken along the inner walk."

3) Last push, running low GM fills Supply to 2/4 due to Significant Time climbing and cold. Face tries to soothe the witness (Presence+Sway, 5d10): 9, 8, 2, 1, 1 \Rightarrow 2 hits, 2 CP. GM spends 2 CP: +1 Fatigue to the Face (shivering, breathless) and tick Patrol Sweep to 5/6.

4) Extraction or collapse They have a choice: burn a Boon to activate an off-screen contact's garden gate, or risk one more roll with Fatigue penalties. If they roll and give the GM 1 CP, the GM can fill Patrol Sweep to 6/6 \Rightarrow "Cordon slams shut; horns blare. Capture is on the table."

32.11 Nomenclature (Quick Canon)

32.11.1 Regions and Peoples

- Kahfagia — western convoys lantern law.
- Ecktoria — central peninsula; coinhouses forums.
- Acasia — broken marches; cursed and lawless territory.
- Silkstrand — port city of trade, secrets, bravos, and intrigue; sole major city in Acasia on the Amaranthine Sea.
- Vhasia — fractured sun; Marcott at the Belworth mouth.
- Viterra — last kingdom; Fairport at the Belworth mouth; Tarlington on the falls.

- Ubral — stone between spears; passes to the Dolmis NW.
- Thepyrgos — stairs, synod, and the Astroegro Straits.
- Aeler — crowns under-vaults across the Aelerians.
- Mistlands — bells, salt, and breath; Payden's Port.
- Valewood — empire under leaves; thin shore.
- Aelinnel — stone, bough, and bright tide-gates.
- Aelaerem — hearth hollow across rolling downs.
- Linn — skerries storm-oaths; the Yloka road.
- Ykrul — wolf standards winter camps.
- Vilikari — laurels longhouses.
- Zakov — salt serpent corsairs; criminal syndicates and smuggler's haven on the Dolmis coast.
- Black Banners — condotta free companies; mercenaries and war-band territories in Ykrul lands.

32.11.2 Geography

- Amaranthine Sea — western sea.
- Dolmis Sea — inner sea to the east.
- Aberderrin Sea — northeastern basin.
- Astroegro Straits — hinge between seas.

32.12 Prestige Abilities

- **Echo-Walker's Step** (High Elf, Cost: 20 XP; Req: Wits 5, Arcana 4): 1/arc, *observe* a perfect echo of a past event at your location (no retconning). GM immediately banks +2 CP; scenes touching that memory carry an omen. Grants DV 1 on one action that uses the revealed truth.
- **Warglord** (Ykrul, Cost: 18 XP; Req: Body 5, Command 3): Once per campaign, unify scattered warbands into a single host for a season. Start a *Logistics* clock and a *Grudge* clock; either one filling fractures the host.
- **Spirit-Shield** (Aeler, Cost: 15 XP; Req: Spirit 4, Insight 3): 1/session, erase up to 3 CP from an ally's *current* roll; you immediately mark Fatigue +1 and the GM banks +1 CP as backlash.

32.13 Between Sessions Activities Log

32.13.1 Character Advancement

XP Allocation

- Total XP Available: _____ XP
- Attributes Spent: _____ XP (_____ days downtime)
- Skills Spent: _____ XP (_____ days downtime)
- Remaining XP: _____ XP

Attribute Improvements

Attribute	Old Rating	New Rating	Cost	Downtime
Might				
Finesse				
Resolve				
Insight				
Aura				

Skill Improvements

Skill	Old Level	New Level	Cost	Downtime
Academia				
Arts				
Athletics				
Bonds				
Combat				
Craft				
Deceive				
Empathy				
Lore				
Move				
Notice				
Perform				
Physique				
Pilot				
Ranged				
Rapport				
Resist				
Stealth				
Tactics				
Will				

32.13.2 Asset Management**New Assets Acquired**

Asset Name	Type	Cost	Acquisition Method

Existing Assets

Asset Name	Status	Used This Session	Notes

32.13.3 Follower Updates**Active Followers**

Name	Role	Harm	Exposure	Status

New Followers Recruited

- Follower Name: _____
- Cost: _____ XP
- Downtime: _____ days
- Capabilities: _____

32.13.4 Bond Development**Bonds Strengthened**

- Character/NPC: _____
- Development: _____

New Bonds Formed

- Character/NPC: _____
- Nature of Bond: _____

32.13.5 Complication Resolution

Complications Cleared

Complication	Resolution Method

Ongoing Complications

- **Active Complications:** _____
- **CP Debt This Session:** + _____ CP per scene

32.13.6 Boon Economy

- **Boons Held:** _____ / 5 maximum
- **Boons Converted to XP:** _____ (2 Boons = 1 XP, max 2 XP/session)
- **Boons Spent on Assets:** _____
- **Boons from Bond Actions:** _____

32.13.7 Session Rewards Summary

Reward Type	XP Gained
Table Attendance	+2 XP
Major Objective Reached	+ _____ XP
Discovery or Lore Unlocked	+ _____ XP
Hard Choice Embraced	+ _____ XP
Complication Spotlight	+ _____ XP
Bond/Flag Driven Play	+ _____ XP
GM Curveball Award	+ _____ XP
Complication Dividend (Cards)	+ _____ XP
Total Session XP	+ _____ XP

32.13.8 Downtime Activities

- **Total Downtime Days:** _____
- **Activities Undertaken:**
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- **Haste Clock Status (if applicable):** _____ / _____ segments

32.13.9 Campaign Clock Updates

- Mandate: _____ / 6
- Crisis: _____ / 6
- Notable Changes: _____

32.13.10 Notes and Reflections

Voices

Acasia

Elite.

"I kept the ledgers when the last governors fled. Law is a map; ours burned. In Acasia the only borders left are curses you learn too late. The ink runs thin where the old roads used to be, and the names of places shift like smoke in the wind. I've seen three different cartographers try to chart our borders—each map disagreed with the last, and all of them were wrong. The curse doesn't care about parchment—it cares about blood, about the weight of oaths broken and promises forgotten. Every milepost whispers a different name now, and if you listen too long, you start to forget your own."

Commoner.

"You don't take shelter—you bargain with whatever lives in the dark. Pay in trinkets, or it takes memories. I'm light on both. Last week I traded my grandmother's wedding ring for a night's peace in an abandoned barn. The thing that took it looked almost human, but its eyes were wrong—like staring into deep water. Now I can't remember her face, only that she had kind hands. The ring's gone, the memory's gone, and I'm still hungry. There's a merchant two valleys over who'll give you a vial of forget-me-not tea for a copper piece—brew it right and you won't remember trading away your nightmares. Problem is, you also won't remember your children's names."

Aelaerem

Elite.

"Our hedges are not for show; they are promises plaited green. We tithe milk and song so the old neighbors stay on their side of dusk. Every spring we walk the boundaries, weaving new growth with old wood, singing the songs that hold the wild things at bay. The hedge-witch taught me that a properly tended hedge remembers every word spoken near it—every blessing, every curse, every secret whispered in the dark. We plant according to the moon's phase: rowan for protection, hawthorn for luck, and always, always, a sprig of rosemary to remember the dead. The old neighbors are particular about their due—too little song and they scratch at the roots; too much milk and they send the crows to peck your crops. Balance is everything."

Commoner.

"The flock startles before the wind turns. When they refuse the east meadow, I refuse it too. Hoofprints don't lie—even the small, barefoot ones. Last harvest moon, all the sheep faced inward, huddled together like they were afraid of something coming from the edges of the field. I found prints in the mud the next morning—too small for any animal I'd ever seen, too deep for the weight they should have been. The old shepherd said once that sheep see what we can't, that their fear is cleaner than ours. They know when the hedge-witch has been walking in her other shape, when the mummers have taken off their masks and forgotten to put them back on. I follow their lead because they've never led me wrong yet."

Aeler

Elite.

"Profit is a kind of ballast; it keeps a city steady when the deep knocks. We sell guarantees—tunnel, treaty, inheritance. Every vault has its price, every passage its fee, every word carved in stone its weight in silver. The Guild Princes don't rule from above—we rule from the ledgers, from the careful balance of what goes down and what comes up. When the mountain groans in the night, we don't pray—we calculate. How much stone will shift? What tunnels will need shoring? Which families will lose their birthright to the deep? The answers are always in the numbers, always in the careful accounting of risk versus reward. A guarantee properly worded is worth more than a crown, and lasts longer than most marriages."

Commoner.

"You learn to hear the stone thinking. If it dreams hungry, you wake the alarm and hope the lifts aren't already coming up full. The deep has moods like a sleeping giant—sometimes it snores, sometimes it turns over, sometimes it wakes up hungry. I've been down there for twelve years, and I can tell by the way the walls breathe whether we're safe or not. Last winter, the stone started singing in the third descent—a low hum that made the lamp-wicks flutter. The engineer said it was just gas pockets, but I knew better. Something was listening down there, something that remembered when the vaults were new and the guarantees meant something. We sealed that tunnel for a season, but the singing followed us up."

Aelinnel

Elite.

"Equations are cages for impossible beasts. Mind your bars; the numbers will bite if the proof has gaps. In the Mathlands, we don't just calculate—we domesticate. Every formula is a leash, every theorem a collar. I've seen what happens when a proof breaks—when the bars of an equation snap and the beast inside gets loose. Last solstice, the Geometer-General tried to prove the nature of time itself. The equation held for three days, then... something slipped through. Time doubled back on itself for a mile around the academy. Students aged fifty years in an hour, then un-aged just as quickly. The Geometer-General is still trying to solve for what got out—he won't eat, won't sleep, just stares at his chalkboard and mutters about prime numbers and the weight of infinity."

Commoner.

"Master says the kettle is safe because it only screams on prime days. I marked my calendar with bandages. The first month I was apprenticed, I thought he was joking. Then the kettle started screaming on the 2nd, the 3rd, the 5th... always prime numbers. Master's got twenty-seven kettles in his workshop, and they all sing different songs. The copper one hums lullabies to keep the equations docile. The iron one growls warnings when the proofs start to strain. The silver kettle—that one's the worst. It only screams on Mersenne primes, and when it does, the numbers start moving on their own. I've seen equations crawl across the floor like spilled ink, looking for something to calculate. Master says that's what happens when you try to cage infinity—it fights back."

Black Banner**Elite.**

"A contract is a country small enough to carry. We march inside its borders until someone pays to redraw them. Every clause is a territory, every signature a citizen. I've seen generals surrender entire provinces for the right wording in a rider, and kings give up daughters for a properly witnessed amendment. The beauty of a contract is that it's always negotiable—until the blood starts flowing. Then it becomes something else entirely. My company's banner has changed hands seventeen times in the last decade. Each new captain brings their own interpretation of the original charter, their own understanding of what we're contracted to protect. The men don't care who signs the papers—they care who pays their wages and who leads them into battle."

Commoner.

"Uniform by day, coin by night. If the banners dance with Ykrul or Vilikari, I keep step and count my fingers after. Last campaign, we switched sides three times in as many weeks. First we were protecting a merchant convoy from river pirates, then we were the pirates attacking a noble's estate, then we were the noble's guards putting down a peasant uprising. The captain said it was all according to contract—that the wording was flexible enough to cover any interpretation. By the end, I couldn't remember whose coin I was spending or whose blood was on my sword. The only constant was the paymaster's seal, and even that looked different every payday."

Ecktoria**Elite.**

"Empire is a habit; we still set tables as if guests will arrive crowned. What we lack in legions we spend in letters. The marble forums echo with the ghosts of senators who never existed, and the basilicas still ring with the voices of laws that were never passed. I've spent three years drafting a treaty with a kingdom that fell to plague twenty years ago—their ambassador arrives every spring, all ceremony and empty titles, and we discuss trade routes that lead to abandoned cities. The coin-house still mints coins bearing the face of an emperor who died before his coronation, because to stop would be to admit that the empire is smaller than we pretend. We are a nation of forms, of the careful ritual of governance performed for an audience of shadows."

Commoner.

"I stamp more seals than I eat meals. Paper walks farther than soldiers do now. Every document that crosses my desk needs three different stamps, two signatures, and a witness who swears they saw it written in triplicate. I've seen trade agreements that were longer than epic poems, marriage contracts that required their own libraries, and death certificates that needed to be notarized by the dead man's living relatives. The clerks have developed a kind of poetry to the process—we can tell just by looking at a document how important it is, how many departments it will need to visit before it's properly dead. The most tragic are the love letters that come through the system—by the time they're stamped and sealed, the lovers have usually forgotten why they wrote them."

Kahfagia**Elite.**

"Currents are taxes paid in advance. We collect where winds consent and governors remember who taught them the tide. The sea is the greatest empire builder—every wave carries tribute, every storm redistributes wealth. I've seen merchant fleets founder on reefs that weren't there last season, and fishing villages prosper from currents that bring silver fish instead of the usual bait. The Admiralty Prefect doesn't rule from a throne—he rules from a chart room, watching the dance of wind and water that determines who prospers and who drowns. The Oshiiran taught us that the sea remembers everything—every dropped anchor, every spilled cargo, every prayer whispered to placate the deep. We collect not just the obvious tariffs, but the subtle ones: the price of safe passage, the cost of favorable winds, the fee for not mentioning the wrecks we know about."

Commoner.

"Salt is honest work—your palms tell the truth by dusk. The empire is ropes and knots; I know which ones hold. Every morning I check the rigging on three different ships, and every evening I can tell by the calluses on my hands which lines were properly secured and which were just for show. The salt gets into everything—your clothes, your food, your dreams. I've been at sea for fifteen years, and I still wake up thinking I hear the waves. The old salts say that's how you know you're truly part of the fleet—when the sea starts talking to you in your sleep. The Vilikari officers think they understand navigation, but they're still learning to read the wind. They measure distance in leagues; we measure it in the way the spray tastes and the angle of the sun on the water."

Linns**Elite.**

"Oars decide what laws can reach. My ships are courts that sit wherever the tide allows. The law is a fluid thing among the skerries—it changes with the depth of water, with the strength of the wind, with the phase of the moon. I've held court on ice floes, in fog banks, and once on a whale's back when the sea was calm enough to make it work."

The River Jarls understand that justice isn't about permanence—it's about adaptation. A ruling that works in deep water might be useless in the shallows, and a law that serves the mainland is often meaningless among the islands. My authority flows like the tide—strong in some channels, weak in others, always moving, always changing. The only constant is the need for a strong arm and a steady hand on the tiller."

Commoner.

"We read the Yloka by taste—mud for shallows, iron for towns. When the rowlocks sing, a door is about to open. The river has its own language, and if you listen with more than your ears, it tells you everything you need to know. Sweet water means we're approaching a village that's been good to travelers. Bitter water warns of bandits or bad blood ahead. When the current changes direction suddenly, it's because someone upstream has made a decision that's going to affect us all. The old oarsmen say the river remembers every drop of blood spilled in its waters, and when the time is right, it brings the reckoning to the surface. I've seen fish rise with arrowheads in their bellies, and reeds grow around coins that were lost generations ago."

Mistlands

Elite.

"We count winters, not kings. The mountain signs the treaties; we only initial them. In the Mistlands, power doesn't come from crowns or charters—it comes from endurance. I've seen kingdoms rise and fall while our flocks grazed the same hills, watched empires crumble while our bells tolled the same hours. The mountain speaks in geological time, in the slow settling of stone and the patient accumulation of snow. Kings come and go like seasons, but the mountain remembers every treaty, every boundary stone, every drop of blood spilled on its slopes. We are the mountain's memory keepers, the ones who ensure that the old agreements hold even when the signatories have forgotten what they promised. The Dwarves understand this—they know that some things are meant to last longer than human ambition."

Commoner.

"Mist keeps secrets. I keep sheep. Between us, we've hidden whole wars from the world. The mist comes down thick some mornings, so thick you can't see your own hands in front of your face. That's when the real work gets done—when the sheep move through the fog like ghosts, carrying messages in their wool, hiding refugees in their folds. I've guided armies through the mist without the enemy knowing they were there, smuggled nobles across borders that should have been impassable. The sheep don't care about politics—they just want good grass and clean water. But they're better at keeping secrets than most people, and they never betray a trust. The mist respects that kind of loyalty."

Silkstrand

Elite.

"Water is the city's memory; every debt finds its level. Our bravos keep the surface calm while old things move below. The canals remember everything—the weight of every boat, the cargo of every barge, the blood that's been spilled in their depths. I've seen merchants who thought they could escape their obligations by taking ship, only to find that the water carried their debts faster than their sails. The old things beneath the city are patient—they wait for the right moment to surface, when the weight of accumulated sins finally breaks the surface tension. We maintain the delicate balance between order and chaos, between the prosperity that flows on the surface and the corruption that festers below. Every bridge is a negotiation, every canal a compromise with forces that predate the city itself."

Commoner.

"Oar in one hand, knife in the other. If the fog tastes bitter, don't sing—listen. The gondoliers know the city's secrets because we navigate by more than sight. The taste of the water tells us what's happening in the districts we can't see, the sound of our oars against the current warns of trouble ahead. When the fog comes down thick over the canals, it's not just visibility that's lost—communication breaks down, alliances shift, and old enemies find themselves rowing side by side. I've carried messages that were worth more than gold, and passengers who were worth less than the air they breathed. The fog doesn't care about your status—it just wants to know what you're really made of."

section*Theona **High Status.**

"Hospitality binds sharper than iron. We keep the old table set, and our guests behave like saints—most nights. The table seats eight, never nine. The ninth chair remains empty, turned to face the wall. Guests count themselves without speaking the number aloud—eight-and-one, seven-and-two, six-and-three. The old ones taught us that some numbers are doors that should not be opened, some counts that invite what walks between the stones. When the tide brings nine ships to our harbor, we count them as eight-and-one, and the harbor-master knows to leave the ninth blessing unspoken. The Green Neighbors understand this mathematics—they count in seasons, not numbers, and their gifts always come in eights."

Low Status.

"Lights on the water mean one of two things: a catch or a bargain. Bring extra salt either way. But never, never nine fish in your net—eight-and-one, or cast again. The sea counts what we cannot see, and it knows when we try to hide the true number. I once hauled a catch of nine silver fish to market, and the buyer's eyes went strange, like he was looking through me to something else. He paid me in coins that turned to leaves by noon. Now I count my haul twice—once for the market, once for the water's memory. Eight fish, eight coins, eight blessings. The ninth belongs to the tide, and the tide keeps its own counsel."

Thepyrgos

Elite.

"Dispute is our sport; we wrestle with premises and shake truth out by the ankle. In the City of a Thousand Stairs, every argument is a climb, every conclusion a summit worth reaching. I've seen philosophers spend years debating the nature of a single word, climbing higher and higher on the scaffolding of logic until they're dizzy with the view. The Synod Hall echoes with the voices of scholars who've dedicated their lives to proving that the opposite of everything is also true. We don't just debate ideas—we inhabit them, live inside their implications until we understand their weight and texture. Truth in Thepyrgos is not a destination but a journey, and the most interesting truths are the ones that lead us to unexpected vistas."

Commoner.

"When the scholars argue, we add steps. Every answer needs somewhere noble to stand. The stonecutters and masons of Thepyrgos understand that knowledge has weight—it needs to be properly supported, given a foundation that won't shift under the pressure of new ideas. I've built lecture halls for philosophers who needed to pace while they thought, constructed viewing platforms for astronomers who wanted to get closer to the sky, and carved steps into solid rock for debates that were expected to last for months. The scholars pay well for quality work, but they also expect their surroundings to reflect the importance of their thoughts. A poorly constructed staircase can undermine an entire philosophical system—form and function are inseparable in our city."

Ubral

Elite.

"We own what we can defend at dawn. Feuds are calendars the dead write on our doors. In the highlands, property is not measured in acres but in the strength of your arm and the sharpness of your blade. I've seen territories change hands three times in a single day—won at sunrise, lost at noon, reclaimed by sunset. The clan chiefs understand that ownership is temporary, but honor is eternal. Every feud adds another name to the list, another obligation that will be passed down through generations. The dead write their calendars in blood, and the living are expected to honor their appointments. We don't sign treaties—we make promises that are witnessed by the stones and remembered by the wind."

Commoner.

"Cattle know the safe passes better than chiefs do. I follow their noses and keep my knife friendly. The herders understand that the mountains have their own wisdom—the cattle can smell danger on the wind, sense the shifting of stone before it happens, know which paths are watched by unfriendly eyes. I've learned to read their behavior like a map, to understand that when they bunch together and face a particular direction, there's something worth paying attention to over the next ridge. The chiefs make their plans in council halls, but the cattle make the real decisions about where we're safe and where we're not. My knife is for protection, but it's also a tool for making offerings to the spirits who watch over the high passes."

Valewood

Elite.

"What grows too tall forgets its roots. Stones that dream of permanence become flowers. We are the forest's gardeners, not its jailers. The old empire sought to write its name in stone, but stone is deaf to whispers. The wood listens. It heard their boots, their swords, their screams—and then it dreamed them into mulch. What is buried becomes soil. What is forgotten becomes rain. What is remembered becomes new growth. The forest does not hate the past; it digests it. You cannot impose will on a tree that has forgotten more than you will ever know."

Commoner.

"Silence is the forest's first language. Words are its second. When you speak thanks, you name a debt. When you name a debt, you invite the forest to collect. I have walked paths that opened for me like flower petals, and paths that closed behind me like fists. The difference was never in what I said, but in what I did not say. The forest counts your footfalls, not your gratitude. It remembers the weight of your need, not the sound of your praise. Offer something that cannot be named—your breath, your shadow, the space between your heartbeats. The wood accepts only what you do not realize you have given."

Vhasia

Elite.

"We dine from borrowed plates and plot at borrowed maps. The crown fits best when worn in rumor. In the Fractured Sun, legitimacy is not inherited but acquired—gathered like loose coins, picked up from the tables of fallen houses. I've seen pretenders who commanded more respect than the so-called legitimate heirs, dukes who ruled from cellars while their castles were occupied by strangers. The old court is scattered to the winds, but its forms and ceremonies live on in the dreams of those who would restore it. We are a nation of shadows and echoes, of rulers who govern from hiding and nobles who sign their names in code. The crown is not a symbol of authority—it's a target, and everyone knows it."

Commoner.

"Dukes change faster than bowstrings. I keep both dry and swear as required. The countryside is a patchwork of competing authorities—this village owes fealty to a merchant who bought the title, that town answers to a priest who claims divine right, and the next hamlet follows a bandit chief who's proven he can protect them better than anyone else. I've served under seven different lords in as many months, and I've learned that loyalty is a luxury I can't afford. My bowstring stays dry because I never know when I might need to use it, and my oaths are carefully worded to leave room for interpretation. The only constant is change, and the only certainty is that today's master will be tomorrow's memory."

Vilikari

Elite.

"We trade with yesterday's enemy and sow where tomorrow's treaty will land. Soil forgives what banners won't. The Marches understand that enmity is seasonal—what burns today might nourish tomorrow's harvest. I've signed peace treaties with men whose fathers I helped bury, and declared war on allies whose grandfathers were my drinking companions. The soil doesn't care about the color of your banner—it only wants to know if you're bringing nutrients or poison. The Foedus Stone has seen more treaties carved into its surface than any other monument in the known world, and still the work continues. We are farmers of diplomacy, understanding that the best agreements are the ones that grow naturally from the conditions of the land."

Commoner.

"I've buried seed and brothers in the same field. Both come up when it rains. The frontier farmers understand that death and life are partners in the same dance—the bones of the fallen enrich the soil that feeds the living. I've seen graves that produced the finest wheat in the district, and battlefields that grew flowers so beautiful they attracted pilgrims from across the sea. The soil remembers everything, and it's not particular about the source of its nutrients. My brothers died defending this ground, and now it feeds my children. The cycle continues, and the land is patient. The Ykrul understand this—they know that conquest without cultivation is just temporary occupation."

Viterra

Elite.

"We rule by bridges. Break a span and watch titles wash away. In the Last Kingdom, power flows like water—controlled by the careful management of crossings and the strategic placement of obstacles. I've seen earls who commanded vast territories on paper lose everything when their bridges were destroyed, and minor nobles who controlled a single ford become the most important people in the region. The rivers are the arteries of Viterra, and those who control the flow of traffic across them control the destiny of the realm. Every bridge is a statement of authority, every ford a potential chokepoint. The Queen understands that governance is not about commanding obedience but about making compliance the easiest path available."

Commoner.

"Coins talk louder than heralds at the ford. I hear who's winning before the town does. The ferry operators and bridge toll collectors are the true intelligence network of Viterra—we know who's paying what to whom, and we can read the political winds by the weight of the purses that cross our waters. I've seen merchants who could afford to pay double the normal toll but chose to haggle over a few coppers, and I've seen nobles who tried to cross without payment and found themselves waiting for weeks. The coins tell the story of the realm more accurately than any official report. When the payments start changing hands, when new faces appear at the fords, that's when you know the balance of power is shifting."

Ways Between

Elite.

"A threshold is a promise with hinges. I oil them so the dead don't squeal when they pass. The Gate-Wardens understand that every crossing is a negotiation, every passage a compact between the traveler and the forces that govern the spaces between spaces. I've seen doors that led to yesterday, windows that opened onto tomorrow, and thresholds that connected to places that never were and never will be. The hinges are the key—they determine not just whether a door opens, but what kind of opening it creates. A well-maintained threshold can be the difference between salvation and damnation, between arrival and endless wandering. The dead are particular about their passage—they remember every sound, every hesitation, every moment of doubt."

Commoner.

"Walk until your name sounds strange in your own mouth; that's how you know the road is listening. The pilgrims and wayfarers of the Spiritways understand that identity is fluid in the spaces between worlds. I've walked paths that made me forget my own face, crossed bridges that changed my name with every step, and navigated mazes that rearranged my memories like cards in a dealer's hands. The road doesn't just test your endurance—it tests your willingness to become someone new. When your name starts to feel foreign, when your past seems like someone else's story, that's when the path reveals its true nature. Most people never reach that point—they turn back when the road starts asking questions they're not prepared to answer."

Ykrul

Elite.

"Grass is a sea that drowns empires. We ride the waves and choose who to pull ashore. The Violet Steppe understands that power is not about holding territory but about controlling movement—about being able to appear anywhere and disappear just as quickly. I've seen great armies bogged down in grass that seemed harmless, and small warbands that could move faster than the wind across terrain that should have been impassable. The grass remembers every hoofbeat, every campfire, every drop of blood spilled on its surface. We are not conquerors but navigators, reading the signs that others miss and following paths that exist only in the memory of the steppe. Empires build walls; we build speed."

Commoner.

"If the wind smells of iron, veer north. If it smells of bread, saddle light—we won't be welcome. The scouts and outriders understand that the steppe speaks in scents and sounds that civilized people never learn to interpret. Iron means battle—recent or impending—and the smart scout knows when to avoid the area. Bread means settlement, and settlements mean complications. The Ykrul prefer the open grass where the only laws are the ones written in hoofprints and the only currency is the ability to move faster than your enemies. I've smelled smoke from fires that were fifty miles away, heard the whisper of horse hooves across ground that should have muffled all sound, and felt the approach of storms that wouldn't show on any civilized weather vane."

Zakov

Elite.

"Customs is a conversation, not a wall. We speak every dialect of gray. The Salt and Serpent understand that the most profitable trade happens in the spaces between legality and illegality, in the gray areas where definitions become flexible and boundaries shift according to the needs of the moment. I've negotiated deals that were technically legal but morally bankrupt, and arranged transactions that were illegal but socially necessary. The key is understanding that every law has its price, every regulation its exception. The Syndicate Princes don't rule through force—they rule through the careful manipulation of definitions, the strategic application of technicalities, and the patient cultivation of relationships with those who enforce the rules."

Commoner.

"If a crate walks by itself, don't see it. If a coin falls alone, catch it for the man behind you. The dock rats and runners understand that Zakov operates on levels that the surface world never sees. I've watched cargo move itself from ship to warehouse without human hands, seen coins change ownership in ways that defied explanation, and learned that some of the most valuable goods in the city are the ones that don't appear on any manifest. The city has its own intelligence network—not the official kind with guards and couriers, but the kind that operates through whispers in dark alleys and signals that only the initiated understand. The smart runner knows when to look away and when to pay attention, when to speak and when to remain silent."

33 Appendices

33.1 Quick Reference Sheets

33.1.1 Core Mechanic: The Art of Consequence

1. **Approach:** Player states intent and method (Attribute + Skill).
2. **Execution:** Roll dice pool of d10s. Each 6+ is a success; each 1 is a Complication Point.
3. **Outcome:** Basic Roll as-is; Detailed re-roll one 1; Intricate re-roll all 1s and add one positive flourish if successful.

33.1.2 Attributes and Skills

Body Strength, endurance, physical force.

Wits Perception, cleverness, reflexes.

Spirit Willpower, intuition, resilience.

Presence Charm, command, social force.

33.1.3 Skill Ratings (0–5)

0 Untrained Rely on raw Attribute.

1 Familiar Basic competence.

2 Skilled Reliable training.

3 Expert Professional mastery.

4 Master Renowned in your field.

5 Legendary Near-mythic talent.

33.1.4 XP Costs

Attributes New rating $\times 3$.

Skills New level $\times 2$.

Followers (On-Screen) Cap² XP.

Off-Screen Assets Minor 4 XP, Standard 8 XP, Major 12 XP.

33.2 Deck of Consequences

Fate's Edge uses two distinct card tools:

Travel Decks (regional, 52-card). *Spade*=Place, *Heart*=Actor, *Club*=Pressure, *Diamond*=Leverage. These power journeys and gates.

Deck of Consequences (scene drama). *Hearts*=social fallout, *Spades*=harm/escalation, *Clubs*=material cost, *Diamonds*=magical/spiritual disturbance.

Guidance: Never mix suit meanings across decks. When a rule references "Spade/Club/Diamond," it means *Travel*. When it says "Hearts/Spades/Clubs/Diamonds," it means *Consequences*.

33.2.1 Using the Deck

After a roll that generates CP, the GM chooses one method for that roll:

1. **Direct Spend:** Translate CP into consequences/rail ticks immediately.
2. **Deck Draw:** Draw up to **min(CP, 3)** cards and synthesize a single twist guided by suit and highest rank.

33.2.2 Consequences Deck Structure

Hearts Emotional / Social fallout (fear, anger, betrayal)

Spades Physical harm / Obstacles (injuries, blockades, fatigue)

Clubs Resource / Wealth loss (gear breaks, expenses rise)

Diamonds Mystical / Narrative twists (omens, curses, chance)

33.2.3 Ranks (1–10, J–K–A)

Ace–3 Minor inconvenience or flavor complication.

4–6 Moderate setback with some narrative teeth.

7–9 Significant consequence altering the course of action.

10–King Major fallout, introducing new problems or lasting scars.

33.3 Magic Casting Loop

1. **Channel:** Wits + Arcana roll to gather Potential.
2. **Weave:** Wits + Art roll to shape spell.
3. **Backlash:** Complication Points spent through Deck of Consequences, themed to the opposing element.

Mitigation: Boons do not reduce CP unless a Talent/Asset explicitly says "Mitigate CP."

33.4 Player Archetypes

Solo Invests in Attributes + Skills. Strong spotlight.

Mixed Balances self with one follower or off-screen assets.

Mastermind Multiple followers + networks, but more narrative liabilities.

33.5 Narrative Time

A Moment A heartbeat; single action.

Some Time A few minutes; quick exchanges.

Significant Time An hour or more; downtime actions.

Days Extended travel or projects.

33.6 GM Guidance at a Glance

- Spend Complication Points to add story problems, not punish.
- Always tie consequences back to thematic domains (Hearts, Spades, Clubs, Diamonds).
- Encourage Intricate actions: reward description with rerolls and narrative control.
- Let Off-Screen assets resolve downtime problems but keep adventures on the table.

33.7 Design Guardrails (So It Feels Fair)

- Telegraph clocks. Name them aloud or show them in fiction.
- Spend CP transparently. "I'm using 2 CP to tick Patrol Sweep."
- Always offer a way out. Boon, asset burn, or devil's bargain.
- Let Fatigue bite. It's your attrition dial; don't be shy.

33.8 Mechanical Constraints

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

33.9 Clock Starters (d6 Prompts)

1. Peril (6): "They triangulate your hideout." Triggers: noise, bribed neighbor, CP spend.
2. Supply (4): "The cold eats your prep." Triggers: storm, lost mule, CP spend.
3. Doom (8): "Blood moon eats the sky." Triggers: daily tick, ritual step, CP spend.
4. Debt (6): "Collector circles." Triggers: downtime passes, flash spend, CP spend.
5. Injury (4): "Cracking ice underfoot." Triggers: sprint, fall, CP spend.
6. Hunt (6): "Rival fixer stalks your routes." Triggers: contact flips, trace, CP spend.

33.10 Sample Play (Clocks + CP + Fatigue)

33.10.1 Scene Frame

Smuggling a witness over the palace wall at night. Active clocks: Patrol Sweep (6) at 3/6, Supply (4) at 1/4.

33.10.2 Beats

1) Scout the south wall Wits+Stealth (5d10): 10, 8, 6, 3, 1 \Rightarrow 3 hits, 1 CP. GM spends 1 CP: "You succeed, but your old rope is Compromised." Patrol Sweep stays at 3/6.

2) Climb with the witness Body+Athletics (4d10): 7, 6, 5, 1 \Rightarrow 2 hits, 1 CP. GM spends 1 CP to tick Patrol Sweep \Rightarrow 4/6 and adds pressure: "Lanterns brighten; footsteps quicken along the inner walk."

3) Last push, running low GM fills Supply to 2/4 due to Significant Time climbing and cold. Face tries to soothe the witness (Presence+Sway, 5d10): 9, 8, 2, 1, 1 \Rightarrow 2 hits, 2 CP. GM spends 2 CP: +1 Fatigue to the Face (shivering, breathless) and tick Patrol Sweep to 5/6.

4) Extraction or collapse They have a choice: burn a Boon to activate an off-screen contact's garden gate, or risk one more roll with Fatigue penalties. If they roll and give the GM 1 CP, the GM can fill Patrol Sweep to 6/6 \Rightarrow "Cordon slams shut; horns blare. Capture is on the table."

33.11 Nomenclature (Quick Canon)

33.11.1 Regions and Peoples

- Kahfagia — western convoys lantern law.
- Ecktoria — central peninsula; coinhouses forums.
- Acasia — broken marches; cursed and lawless territory.
- Silkstrand — port city of trade, secrets, bravos, and intrigue; sole major city in Acasia on the Amaranthine Sea.
- Vhasia — fractured sun; Marcott at the Belworth mouth.
- Viterra — last kingdom; Fairport at the Belworth mouth; Tarlington on the falls.

- Ubral — stone between spears; passes to the Dolmis NW.
- Thepyrgos — stairs, synod, and the Astroegro Straits.
- Aeler — crowns under-vaults across the Aelerians.
- Mistlands — bells, salt, and breath; Payden's Port.
- Valewood — empire under leaves; thin shore.
- Aelinnel — stone, bough, and bright tide-gates.
- Aelaerem — hearth hollow across rolling downs.
- Linn — skerries storm-oaths; the Yloka road.
- Ykrul — wolf standards winter camps.
- Vilikari — laurels longhouses.
- Zakov — salt serpent corsairs; criminal syndicates and smuggler's haven on the Dolmis coast.
- Black Banners — condotta free companies; mercenaries and war-band territories in Ykrul lands.

33.11.2 Geography

- Amaranthine Sea — western sea.
- Dolmis Sea — inner sea to the east.
- Aberderrin Sea — northeastern basin.
- Astroegro Straits — hinge between seas.

33.12 Prestige Abilities

- **Echo-Walker's Step** (High Elf, Cost: 20 XP; Req: Wits 5, Arcana 4): 1/arc, *observe* a perfect echo of a past event at your location (no retconning). GM immediately banks +2 CP; scenes touching that memory carry an omen. Grants DV 1 on one action that uses the revealed truth.
- **Warglord** (Ykrul, Cost: 18 XP; Req: Body 5, Command 3): Once per campaign, unify scattered warbands into a single host for a season. Start a *Logistics* clock and a *Grudge* clock; either one filling fractures the host.
- **Spirit-Shield** (Aeler, Cost: 15 XP; Req: Spirit 4, Insight 3): 1/session, erase up to 3 CP from an ally's *current* roll; you immediately mark Fatigue +1 and the GM banks +1 CP as backlash.

33.13 Between Sessions Activities Log

33.13.1 Character Advancement

XP Allocation

- **Total XP Available:** _____ XP
- **Attributes Spent:** _____ XP (_____ days downtime)
- **Skills Spent:** _____ XP (_____ days downtime)
- **Remaining XP:** _____ XP

Attribute Improvements

Attribute	Old Rating	New Rating	Cost	Downtime
Body				
Wits				
Spirit				
Presence				

Skill Improvements

Skill	Old Level	New Level	Cost	Downtime
Academia				
Arts				
Athletics				
Bonds				
Combat				
Craft				
Deceive				
Empathy				
Lore				
Move				
Notice				
Perform				
Physique				
Pilot				
Ranged				
Rapport				
Resist				
Stealth				
Tactics				
Will				

33.13.2 Asset Management**New Assets Acquired**

Asset Name	Type	Cost	Acquisition Method

Existing Assets

Asset Name	Status	Used This Session	Notes

33.13.3 Follower Updates**Active Followers**

Name	Role	Harm	Exposure	Status

New Followers Recruited

- Follower Name: _____
- Cost: _____ XP
- Downtime: _____ days
- Capabilities: _____

33.13.4 Bond Development**Bonds Strengthened**

- Character/NPC: _____
- Development: _____

New Bonds Formed

- Character/NPC: _____
- Nature of Bond: _____

33.13.5 Complication Resolution

Complications Cleared

Complication	Resolution Method

Ongoing Complications

- **Active Complications:** _____
- **CP Debt This Session:** + _____ CP per scene

33.13.6 Boon Economy

- **Boons Held:** _____ / 5 maximum
- **Boons Converted to XP:** _____ (2 Boons = 1 XP, max 2 XP/session)
- **Boons Spent on Assets:** _____
- **Boons from Bond Actions:** _____

33.13.7 Session Rewards Summary

Reward Type	XP Gained
Table Attendance	+2 XP
Major Objective Reached	+ _____ XP
Discovery or Lore Unlocked	+ _____ XP
Hard Choice Embraced	+ _____ XP
Complication Spotlight	+ _____ XP
Bond/Flag Driven Play	+ _____ XP
GM Curveball Award	+ _____ XP
Complication Dividend (Cards)	+ _____ XP
Total Session XP	+ _____ XP

33.13.8 Downtime Activities

- **Total Downtime Days:** _____
- **Activities Undertaken:**
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- **Haste Clock Status (if applicable):** _____ / _____ segments

33.13.9 Campaign Clock Updates

- Mandate: _____ / 6
- Crisis: _____ / 6
- Notable Changes: _____

33.13.10 Notes and Reflections

Voices

Acasia

Elite.

"I kept the ledgers when the last governors fled. Law is a map; ours burned. In Acasia the only borders left are curses you learn too late. The ink runs thin where the old roads used to be, and the names of places shift like smoke in the wind. I've seen three different cartographers try to chart our borders—each map disagreed with the last, and all of them were wrong. The curse doesn't care about parchment—it cares about blood, about the weight of oaths broken and promises forgotten. Every milepost whispers a different name now, and if you listen too long, you start to forget your own."

Commoner.

"You don't take shelter—you bargain with whatever lives in the dark. Pay in trinkets, or it takes memories. I'm light on both. Last week I traded my grandmother's wedding ring for a night's peace in an abandoned barn. The thing that took it looked almost human, but its eyes were wrong—like staring into deep water. Now I can't remember her face, only that she had kind hands. The ring's gone, the memory's gone, and I'm still hungry. There's a merchant two valleys over who'll give you a vial of forget-me-not tea for a copper piece—brew it right and you won't remember trading away your nightmares. Problem is, you also won't remember your children's names."

Aelaerem

Elite.

"Our hedges are not for show; they are promises plaited green. We tithe milk and song so the old neighbors stay on their side of dusk. Every spring we walk the boundaries, weaving new growth with old wood, singing the songs that hold the wild things at bay. The hedge-witch taught me that a properly tended hedge remembers every word spoken near it—every blessing, every curse, every secret whispered in the dark. We plant according to the moon's phase: rowan for protection, hawthorn for luck, and always, always, a sprig of rosemary to remember the dead. The old neighbors are particular about their due—too little song and they scratch at the roots; too much milk and they send the crows to peck your crops. Balance is everything."

Commoner.

"The flock startles before the wind turns. When they refuse the east meadow, I refuse it too. Hoofprints don't lie—even the small, barefoot ones. Last harvest moon, all the sheep faced inward, huddled together like they were afraid of something coming from the edges of the field. I found prints in the mud the next morning—too small for any animal I'd ever seen, too deep for the weight they should have been. The old shepherd said once that sheep see what we can't, that their fear is cleaner than ours. They know when the hedge-witch has been walking in her other shape, when the mummers have taken off their masks and forgotten to put them back on. I follow their lead because they've never led me wrong yet."

Aeler

Elite.

"Profit is a kind of ballast; it keeps a city steady when the deep knocks. We sell guarantees—tunnel, treaty, inheritance. Every vault has its price, every passage its fee, every word carved in stone its weight in silver. The Guild Princes don't rule from above—we rule from the ledgers, from the careful balance of what goes down and what comes up. When the mountain groans in the night, we don't pray—we calculate. How much stone will shift? What tunnels will need shoring? Which families will lose their birthright to the deep? The answers are always in the numbers, always in the careful accounting of risk versus reward. A guarantee properly worded is worth more than a crown, and lasts longer than most marriages."

Commoner.

"You learn to hear the stone thinking. If it dreams hungry, you wake the alarm and hope the lifts aren't already coming up full. The deep has moods like a sleeping giant—sometimes it snores, sometimes it turns over, sometimes it wakes up hungry. I've been down there for twelve years, and I can tell by the way the walls breathe whether we're safe or not. Last winter, the stone started singing in the third descent—a low hum that made the lamp-wicks flutter. The engineer said it was just gas pockets, but I knew better. Something was listening down there, something that remembered when the vaults were new and the guarantees meant something. We sealed that tunnel for a season, but the singing followed us up."

Aelinnel

Elite.

"Equations are cages for impossible beasts. Mind your bars; the numbers will bite if the proof has gaps. In the Mathlands, we don't just calculate—we domesticate. Every formula is a leash, every theorem a collar. I've seen what happens when a proof breaks—when the bars of an equation snap and the beast inside gets loose. Last solstice, the Geometer-General tried to prove the nature of time itself. The equation held for three days, then... something slipped through. Time doubled back on itself for a mile around the academy. Students aged fifty years in an hour, then un-aged just as quickly. The Geometer-General is still trying to solve for what got out—he won't eat, won't sleep, just stares at his chalkboard and mutters about prime numbers and the weight of infinity."

Commoner.

"Master says the kettle is safe because it only screams on prime days. I marked my calendar with bandages. The first month I was apprenticed, I thought he was joking. Then the kettle started screaming on the 2nd, the 3rd, the 5th... always prime numbers. Master's got twenty-seven kettles in his workshop, and they all sing different songs. The copper one hums lullabies to keep the equations docile. The iron one growls warnings when the proofs start to strain. The silver kettle—that one's the worst. It only screams on Mersenne primes, and when it does, the numbers start moving on their own. I've seen equations crawl across the floor like spilled ink, looking for something to calculate. Master says that's what happens when you try to cage infinity—it fights back."

Black Banner**Elite.**

"A contract is a country small enough to carry. We march inside its borders until someone pays to redraw them. Every clause is a territory, every signature a citizen. I've seen generals surrender entire provinces for the right wording in a rider, and kings give up daughters for a properly witnessed amendment. The beauty of a contract is that it's always negotiable—until the blood starts flowing. Then it becomes something else entirely. My company's banner has changed hands seventeen times in the last decade. Each new captain brings their own interpretation of the original charter, their own understanding of what we're contracted to protect. The men don't care who signs the papers—they care who pays their wages and who leads them into battle."

Commoner.

"Uniform by day, coin by night. If the banners dance with Ykrul or Vilikari, I keep step and count my fingers after. Last campaign, we switched sides three times in as many weeks. First we were protecting a merchant convoy from river pirates, then we were the pirates attacking a noble's estate, then we were the noble's guards putting down a peasant uprising. The captain said it was all according to contract—that the wording was flexible enough to cover any interpretation. By the end, I couldn't remember whose coin I was spending or whose blood was on my sword. The only constant was the paymaster's seal, and even that looked different every payday."

Ecktoria**Elite.**

"Empire is a habit; we still set tables as if guests will arrive crowned. What we lack in legions we spend in letters. The marble forums echo with the ghosts of senators who never existed, and the basilicas still ring with the voices of laws that were never passed. I've spent three years drafting a treaty with a kingdom that fell to plague twenty years ago—their ambassador arrives every spring, all ceremony and empty titles, and we discuss trade routes that lead to abandoned cities. The coin-house still mints coins bearing the face of an emperor who died before his coronation, because to stop would be to admit that the empire is smaller than we pretend. We are a nation of forms, of the careful ritual of governance performed for an audience of shadows."

Commoner.

"I stamp more seals than I eat meals. Paper walks farther than soldiers do now. Every document that crosses my desk needs three different stamps, two signatures, and a witness who swears they saw it written in triplicate. I've seen trade agreements that were longer than epic poems, marriage contracts that required their own libraries, and death certificates that needed to be notarized by the dead man's living relatives. The clerks have developed a kind of poetry to the process—we can tell just by looking at a document how important it is, how many departments it will need to visit before it's properly dead. The most tragic are the love letters that come through the system—by the time they're stamped and sealed, the lovers have usually forgotten why they wrote them."

Kahfagia**Elite.**

"Currents are taxes paid in advance. We collect where winds consent and governors remember who taught them the tide. The sea is the greatest empire builder—every wave carries tribute, every storm redistributes wealth. I've seen merchant fleets founder on reefs that weren't there last season, and fishing villages prosper from currents that bring silver fish instead of the usual bait. The Admiralty Prefect doesn't rule from a throne—he rules from a chart room, watching the dance of wind and water that determines who prospers and who drowns. The Oshiiran taught us that the sea remembers everything—every dropped anchor, every spilled cargo, every prayer whispered to placate the deep. We collect not just the obvious tariffs, but the subtle ones: the price of safe passage, the cost of favorable winds, the fee for not mentioning the wrecks we know about."

Commoner.

"Salt is honest work—your palms tell the truth by dusk. The empire is ropes and knots; I know which ones hold. Every morning I check the rigging on three different ships, and every evening I can tell by the calluses on my hands which lines were properly secured and which were just for show. The salt gets into everything—your clothes, your food, your dreams. I've been at sea for fifteen years, and I still wake up thinking I hear the waves. The old salts say that's how you know you're truly part of the fleet—when the sea starts talking to you in your sleep. The Vilikari officers think they understand navigation, but they're still learning to read the wind. They measure distance in leagues; we measure it in the way the spray tastes and the angle of the sun on the water."

Linns**Elite.**

"Oars decide what laws can reach. My ships are courts that sit wherever the tide allows. The law is a fluid thing among the skerries—it changes with the depth of water, with the strength of the wind, with the phase of the moon. I've held court on ice floes, in fog banks, and once on a whale's back when the sea was calm enough to make it work."

The River Jarls understand that justice isn't about permanence—it's about adaptation. A ruling that works in deep water might be useless in the shallows, and a law that serves the mainland is often meaningless among the islands. My authority flows like the tide—strong in some channels, weak in others, always moving, always changing. The only constant is the need for a strong arm and a steady hand on the tiller."

Commoner.

"We read the Yloka by taste—mud for shallows, iron for towns. When the rowlocks sing, a door is about to open. The river has its own language, and if you listen with more than your ears, it tells you everything you need to know. Sweet water means we're approaching a village that's been good to travelers. Bitter water warns of bandits or bad blood ahead. When the current changes direction suddenly, it's because someone upstream has made a decision that's going to affect us all. The old oarsmen say the river remembers every drop of blood spilled in its waters, and when the time is right, it brings the reckoning to the surface. I've seen fish rise with arrowheads in their bellies, and reeds grow around coins that were lost generations ago."

Mistlands

Elite.

"We count winters, not kings. The mountain signs the treaties; we only initial them. In the Mistlands, power doesn't come from crowns or charters—it comes from endurance. I've seen kingdoms rise and fall while our flocks grazed the same hills, watched empires crumble while our bells tolled the same hours. The mountain speaks in geological time, in the slow settling of stone and the patient accumulation of snow. Kings come and go like seasons, but the mountain remembers every treaty, every boundary stone, every drop of blood spilled on its slopes. We are the mountain's memory keepers, the ones who ensure that the old agreements hold even when the signatories have forgotten what they promised. The Dwarves understand this—they know that some things are meant to last longer than human ambition."

Commoner.

"Mist keeps secrets. I keep sheep. Between us, we've hidden whole wars from the world. The mist comes down thick some mornings, so thick you can't see your own hands in front of your face. That's when the real work gets done—when the sheep move through the fog like ghosts, carrying messages in their wool, hiding refugees in their folds. I've guided armies through the mist without the enemy knowing they were there, smuggled nobles across borders that should have been impassable. The sheep don't care about politics—they just want good grass and clean water. But they're better at keeping secrets than most people, and they never betray a trust. The mist respects that kind of loyalty."

Silkstrand

Elite.

"Water is the city's memory; every debt finds its level. Our bravos keep the surface calm while old things move below. The canals remember everything—the weight of every boat, the cargo of every barge, the blood that's been spilled in their depths. I've seen merchants who thought they could escape their obligations by taking ship, only to find that the water carried their debts faster than their sails. The old things beneath the city are patient—they wait for the right moment to surface, when the weight of accumulated sins finally breaks the surface tension. We maintain the delicate balance between order and chaos, between the prosperity that flows on the surface and the corruption that festers below. Every bridge is a negotiation, every canal a compromise with forces that predate the city itself."

Commoner.

"Oar in one hand, knife in the other. If the fog tastes bitter, don't sing—listen. The gondoliers know the city's secrets because we navigate by more than sight. The taste of the water tells us what's happening in the districts we can't see, the sound of our oars against the current warns of trouble ahead. When the fog comes down thick over the canals, it's not just visibility that's lost—communication breaks down, alliances shift, and old enemies find themselves rowing side by side. I've carried messages that were worth more than gold, and passengers who were worth less than the air they breathed. The fog doesn't care about your status—it just wants to know what you're really made of."

Theona

High Status.

"Hospitality binds sharper than iron. We keep the old table set, and our guests behave like saints—most nights. The table seats eight, never nine. The ninth chair remains empty, turned to face the wall. Guests count themselves without speaking the number aloud—eight-and-one, seven-and-two, six-and-three. The old ones taught us that some numbers are doors that should not be opened, some counts that invite what walks between the stones. When the tide brings nine ships to our harbor, we count them as eight-and-one, and the harbor-master knows to leave the ninth blessing unspoken. The Green Neighbors understand this mathematics—they count in seasons, not numbers, and their gifts always come in eights."

Low Status.

"Lights on the water mean one of two things: a catch or a bargain. Bring extra salt either way. But never, never nine fish in your net—eight-and-one, or cast again. The sea counts what we cannot see, and it knows when we try to hide the true number. I once hauled a catch of nine silver fish to market, and the buyer's eyes went strange, like he was looking through me to something else. He paid me in coins that turned to leaves by noon. Now I count my haul twice—once for the market, once for the water's memory. Eight fish, eight coins, eight blessings. The ninth belongs to the tide, and the tide keeps its own counsel."

Thepyrgos

Elite.

"Dispute is our sport; we wrestle with premises and shake truth out by the ankle. In the City of a Thousand Stairs, every argument is a climb, every conclusion a summit worth reaching. I've seen philosophers spend years debating the nature of a single word, climbing higher and higher on the scaffolding of logic until they're dizzy with the view. The Synod Hall echoes with the voices of scholars who've dedicated their lives to proving that the opposite of everything is also true. We don't just debate ideas—we inhabit them, live inside their implications until we understand their weight and texture. Truth in Thepyrgos is not a destination but a journey, and the most interesting truths are the ones that lead us to unexpected vistas."

Commoner.

"When the scholars argue, we add steps. Every answer needs somewhere noble to stand. The stonecutters and masons of Thepyrgos understand that knowledge has weight—it needs to be properly supported, given a foundation that won't shift under the pressure of new ideas. I've built lecture halls for philosophers who needed to pace while they thought, constructed viewing platforms for astronomers who wanted to get closer to the sky, and carved steps into solid rock for debates that were expected to last for months. The scholars pay well for quality work, but they also expect their surroundings to reflect the importance of their thoughts. A poorly constructed staircase can undermine an entire philosophical system—form and function are inseparable in our city."

Ubral

Elite.

"We own what we can defend at dawn. Feuds are calendars the dead write on our doors. In the highlands, property is not measured in acres but in the strength of your arm and the sharpness of your blade. I've seen territories change hands three times in a single day—won at sunrise, lost at noon, reclaimed by sunset. The clan chiefs understand that ownership is temporary, but honor is eternal. Every feud adds another name to the list, another obligation that will be passed down through generations. The dead write their calendars in blood, and the living are expected to honor their appointments. We don't sign treaties—we make promises that are witnessed by the stones and remembered by the wind."

Commoner.

"Cattle know the safe passes better than chiefs do. I follow their noses and keep my knife friendly. The herders understand that the mountains have their own wisdom—the cattle can smell danger on the wind, sense the shifting of stone before it happens, know which paths are watched by unfriendly eyes. I've learned to read their behavior like a map, to understand that when they bunch together and face a particular direction, there's something worth paying attention to over the next ridge. The chiefs make their plans in council halls, but the cattle make the real decisions about where we're safe and where we're not. My knife is for protection, but it's also a tool for making offerings to the spirits who watch over the high passes."

Valewood

Elite.

"What grows too tall forgets its roots. Stones that dream of permanence become flowers. We are the forest's gardeners, not its jailers. The old empire sought to write its name in stone, but stone is deaf to whispers. The wood listens. It heard their boots, their swords, their screams—and then it dreamed them into mulch. What is buried becomes soil. What is forgotten becomes rain. What is remembered becomes new growth. The forest does not hate the past; it digests it. You cannot impose will on a tree that has forgotten more than you will ever know."

Commoner.

"Silence is the forest's first language. Words are its second. When you speak thanks, you name a debt. When you name a debt, you invite the forest to collect. I have walked paths that opened for me like flower petals, and paths that closed behind me like fists. The difference was never in what I said, but in what I did not say. The forest counts your footfalls, not your gratitude. It remembers the weight of your need, not the sound of your praise. Offer something that cannot be named—your breath, your shadow, the space between your heartbeats. The wood accepts only what you do not realize you have given."

Vhasia

Elite.

"We dine from borrowed plates and plot at borrowed maps. The crown fits best when worn in rumor. In the Fractured Sun, legitimacy is not inherited but acquired—gathered like loose coins, picked up from the tables of fallen houses. I've seen pretenders who commanded more respect than the so-called legitimate heirs, dukes who ruled from cellars while their castles were occupied by strangers. The old court is scattered to the winds, but its forms and ceremonies live on in the dreams of those who would restore it. We are a nation of shadows and echoes, of rulers who govern from hiding and nobles who sign their names in code. The crown is not a symbol of authority—it's a target, and everyone knows it."

Commoner.

"Dukes change faster than bowstrings. I keep both dry and swear as required. The countryside is a patchwork of competing authorities—this village owes fealty to a merchant who bought the title, that town answers to a priest who claims divine right, and the next hamlet follows a bandit chief who's proven he can protect them better than anyone else. I've served under seven different lords in as many months, and I've learned that loyalty is a luxury I can't afford. My bowstring stays dry because I never know when I might need to use it, and my oaths are carefully worded to leave room for interpretation. The only constant is change, and the only certainty is that today's master will be tomorrow's memory."

Vilikari

Elite.

"We trade with yesterday's enemy and sow where tomorrow's treaty will land. Soil forgives what banners won't. The Marches understand that enmity is seasonal—what burns today might nourish tomorrow's harvest. I've signed peace treaties with men whose fathers I helped bury, and declared war on allies whose grandfathers were my drinking companions. The soil doesn't care about the color of your banner—it only wants to know if you're bringing nutrients or poison. The Foedus Stone has seen more treaties carved into its surface than any other monument in the known world, and still the work continues. We are farmers of diplomacy, understanding that the best agreements are the ones that grow naturally from the conditions of the land."

Commoner.

"I've buried seed and brothers in the same field. Both come up when it rains. The frontier farmers understand that death and life are partners in the same dance—the bones of the fallen enrich the soil that feeds the living. I've seen graves that produced the finest wheat in the district, and battlefields that grew flowers so beautiful they attracted pilgrims from across the sea. The soil remembers everything, and it's not particular about the source of its nutrients. My brothers died defending this ground, and now it feeds my children. The cycle continues, and the land is patient. The Ykrul understand this—they know that conquest without cultivation is just temporary occupation."

Viterra

Elite.

"We rule by bridges. Break a span and watch titles wash away. In the Last Kingdom, power flows like water—controlled by the careful management of crossings and the strategic placement of obstacles. I've seen earls who commanded vast territories on paper lose everything when their bridges were destroyed, and minor nobles who controlled a single ford become the most important people in the region. The rivers are the arteries of Viterra, and those who control the flow of traffic across them control the destiny of the realm. Every bridge is a statement of authority, every ford a potential chokepoint. The Queen understands that governance is not about commanding obedience but about making compliance the easiest path available."

Commoner.

"Coins talk louder than heralds at the ford. I hear who's winning before the town does. The ferry operators and bridge toll collectors are the true intelligence network of Viterra—we know who's paying what to whom, and we can read the political winds by the weight of the purses that cross our waters. I've seen merchants who could afford to pay double the normal toll but chose to haggle over a few coppers, and I've seen nobles who tried to cross without payment and found themselves waiting for weeks. The coins tell the story of the realm more accurately than any official report. When the payments start changing hands, when new faces appear at the fords, that's when you know the balance of power is shifting."

Ways Between

Elite.

"A threshold is a promise with hinges. I oil them so the dead don't squeal when they pass. The Gate-Wardens understand that every crossing is a negotiation, every passage a compact between the traveler and the forces that govern the spaces between spaces. I've seen doors that led to yesterday, windows that opened onto tomorrow, and thresholds that connected to places that never were and never will be. The hinges are the key—they determine not just whether a door opens, but what kind of opening it creates. A well-maintained threshold can be the difference between salvation and damnation, between arrival and endless wandering. The dead are particular about their passage—they remember every sound, every hesitation, every moment of doubt."

Commoner.

"Walk until your name sounds strange in your own mouth; that's how you know the road is listening. The pilgrims and wayfarers of the Spiritways understand that identity is fluid in the spaces between worlds. I've walked paths that made me forget my own face, crossed bridges that changed my name with every step, and navigated mazes that rearranged my memories like cards in a dealer's hands. The road doesn't just test your endurance—it tests your willingness to become someone new. When your name starts to feel foreign, when your past seems like someone else's story, that's when the path reveals its true nature. Most people never reach that point—they turn back when the road starts asking questions they're not prepared to answer."

Ykrul

Elite.

"Grass is a sea that drowns empires. We ride the waves and choose who to pull ashore. The Violet Steppe understands that power is not about holding territory but about controlling movement—about being able to appear anywhere and disappear just as quickly. I've seen great armies bogged down in grass that seemed harmless, and small warbands that could move faster than the wind across terrain that should have been impassable. The grass remembers every hoofbeat, every campfire, every drop of blood spilled on its surface. We are not conquerors but navigators, reading the signs that others miss and following paths that exist only in the memory of the steppe. Empires build walls; we build speed."

Commoner.

"If the wind smells of iron, veer north. If it smells of bread, saddle light—we won't be welcome. The scouts and outriders understand that the steppe speaks in scents and sounds that civilized people never learn to interpret. Iron means battle—recent or impending—and the smart scout knows when to avoid the area. Bread means settlement, and settlements mean complications. The Ykrul prefer the open grass where the only laws are the ones written in hoofprints and the only currency is the ability to move faster than your enemies. I've smelled smoke from fires that were fifty miles away, heard the whisper of horse hooves across ground that should have muffled all sound, and felt the approach of storms that wouldn't show on any civilized weather vane."

Zakov

Elite.

"Customs is a conversation, not a wall. We speak every dialect of gray. The Salt and Serpent understand that the most profitable trade happens in the spaces between legality and illegality, in the gray areas where definitions become flexible and boundaries shift according to the needs of the moment. I've negotiated deals that were technically legal but morally bankrupt, and arranged transactions that were illegal but socially necessary. The key is understanding that every law has its price, every regulation its exception. The Syndicate Princes don't rule through force—they rule through the careful manipulation of definitions, the strategic application of technicalities, and the patient cultivation of relationships with those who enforce the rules."

Commoner.

"If a crate walks by itself, don't see it. If a coin falls alone, catch it for the man behind you. The dock rats and runners understand that Zakov operates on levels that the surface world never sees. I've watched cargo move itself from ship to warehouse without human hands, seen coins change ownership in ways that defied explanation, and learned that some of the most valuable goods in the city are the ones that don't appear on any manifest. The city has its own intelligence network—not the official kind with guards and couriers, but the kind that operates through whispers in dark alleys and signals that only the initiated understand. The smart runner knows when to look away and when to pay attention, when to speak and when to remain silent."

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