

Fate's Edge Player's Guide

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Chapter 1

Welcome to Fate's Edge

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

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

What Is Fate's Edge?

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

- Every roll introduces the potential for triumph *and* complication.
- Magic is powerful—but dangerous.
- Choices ripple outward, shaping both character arcs and the setting.
- Growth is meaningful, earned through XP spent on skills, assets, and unique talents.

This guide is your primer to the world, the people, and the powers that define Fate's Edge. It is designed to help you build a character, understand the setting, and step into a world where your actions matter.

Design Philosophy

Fate's Edge is built on four core principles:

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

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

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

Consequence Weight No action is free. Every choice changes the fiction, for better or worse.

Tone of Play

Fate's Edge encourages cinematic, collaborative storytelling. Expect:

- Stories driven by character choices, not predetermined plots.
- A world that reacts to your decisions—both big and small.

- Themes of legacy, sacrifice, and moral ambiguity.

Whether you're a lone duelist, a scheming mastermind, or a spirit-touched outlander, your path is yours to forge—and the world will remember it.

What's in This Guide

This Player's Guide is divided into thematic chapters to help you build and play your character with confidence:

- **Core Mechanics** — How to resolve actions, spend XP, and manage consequences.
- **Character Creation** — Attributes, skills, paths, and archetypes.
- **Magic and Talents** — Dangerous arts, cultural abilities, and unique powers.
- **World and Lore** — The lands, peoples, and gods of the Amaranthine Sea.
- **Assets and Followers** — How to build influence beyond the self.
- **Appendices** — Quick reference sheets, compendiums, and deck generators.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is modular. You can read it cover to cover or jump to sections relevant to your character concept. Each chapter is designed to stand alone while connecting to the broader themes of the game.

Use this guide alongside the *Fate's Edge System Reference Document (SRD)* for full mechanical support.

A Final Word

Fate's Edge is a game of bold choices and lasting consequences. Your story is not written in dice, but in the decisions you make—and the price you're willing to pay.

Welcome to the Edge. The world is watching.

What are you willing to risk to reshape the world around you?

Flavor is Free

Players and GMs: Remember that in Fate's Edge, **flavor is free!**

This means you can add descriptive details, cultural elements, and atmospheric touches to your actions without spending resources or requiring mechanical justification. Want to perform a parry with the traditional Aelerian bell-guard technique? Go ahead! Want to invoke the seasonal festivals of Theona when making a social roll? Perfect!

Flavor doesn't change the mechanical outcome of your actions, but it makes the world come alive and helps everyone at the table visualize and engage with the rich setting. Describe your character's background, their cultural customs, the local architecture, or the atmospheric details of a scene. These elements enrich the narrative without requiring dice rolls or resource expenditure.

The GM should encourage flavorful descriptions and may even provide additional descriptive details about the world in return. This collaborative approach to world-building through flavor helps create a more immersive experience for everyone involved.

Remember: Mechanics determine success or failure, but flavor determines the story we tell about how that success or failure came to be.

Chapter 2

Core Mechanics

In **Fate's Edge**, every action matters. The dice don't just tell you if you succeed—they shape the story by introducing tension, risk, and consequence. This chapter walks you through the core resolution system, Complication Points, and how every roll changes the narrative.

2.1 Basic Dice Mechanics

When you attempt a significant action, you roll a pool of ten-sided dice (d10s). The size of your pool is determined by:

$$DicePool = Attribute + Skill$$

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

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

Counting Successes

Each die that rolls **6 or higher** counts as a **Success**. Each die that rolls a **1** generates a **Complication Point (CP)**.

Die Result	Effect
6–10	+1 Success
1	+1 Complication Point (CP)
2–5	No effect

2.2 Difficulty Value (DV)

Before rolling, the Game Master (GM) sets a **Difficulty Value (DV)**—a target number of Successes needed to achieve the intent. DVs typically range from 1 to 4+, depending on the stakes and opposition.

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

2.3 Outcome Matrix

After rolling, compare your total Successes against the DV. The GM then resolves the outcome using the following matrix:

Outcome	Effect
Clean Success	Intent achieved crisply (DV met, no CP)
Success & Cost	Intent achieved, but GM spends CP for complications
Partial	Progress with a fork (accept cost OR concede ground)
Miss	No progress; GM spends CP OR offers Devil's Bargain

2.4 Complication Points (CP)

Complication Points are the engine of drama. They are not mere penalties—they are narrative tools the GM uses to introduce twists, tension, and texture into the story.

What CP Can Do

The GM may spend CP to:

- Escalate a threat or introduce a new one.
- Drain resources (time, gear, position).
- Reveal hidden dangers or betrayals.
- Cause collateral damage or unintended consequences.

CP Spend Menu (Examples)

- **1 CP** — Noise, trace, +1 Supply segment.
- **2 CP** — Alarm raised, lose position/cover, lesser foe or lock.
- **3 CP** — Reinforcements, gear breaks, rail tick.
- **4+ CP** — Major turn: trap springs, authority arrives, scene shifts.

2.5 The Description Ladder

The way you describe your action affects how the dice fall. Rich, vivid descriptions earn mechanical benefits.

Basic Action Roll as normal. All 1s remain as CP.

Detailed Action Re-roll one die showing 1.

Intricate Action Re-roll all dice showing 1, and add one narrative flourish on success.

CP Note. Re-rolling 1s does *not* erase their CP; any new 1s on the re-roll add more CP.

2.6 Assistance

Characters can help each other during actions. One helper per action may provide assistance dice, up to a maximum of +3 dice total from all sources. Exception: The "Exceptional Coordination" Talent allows one follower to provide +4 assist dice.

Assist dice come from the helper, not the leader. When applicable, the follower adds help dice equal to $\min(C, \text{the helper's relevant Skill})$, capped at +3 dice.

2.7 Boons

Boons are narrative tokens representing luck, resilience, or growth. You may carry up to **5 Boons** at once.

What You Can Do With Boons

- Re-roll one die after seeing the pool.
- Once per session, in downtime, you may convert 2 Boons \rightarrow 1 XP (max 2 XP via conversion per session).

2.8 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*.

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 **$\min(\text{CP}, 3)$** cards and synthesize a single twist guided by suit and highest rank.

2.9 Summary

The core mechanic of Fate's Edge is simple, but rich in narrative possibility:

1. Describe your intent and method.
2. Build your dice pool: Attribute + Skill.
3. Roll d10s, count Successes and Complication Points.
4. Compare Successes to DV, apply Outcome Matrix.
5. GM spends CP to add twists or tension, or draws from the Deck of Consequences.
6. You earn Boons for engaging the fiction meaningfully.

Every roll is a story beat. Embrace the risk—and let the consequences unfold.

Chapter 3

Character Advancement

In **Fate's Edge**, growth is not just about getting better at fighting or sneaking—it's about shaping your character's identity and influence in the world. Advancement comes through **Experience Points (XP)**, which you earn through play and spend to enhance your capabilities.

3.1 Earning XP

At the end of each session or story arc, the Game Master awards XP based on your actions and choices. Typical sources include:

- **Attendance** — Showing up to the table.
- **Objectives Reached** — Completing major goals or plot points.
- **Discoveries** — Unlocking lore, secrets, or new regions.
- **Hard Choices** — Embracing moral or emotional dilemmas.
- **Complication Spotlight** — Leaning into narrative twists and risks.
- **Bond/Flag Driven Play** — Engaging personal storylines.
- **GM Curveball Award** — For embracing unexpected challenges.

Session Pacing Options

The GM may choose from three pacing modes:

Mode	XP per Session
Gritty	4–6 XP
Standard	6–10 XP
Heroic	10–14 XP

Session Awards

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

Milestones

- +8–12 XP to all players at the conclusion of a major story arc.
- +2 XP bonus to one player for a signature moment of the arc.

Complication Dividend

- Face Card: +1 XP
- Ace: +2 XP

3.2 Spending XP

XP is the universal currency of growth. You may spend it in three broad categories:

1. Enhance Self

Invest XP to improve your core capabilities:

- **Attributes:** Cost = New Rating \times 3 XP. Downtime = new rating in days.
- **Skills:** Cost = New Level \times 2 XP. Downtime = new level in days.

Example: Raising Melee from 2 to 3 costs $3 \times 2 = 6$ XP.

2. Acquire Assets

XP can be spent to gain worldly influence:

- **Off-Screen Assets** — Minor (4 XP, 1 day), Standard (8 XP, 1 week), Major (12 XP, 1 month).
- **On-Screen Followers** — Allies who assist in scenes. Cost = Cap² XP. Downtime = 1–3 days to recruit and brief.

Example: A Cap 3 Scout costs $3^2 = 9$ XP.

3. Learn Talents

Talents are unique abilities that expand what your character can do:

- **General Talents** — Universal benefits like rerolls or bonuses.
- **Racial/Cultural Talents** — Abilities tied to your heritage.
- **Prestige Abilities** — Capstone powers with significant narrative weight.

3.3 The Three Paths of XP

Each path reflects a different approach to growth:

Solo Path 70–90% Enhance Self, 0–10% Assets, 0–20% Talents

Focus on personal mastery. Strong in spotlight scenes, but fragile off-scene.

Mixed Path 50–65% Self, 15–25% Assets, 15–25% Talents

Balanced growth. Reliable in most scenes, but upkeep and risk apply.

Mastermind Path 25–40% Self, 35–55% Assets, 20–40% Talents

Build networks and influence. Powerful in strategy, but vulnerable to fallout.

3.4 Downtime and Rushed Growth

Most advancement requires **Downtime** to reflect training, study, or negotiation:

- **Attributes:** New rating in days.
- **Skills:** New level in days.
- **Followers/Assets:** 1–30 days depending on scope.

Rush Rule

You may skip downtime, but the GM creates a **Haste Clock** (4 segments). If it fills, the new ability or asset carries flaws or narrative complications.

3.5 Tiers of Reputation

As you spend XP, you rise through soft "tiers" that affect how the world responds:

Tier	XP Range
I – Rookie	0–40 XP
II – Seasoned	41–90 XP
III – Veteran	91–150 XP
IV – Paragon	151–220 XP
V – Mythic	221+ XP

Higher tiers unlock access to Prestige Abilities and deeper narrative influence.

3.6 Follower Upkeep and Risk

Followers require maintenance to remain effective:

- **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 crew.

3.7 Summary

Advancement in Fate's Edge is about **choice**:

- Will you master yourself?
- Will you command networks?
- Will you become a mythic figure?

Every XP spent reshapes your story. Choose wisely—and live with the consequences.

Chapter 4

Magic & The Arts

In **Fate's Edge**, magic is not a tool of convenience—it is a dangerous negotiation with the fabric of reality. Every spell is a story beat, and every casting carries risk. This chapter introduces the **Casting Loop**, magical Backlash, and the thematic power of the Arts.

4.1 Philosophy of Magic

Magic in Fate's Edge is:

- **Powerful** — It can reshape the battlefield, the story, or the world.
- **Risky** — Every spell generates Complication Points (CP), which manifest as Backlash.
- **Thematic** — Effects and consequences align with the Art invoked (fire, shadow, storm, etc.).
- **Volatile by Design** — Magic is not fully understood.
- **Narrative Weight** — Casting is always a story moment.

Magic is not about stacking damage—it's about shifting the narrative.

4.2 The Caster's Burden

Magicians are defined not by what they can do, but by what they are willing to risk.

4.3 The Casting Loop

All spellcasting follows a structured sequence called the **Casting Loop**. It unfolds in two phases:

1. Channel

The caster focuses, rolling **Wits + Arcana** to gather **Potential**.

- Each **Success** becomes a point of Potential.
- Each **1 rolled** generates a Complication Point immediately.

2. Weave

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

- The **Description Ladder** applies: Intricate actions reroll 1s and may add a flourish.
- The spell's effect is determined by successes and the GM's interpretation of position and effect.

3. Backlash

Any Complication Points generated during the Casting Loop are spent by the GM as **Backlash**.

- Backlash is **thematic**—aligned with the Art used.
- Severity scales with the number of CP spent.
- Mitigation: Boons do not reduce CP unless a Talent/Asset explicitly says "Mitigate CP."

4.4 Backlash Severity Table

CP Spent	Typical Consequence
1–2	Minor nuisance or tell (noise, fatigue, brief distraction)
3–4	Noticeable setback (hazard clock, condition, new pressure)
5+	Major turn (scene shift, new foe, severe condition)

4.5 Common Magical Arts

Each Art has its own flavor and risk. Below are examples:

Pyromancy — Fire and heat. Backlash: Flames leap to unattended surfaces, smoke blinds allies, or the heat weakens structures.

Umbramancy — Shadow and silence. Backlash: Illusions persist too long, unseen things whisper truths best left hidden, morale crumbles.

Stormcraft — Wind and lightning. Backlash: Winds scatter allies' plans, lightning arcs toward unintended targets, storms linger beyond the caster's will.

Geomancy — Stone and structure. Backlash: rigidity, slow movement, guardians awaken.

Hydromancy — Water and flow. Backlash: stagnation, flooding, pests drawn.

Vitalism — Life and healing. Backlash: overgrowth, exhaustion, sympathetic drain.

Thaumaturgy — Divine or holy magic. Backlash: flickering sanctity, beacon effects, spiritual fatigue.

4.6 Ritual Casting (Optional Rule)

For greater effects, multiple casters can join in a **Ritual**.

- **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.
- Helpers may use different relevant skills if their procedure is fictionally distinct.
- CP from Channel resolves on that roller. CP from Weave is assigned to the primary caster.

Rituals increase the ceiling of magic—but also the risk. Backlash severity increases with each helper beyond the first.

4.7 Spell Design Guidelines

When creating new spells, follow this format:

1. **Name & Art** — e.g., Cinder-Fist (Pyromancy)
2. **Effect** — One clear narrative change: start Controlled, +1 effect, Hazard -1, etc.
3. **Backlash Ladder** — 1-2 CP = minor cost; 3-4 CP = pressure; 5+ CP = scene twist.

4.8 Example Spell: Cloak of Shadows

Art Umbramancy

DV 2

Effect In dim or darker light, target starts Controlled vs sight-based detection.

- Backlash**
- 1 CP — Slight self-blindness (-1 die on sight checks).
 - 2 CP — Whispering shadows create a faint tell.
 - 3 CP — You borrow light from elsewhere, leaving a conspicuously bright patch.
 - 4+ CP — A shadow-being takes interest.

4.9 Prestige Magical 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.
- **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.

4.10 Summary

Magic in Fate's Edge is never "safe." Every casting:

- Advances the story.
- Risks Backlash.
- Requires a cost—whether in CP, Fatigue, or narrative tension.

Embrace the risk—and let the Arts reshape the world.

Chapter 5

World Interaction

In **Fate's Edge**, the world is not a static backdrop—it reacts to your choices, complicates your plans, and evolves with your story. This chapter explores how you move through the world, what happens when you get lost, and how consequences ripple outward.

5.1 Travel Framework

Travel in Fate's Edge is not about counting hexes or tracking rations—it's about narrative pacing and the risks you encounter along the way. The GM uses a **Travel Framework** to keep movement tense and meaningful.

Two Deck Systems (Compatibility)

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*.

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.

Clock Size

The highest card rank determines the **Clock Size** for the travel leg:

Rank	Clock Size
2–5	4 segments
6–10	6 segments
J/Q/K	8 segments
Ace	10 segments

Resolving Travel

Each card drawn introduces a narrative element. The GM describes how it affects the journey. Players may act to resolve complications or advance the clock.

Set a travel clock by the highest rank. On success, advance to the next leg; on failure, mark delay, debt, or diversion and resolve a consequence in the fiction.

5.2 Narrative Time

Time in Fate’s Edge is flexible and story-driven. Actions are framed in four narrative scales:

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

Some Time — A few minutes: a skirmish, a careful lockpick, a short negotiation.

Significant Time — Hours: travel between locations, working a ritual, recovering from harm.

Days — Large-scale endeavors: marches, training, major recovery.

5.3 Deck of Consequences

The **Deck of Consequences** is a shared storytelling tool. Whenever you roll a 1 and generate a Complication Point, the GM may draw a card instead of improvising a twist.

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.

Structure of the Deck

Suits Represent domains of complications:

- Hearts — Emotional, social, or relational fallout.
- Spades — Harm, danger, or escalation of conflict.
- Clubs — Resource strain, economic or material cost.
- Diamonds — Magical, spiritual, or cosmic disturbances.

Ranks Represent severity:

- 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.

5.4 Supply Clock

The **Supply Clock** tracks the party's access to food, water, and gear.

Segments Filled	Effect
0 (Full)	The party is well-equipped.
2 (Low)	Minor narrative complications (bland food, damaged arrows, thinning waterskins).
3 (Dangerous)	Each character gains Fatigue.
4 (Empty)	Severe penalties.

5.5 Condition Tracks

Characters and assets have **Condition Tracks** that reflect wear, neglect, or harm:

Assets/Followers — Maintained → Neglected → Compromised

Party Resources — Supply (0-Full → 2-Low → 3-Dangerous → 4-Empty)

Character State — Fatigue (1-4 levels, re-roll successes)

Fatigue

- Effect: On their next roll, a character must reroll one success.
- Stacking: Each level adds another forced reroll.
- Recovery: A night's rest with adequate supply removes 1 Fatigue.

5.6 Engaging the World

The world of Fate's Edge is alive. When you:

- Enter a new region, draw cards to seed local flavor.
- Negotiate with a faction, consider their suit (Heart = personal, Diamond = leverage).
- Face a hazard, let the Deck of Consequences guide the fallout.

5.7 Summary

The world of Fate's Edge is not a puzzle to be solved—it is a living, reactive force. Travel is a narrative journey, not a logistical grind. Every step forward risks a twist, and every twist changes the story.

Engage with the world boldly—and let it shape you in return.

Chapter 6

Attributes and Skills

In **Fate's Edge**, your character is defined not by a long list of numbers—but by the interplay of four core **Attributes** and a focused set of **Skills**. Together, they shape your dice pools, guide your narrative choices, and reflect who you are in the world.

6.1 Attributes

Attributes represent broad aspects of your character's being. Each is rated from 1 to 5 for most mortals. Exceptional beings may exceed this range.

Body — Strength, endurance, and physical force.
Used for: Melee, Athletics, Endurance.

Wits — Perception, cleverness, and reaction speed.
Used for: Arcana, Stealth, Insight, Tactics.

Spirit — Willpower, intuition, and resilience.
Used for: Meditation, Resolve, Faith, Endurance.

Presence — Charm, command, and social force.
Used for: Diplomacy, Command, Performance, Sway.

6.2 Skills

Skills are focused expressions of talent. Each is tied to one or more Attributes, but creative players may justify alternative pairings if the narrative fits.

Skill Ratings

Rating	Meaning
0	Untrained — Rely on raw Attribute alone
1	Familiar — Basic competence, a journeyman's touch
2	Skilled — Trained and reliable in most circumstances
3	Expert — Professional mastery or long experience
4	Master — Renowned; your work is widely recognized
5	Legendary — Near-supernatural; few mortals reach this level

Common Skills

Below is a list of common skills used in Fate's Edge:

Athletics — Climbing, running, swimming.

Arcana — Magical theory, rituals, spellwork.

Brawl — Fists, grappling, improvised fighting.

Insight — Intuition, empathy, lie detection.

Melee — Blades, axes, polearms.

Ranged — Bows, crossbows, thrown arms.

Diplomacy — Negotiation, mediation, etiquette.

Stealth — Hiding, shadowing, evading.

Deception — Disguise, misdirection, bluffing.

Survival — Tracking, foraging, navigation.

Command — Leadership, intimidation, rallying.

Craft — Smithing, alchemy, tinkering.

Performance — Music, oratory, storytelling.

Lore — History, cultures, languages.

6.3 Building Your Dice Pool

When attempting a significant action, combine the relevant Attribute + Skill to determine your dice pool.

Examples:

- Body + Melee = raw steel and sinew.
- Wits + Melee = anticipation and precision.
- Presence + Melee = flourish, feint, and intimidation.

The same Skill, seen through different Attributes, tells a different story.

6.4 Skill Caps and Growth

Each Skill is capped by its linked Attribute. You cannot raise a Skill above your Attribute rating.

Cost to Raise Skills: $\text{New level} \times 2 \text{ XP}$

Example: Raising Stealth from 2 to 3 costs $3 \times 2 = 6 \text{ XP}$.

6.5 Skill Specializations

Some skills may be used in specialized contexts. Players may describe niche expertise (e.g., “Desert Survival” or “City Stealth”) to gain narrative advantages, subject to GM approval.

6.6 Summary

Attributes and Skills are the core of your character's identity:

- Attributes define your potential.
- Skills reflect your training and focus.
- Together, they determine how you act—and how the world responds.

Choose wisely. Your capabilities are not just tools—they are expressions of who you are.

Chapter 7

The Three XP Paths

In **Fate's Edge**, how you spend your Experience Points (XP) defines not only your character's capabilities—but also their role in the world. There are three broad paths of advancement, each representing a different philosophy of growth:

Enhance Self — Invest in personal mastery.

Acquire Assets — Build influence and networks.

Learn Talents — Unlock unique abilities and cultural arts.

This chapter explores each path, helping you choose the one that fits your vision—and warning you of the risks that come with each.

7.1 Path 1: Enhance Self

The **Solo Path** focuses on personal mastery. Players who choose this invest the majority of their XP in Attributes and Skills.

Typical XP Spread

- 70–90% Enhance Self
- 0–10% Assets
- 0–20% Talents

Strengths

- Reliable in spotlight scenes.
- Few moving parts—less upkeep.
- Resilient to follower loss or asset neglect.

Risks

- Vulnerable in logistics or social scenes.
- May stall when problems require networks or off-screen leverage.

Example Build: The Blade-Seeker

- Body 4, Wits 3
- Melee 4, Athletics 2
- Talents: Battle Instincts, Silver Tongue

7.2 Path 2: Acquire Assets

The **Mixed Path** balances personal growth with influence. Players invest in both self and assets—followers, holdings, or networks.

Typical XP Spread

- 50–65% Enhance Self
- 15–25% Assets
- 15–25% Talents

Strengths

- Adaptable—strong in many scenes.
- Bridges party gaps.
- Can solve problems off-screen.

Risks

- Upkeep pressure—assets and followers require attention.
- Followers can be targeted by GM Complication Points.

Example Build: The Bond-Keeper

- Presence 3, Wits 3
- Sway 3, Lore 1
- Follower: Cap 3 Archivist
- Asset: Minor Safehouse

7.3 Path 3: Learn Talents

The **Mastermind Path** prioritizes influence and narrative power. Players invest heavily in followers, assets, and Talents.

Typical XP Spread

- 25–40% Enhance Self
- 35–55% Assets
- 20–40% Talents

Strengths

- Strong strategic reach.
- Scene control via assistance and assets.
- Excellent at heists, social manipulation, and long-term planning.

Risks

- Dependency on lanes and helpers.
- Complication fallout can cascade.
- Vulnerable if assets are compromised or followers lost.

Example Build: The Spider

- Wits 3, Presence 3
- Tactics 2, Subterfuge 2
- Followers: Cap 4 Scout, Cap 3 Informant
- Assets: Standard Spy Network, Minor Workshop

7.4 Choosing Your Path

Your XP path is not fixed. You may shift over time, but each path comes with trade-offs:

Path	Focus	Strength	Fragility
Solo	Attributes/Skills	High personal pools	Low (self-reliant)
Mixed	Balanced	Moderate pools + situational help	Medium (helper risk)
Mastermind	Assets + Followers	Strong leverage	High (network risk)

7.5 Summary

Your XP path defines your role at the table:

- Will you be the hero who stands alone?
- Will you balance strength with support?
- Will you command webs of influence and intrigue?

Each path offers unique rewards—and consequences. Choose wisely, and let your choices echo through the world.

Chapter 8

Talents

In **Fate's Edge**, **Talents** are unique abilities that expand what your character can do. They are purchased with XP and often serve as stepping stones toward Prestige Abilities. Talents can be general, cultural, or narrative capstones that reshape how you engage with the world.

8.1 Types of Talents

Talents are organized into three categories based on cost and impact:

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.

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.

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.

8.2 Purchasing Talents

Talents are purchased with XP and may have prerequisites:

- **Attribute/Skill Requirements** — Must meet minimum ratings (permanent, not temporary).
- **Asset Requirements** — Some Talents require ownership of specific assets.
- **Cultural Requirements** — Certain Talents are restricted to specific cultures or Affinities.

Example: *Echo-Walker's Step* requires Wits 5, Arcana 4, and High Elf Affinity.

8.3 Prestige Prerequisites

- **Qualifying:** Attribute/Skill prerequisites must be met with permanent ratings.
- **After purchase:** If you later lose the Asset prerequisite, you keep the Talent but cannot activate features that require that Asset until restored.
- **Scaling:** Many abilities can be enhanced with additional XP investment.

8.4 Using Talents

Talents are typically used once per scene, session, or arc, as noted in their description. Overuse is restricted to prevent imbalance.

- **Once per Scene** — Can be used multiple times per session, but not on the same action.
- **Once per Session** — Limited to one use between downtimes.
- **Once per Arc/Campaign** — Reserved for narrative milestones.

8.5 Losing Talent Access

If you later lose a prerequisite (e.g., an Attribute is reduced or an Asset is lost), you **keep the Talent** but may not be able to use features that require that prerequisite until it is restored.

8.6 Summary

Talents are the unique expressions of your character's growth:

- General Talents offer reliable mechanical benefits.
- Cultural Talents reflect your heritage and specialized training.
- Prestige Abilities reshape the story at key moments.

Choose Talents that reflect your character's journey—and let them echo through the world.

Chapter 9

Assets and Followers

In **Fate's Edge**, your influence extends beyond your own skills and talents. Through **Assets** and **Followers**, you can shape the world off-screen, command allies in battle, and build lasting legacies. But with power comes responsibility—and risk.

9.1 Assets

Assets are off-screen resources that solve problems between sessions. They do not act in scenes directly, but they change the fiction and provide leverage when you return to the table.

Types of Assets

Minor (4 XP) — Safehouse, small shop, petty title.

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

Major (12 XP) — City license, regional network, fortress lease.

Using Assets

Assets provide off-screen benefits:

- Use each Asset's listed Off-Screen effect once per session for free.
- To reshape the current scene, spend 1 Boon.
- The Asset must have scope and reach.

Asset Condition

All Assets have a **Condition Track**:

Maintained — Full capability.

Neglected — -1 die when used; requires attention.

Compromised — Unavailable until repaired or recovered.

9.2 Followers

Followers are on-screen allies who assist in scenes. They are not stat blocks—they are story agents with personalities, goals, and flaws.

Follower Ratings

Followers are rated by **Cap** (1–5), which determines their specialty dice and assist bonus.

Cost: A follower with Specialty Cap C costs C^2 XP.

Assisting in Scenes

Followers assist by adding dice to your rolls:

- 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.
- When applicable, the follower adds help dice equal to **min(C, the helper's relevant Skill)**, capped at +3 dice.
- Slot Limit: Only one follower may assist a given action.

Follower Condition

Followers track **Exposure** and **Harm**:

Exposure — Heat, attention, or narrative stress.

Harm — Injury or trauma.

States:

- **Maintained** — Reliable and ready.
- **Neglected** — Needs downtime or care.
- **Compromised** — Captured, defected, or lost.

Upkeep

- Each Downtime, pay XP equal to C 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 crew. The GM must describe how the follower's action creates story consequences for the CP generated.

9.3 Follower Initiative Actions

Once per scene (across the crew), one on-screen follower may take a small independent action:

- Scout Signal — Change an ally's next action position to Controlled.
- Distract Draw — Reduce a kinetic rail (Hunt/Escape/Hazard) by –1 tick.
- Fetch Carry — Move a small object through danger.

Cost: Mark Exposure +1 or Harm 1 on that follower.

9.4 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.

9.5 Summary

Assets and Followers are powerful tools—but they come with obligations:

- Assets solve problems off-screen but require maintenance.
- Followers assist in scenes but are vulnerable to Complications.
- Both shape the story and reflect your character's influence.

Invest wisely—and be ready to pay the price.

Chapter 10

Character Archetypes

In **Fate's Edge**, there are no rigid classes—only **Archetypes**, flexible narrative frameworks that help guide your character's development and role at the table. These are not mechanical restrictions, but storytelling tools to inspire concept and playstyle.

10.1 What Is an Archetype?

An Archetype is a broad playstyle or thematic identity. It suggests how you might spend XP, what Talents you might pursue, and how you engage with the world. But it's never a cage—you are free to blend, shift, or subvert any Archetype as your story evolves.

10.2 The Three Core Archetypes

1. The Solo

Theme: The lone wolf whose personal mastery becomes legend.

XP Focus: Attributes and Skills. Minimal followers or holdings.

Strengths:

- Always ready for spotlight scenes.
- Reliable and self-sufficient.
- Few moving parts—less upkeep.

Risks:

- Narrow toolkit outside their specialty.
- May stall in social or logistical scenes.
- Vulnerable if core stats are challenged.

Example Build: High Body/Wits, Melee 4+, minimal assets.

Suggested Talents: Battle Instincts, Silver Tongue, Duelist's Insight.

2. The Mixed Player

Theme: A hero who balances self-growth with allies, networks, or family.

XP Focus: Balanced investment between self and assets.

Strengths:

- Adaptable across many scenes.
- Bridges party gaps with followers or assets.

- Strong when weaving personal hooks into group play.

Risks:

- Upkeep pressure on followers/assets.
- Helpers can be targeted by GM Complications.
- May lag if key assets are compromised.

Example Build: Presence 3, Sway 3, Cap 3 Follower, Minor Asset.

Suggested Talents: Familiar Bond, Guild Ties, Hearth-Banner.

3. The Mastermind

Theme: The strategist who commands webs of allies, followers, and secrets.

XP Focus: Followers, Assets, and Presence.

Strengths:

- Shapes campaigns through schemes and influence.
- Strong in planning, logistics, and long-term play.
- Can solve problems off-screen.

Risks:

- Dependency on lanes and helpers.
- Complication fallout can cascade.
- Vulnerable if assets are seized or followers betrayed.

Example Build: Wits 3, Presence 3, Cap 4 Scout, Standard Asset.

Suggested Talents: Coordinated Assault, Shadow Broker, Master of Coin.

10.3 Classic Fantasy Archetypes (Reimagined)

Fate's Edge reinterprets classic fantasy roles through its narrative lens:

The Oath-Bound Blade — A holy warrior whose power is tied to an unbreakable vow.

The Death-Speaker — A necromancer who bargains with the dead, not commands them.

The Border-Warden — A ranger sworn to protect a liminal territory.

The Guild-Approved Shadow — A licensed rogue operating under factional law.

The Spirit-Touched Outlander — A barbarian possessed by ancestral spirits.

The Scholar of Fractured Truths — A wizard whose spells are volatile fragments of lore.

The Caretaker of Cycles — A druid who maintains the balance of life and death.

The Chronicler of Consequences — A bard whose songs define history.

The Ascetic of the Unbound Body — A monk who detaches from pain and fatigue.

The Petitioner of a Silent God — A cleric who interprets divine silence.

10.4 Creating Your Own Archetype

To create a custom Archetype:

1. **Name It** — Give it a evocative handle.
2. **Define the Theme** — What drives this character?
3. **Suggest XP Focus** — Self? Assets? Talents?
4. **List Strengths and Risks** — What makes it unique?
5. [Optional]Suggest Talents or Assets — What tools fit the theme?

10.5 Summary

Archetypes in Fate’s Edge are about **storytelling**, not mechanics:

- They guide character development.
- They inspire narrative identity.
- They help you find your role at the table.

Choose an Archetype—or blend them. Your story is yours to shape.

Chapter 11

World Regions

The world of **Fate's Edge** is vast, diverse, and shaped by ancient empires, clashing cultures, and the ever-present threat of the unknown. This chapter explores the major regions around the **Amaranthine Sea**—the heart of civilization—and beyond.

11.1 The Amaranthine Sea

At the center of the known world lies the **Amaranthine Sea**, a vast inland body of water that has been the cradle of empires, the highway of trade, and the battleground of kings. Its shores are home to a mosaic of cultures, each with its own traditions, ambitions, and dangers.

11.2 Northern Shores: Vililan

The western and northern coasts of the Amaranthine are dominated by **Vililan**, the remnants of the once-great Utaran Empire. Here, old roads still bind the markets, and ancient laws still hold sway—even if their enforcers are long gone.

Major Regions

Ecktoria — The rump of the old empire, clinging to marble and ceremony. Home to gladiatorial arenas and the Church of the Everflame.

Acasia — A fractured province of warlords and bravo companies. Silkstrand, its great port, is a beacon of cosmopolitan vice and trade.

Vhasia — A land of dukes, bloodlines, and old rivalries. Honor and oaths still matter—though not always as they should.

Viterra — Highland pragmatists and fen traders. Known for their Knights of the Dawn and a culture of logistics.

Ubral — Highland clans and dwarven allies. Guerrilla fighters who know every sheep-track and scree path.

Thepyrgos — The last lantern of learning, where orators and scholars debate the fate of the world.

Mistlands — A fog-shrouded protectorate where dwarves and humans coexist uneasily with stranger things.

Kahfagia — A maritime oligarchy that commands the Titan's Throat and the Dolmis Sea. Storms and krakens are their allies.

11.3 Southern Reaches: Akilan

To the south lies **Akilan**, a continent of sun, stone, and river. Here, monsoon-fed empires rise and fall, and the power of scribes and priests rivals that of kings.

Notable Nations

Oshiira — A bureaucratic machine of canals and granaries. Their prefects and census-takers hold more power than generals.

Sekogo — Druidic jungle cities and lagoon ports. Masters of river and root.

Taharka — Terrace highlands and hydraulic works. Divine mandate guides their rulers.

Ashaan — Slaver-empire turned fractured successor states. Gold, ivory, and ancient tombs draw adventurers and fools alike.

11.4 Eastern Horizons: Ostrilan

Across the sea to the east lies **Ostrilan**, a vast land of monsoons, old empires, and steppe riders. Here, the winds carry the scent of incense and the clash of distant wars.

Key Regions

Dhahara — Peninsula of sky and memory. Monsoon ports and desert kingdoms vie under the banner of Dhahar, Lord of War.

Sihai — A thousand terraces and ten thousand seals. River dynasties and scholar-magistrates shape this vast empire.

Nihon — Isles of quiet steel. Mountain domains and sea-lords uphold the way of the blade.

Ayohkhan — Emerald archipelago of smoke and spice. Jungle thrones and monsoon fleets rule the tides.

11.5 The Wilds Beyond

Beyond the coasts lie lands less mapped and more dangerous:

Valewood — Immense, uncanny forest where geography shifts and old powers linger.

Ykrul Steppes — Vast grasslands where nomad warbands ride under open sky.

The Crimson Basin — Rainforest heart of Akilan, contested between Wood Elves and settlers.

The Great Desert — Harsh and unforgiving, dotted with oases and lost kingdoms.

11.6 Travel and Trade Routes

- **The Titan's Throat** — The narrow strait that connects the Amaranthine to the outer ocean. Controlled by Kahfagia.
- **The Belworth Corridor** — Main artery between Vhasia and Viterra.
- **The Way of Silk** — Southern trade routes linking Fhara, Kuvani, and Dhahara to northern ports.
- **The Khesai River** — Spine of Ashaan trade and power.

11.7 Summary

The world of Fate's Edge is vast and varied:

- Each region offers unique cultures, conflicts, and opportunities.
- Trade routes connect distant lands—and also spread danger.
- The past is never truly gone; it waits in ruins, tombs, and old oaths.

Where will your story begin? And what will you leave behind?

Chapter 12

Cultures and Peoples

The world of **Fate's Edge** is home to a rich tapestry of cultures, each with its own traditions, values, and unique **Affinities**—narrative edges that reflect their place in the world. This chapter introduces the major peoples and cultures you may encounter or belong to.

12.1 What Is an Affinity?

An **Affinity** is a cultural or racial trait that provides a narrative edge rather than a mechanical bonus. It represents how the world itself leans in your favor—whether through ancient pacts, mystical heritage, or deep understanding of the land.

Affinities often unlock access to specific Talents, Arts, or social reactions.

12.2 Major Cultures and Peoples

Humans

Affinity: Versatility

Themes: Adaptability, ambition, diversity

Humans are found across every province and sea. Adaptable and ambitious, they thrive in any environment and quickly adopt the customs of others. Their strength lies not in any single tradition, but in their ability to blend and innovate.

Notable Regions: Vililan, Akilan, Ostrilan

Example Talents: Versatile, Guild Ties, Banner-Bearer

Dwarves (Aeler)

Affinity: Stone-Sense

Themes: Craft, tradition, collective memory

Dwarves are children of stone and forge. They value craftsmanship, kinship, and the deep laws of the earth. Their cities are marvels of engineering, and their word is as unyielding as the mountains they call home.

Sub-Types:

- Mountain Dwarves — Deep kingdom dwellers; focused on giants and dragons.
- Hill Dwarves — Surface allies; fight Ykrul and trolls.
- True Masons — Itinerant stone-clerics who maintain ancient infrastructure.

Example Talents: Stone-Sense, Spirit Shield, Forge-Patriarch

Elves (Lethai)

Affinity: Varies by sub-type

Themes: Memory, nature, continuity

Elves see themselves as the first people, divided by philosophy and time. They are long-lived and deeply connected to the natural and mystical world.

Sub-Types:

- **Wood Elves (Lethai-al)** — Tribal and fey; cycle-focused.
Affinity: Backlash Soothing
- **High Elves (Lethai-thora)** — Sequestered exiles of the mind; memory-keepers.
Affinity: Lorekeeper
- **Grass/Dusk/Sundered Elves** — Nomadic high elves estranged from both cousins.

Example Talents: Backlash Soothing, Ranger's Step, Echo-Walker

Ykrul

Affinity: Blood Memory

Themes: War, pragmatism, kinship

The Ykrul are a people of horse, boar, and warg. They value strength, loyalty, and the wisdom of ancestors. Their warbands are feared across the steppes, but their hearths are warm and their oaths are binding.

Sub-Types:

- Steppe Ykrul — Pastoral nomads of the Violet Steppes.
- Mountain Ykrul — Stockier clans of the highlands.
- River Ykrul — Wargboat raiders and coastal plunderers.

Example Talents: Blood Memory, Blood Frenzy, Warglord

Gnomes (Aelinnel)

Affinity: Numerical Insight

Themes: Mathematics, craft, curiosity

Gnomes are known for their incomprehensible mathematics and delicate craft. They are small in stature but vast in intellect, often found in groves, towers, or burrows deep in the earth.

Sub-Types:

- Rock Gnomes — Gemstone engineers of Wrentfell.
- Forest Gnomes — Attuned to nature and fey magic.
- Faetae — Rare, fragile winged gnomes with insectile wings.

Example Talents: Numerical Insight, Grove Cantor, Winged Messenger

Halflings (Aelaeram)

Affinity: Hearth Sense

Themes: Community, resilience, pastoral life

Halflings are a pastoral people who value hearth, home, and harmony with the land. They are resilient, friendly, and often underestimated—until their slings find their mark.

Sub-Types:

- Hill Halflings — Farmers and traders of Amedell.
- River Halflings — Bargefolk and ferry-keepers.
- Wander Halflings — Caravaners and adventurers.

Example Talents: Hearth Sense, River Guide, Wanderer's Luck

Tulkani

Affinity: Shadowbinding

Themes: Performance, trade, secrecy

The Tulkani are wanderers, performers, and traders who move like shadows across the northern lands. They are known for their wit, their artistry, and their whispered pacts with powers best left unnamed.

Example Talents: Shadowbinding, Performance Mastery, Guild Ties

Other Peoples

Fharan — Desert caravans and incense kingdoms. Masters of trade and star-watching.

Sidhi — Coastal and river peoples of Akilan. Builders, scribes, and traders.

Kuvani — Steppe riders of Dhahara. Honor-bound and fiercely independent.

Ashaani — Ancient silt kingdoms. Masters of necropolises and divine law.

12.3 Mixed Heritage

In Fate's Edge, mixed heritage is common and celebrated. Characters may claim multiple cultural Affinities, but must choose which one to use for Talent prerequisites and cultural benefits.

12.4 Summary

Culture in Fate's Edge shapes more than appearance—it defines how the world reacts to you:

- Affinities provide narrative edges and unlock Talents.
- Each culture has its own values, conflicts, and stories.
- Heritage can be a source of strength—or a chain to the past.

Choose your roots carefully—and let them guide your legend.

Chapter 13

Gods and Powers

In **Fate's Edge**, religion is not just faith—it is **faction**. The gods and powers of the world are active forces, shaping cultures, inspiring zealots, and demanding tribute. This chapter explores the major divine and mystical forces, their followers, and how they influence the world.

13.1 Faith as Faction

Religion in Fate's Edge is deeply political. Each power has its own churches, cults, schisms, and agendas. To serve a god is to join a faction—with all the alliances, enemies, and obligations that come with it.

13.2 Major Powers

Everflame

Domains: Fire, purification, law

Seat: Ecktoria

Themes: Order, sacrifice, judgment

The Everflame is the dominant faith of the northern shores. It teaches that truth burns away falsehood, and that only through suffering can the soul be purified. Its priests are inquisitors, judges, and executioners.

Cleric Talents: Everflame Keeper, Zealot's Blade, Purifying Light

Light

Domains: Revelation, mercy, community

Seat: Viterra

Themes: Healing, unity, evangelism

A reformation of the Everflame, the Light emphasizes compassion and community over punishment. Its followers are healers, teachers, and missionaries who seek to unite the faithful under a single banner.

Cleric Talents: Healing Light, Community Blessing, Evangelist's Tongue

Khemesh and Ráeyn

Domains: Krakens, storms, the sea

Seat: Kahfagia

Themes: Power, survival, dominion

The twin patrons of Kahfagia, Khemesh and Ráeyn are worshipped by sailors, pirates, and storm-riders. Their temples are built on cliffs and islands, and their priests read the will of the deep in the bones of whales.

Cleric Talents: Storm's Favor, Kraken's Blessing, Deep Oracle

Dhahar, Lord of the Sky and War

Domains: Sky, war, honor

Seat: Dhahara

Themes: Battle, banners, judgment

Dhahar is the god of the open sky and righteous war. His followers swear by banners and settle disputes with steel. In the south, to break an oath sworn under his name is to invite his wrath.

Cleric Talents: Banner of War, Sky's Judgment, War-Chanter

Ikasha, She Who Sleeps Within Shadow

Domains: Shadow, secrets, transformation

Seat: Tulkani underground

Themes: Mystery, change, forbidden knowledge

Ikasha is whispered more than preached. Her followers are spies, assassins, and those who walk between worlds. Her temples are hidden, and her rites are known only to the initiated.

Cleric Talents: Shadow Walk, Secret Keeper, Veil of Transformation

The Old Ancestors (Dwarven Faith)

Domains: Kin, stone, memory

Seat: Aeler mountain halls

Themes: Tradition, craft, lineage

The dwarves venerate their ancestors as guardians of the deep laws. To speak an ancestor's name is to invoke their protection—and their expectations.

Cleric Talents: Ancestral Guidance, Stone Communion, Kin-Binding Oath

13.3 Other Powers and Spirits

Ykrul Sky-Spirit — Nameless shamanic power tied to omens and war.

Valewood Entities — Ancient forest powers that shift with the seasons.

Fae Courts — Elusive beings of whim and consequence.

The Hunger Below — Primordial force stirring beneath the world.

13.4 Divine Service and Consequences

Serving a god in Fate's Edge is not without cost:

- **Obligations** — Divine mandates, rituals, and tithes.
- [Complications] — Gods may demand sacrifices or intervene in dramatic ways.
- [Blessings] — Divine favor grants Talents, Boons, or narrative edges.

13.5 Cleric and Divine Spellcasting

Characters who serve the divine may access **Faith-based Talents** and **Thaumaturgy**—a form of spellcasting tied to divine will rather than arcane study.

Thaumaturgy Arts:

- Purifying Light

- Divine Shield
- Blessing of Courage
- Wrath of the Heavens

13.6 Summary

The gods of Fate's Edge, through their worshippers, are active players in the world:

- Faith is faction, with politics and power struggles.
- Divine service brings both blessings and burdens.
- Gods shape culture, law, and the fate of nations.

Choose your faith wisely—and be prepared to pay its price.

Chapter 14

Languages of the Lands

In **Fate's Edge**, language is both **bridge and barrier**. While most folk speak **Common**—a dwarven-forged trade tongue—each culture prizes its own tongue, rich with history, poetry, and power. This chapter explores the major languages of the world and how they shape identity, diplomacy, and secrecy.

14.1 Common: The Trade Tongue

Common is the lingua franca of merchants, soldiers, and diplomats. Born from the ancient Utaran Empire and refined by dwarven traders, it is the default language for cross-cultural communication.

Traits:

- Widely understood across the Amaranthine Sea.
- Lacks the nuance of native tongues—but gets the job done.
- Used in markets, ports, and neutral territories.

14.2 Regional Languages

Each major culture has its own language, often tied to its history, values, and worldview.

Low and High Utaran

Speakers: Humans of Vililan, Ecktoria, Vhasia, Viterra

Traits:

- Low Utaran — The speech of peasants and soldiers. Direct, practical, and full of proverbs.
- High Utaran — The scholar's and priest's tongue. Flowing, formal, and rich in metaphor.

Cultural Role: The language of law, ceremony, and old empire.

Dwarven (Aeler)

Speakers: Dwarves of the Aelerian mountains

Traits: Guttural, clipped, and rich in trade terms. Concepts of kinship and craft are deeply embedded.

Cultural Role: The language of stone, forge, and ancestral memory.

Elven (Lethai)

Speakers: Elves of Valewood and the high courts

Traits: Ancient, fluid, and contextual. Words shift meaning with tone and season.

Cultural Role: The language of memory, magic, and the unseen world.

Tulkani Tongue

Speakers: Tulkani wanderers and performers

Traits: Lilting, mobile, and woven with shadow-cant. Full of double meanings and hidden signals.

Cultural Role: The language of performance, secrecy, and trade.

Kuvani Speech

Speakers: Riders and clans of the Dhaharan steppes

Traits: Sharp, consonant-heavy, and linked to steppe songs. Evocative of wind and open sky.

Cultural Role: The language of honor, war, and horsemanship.

Oshiiran

Speakers: Bureaucrats and scribes of Oshiira

Traits: Precise, hierarchical, and full of formal address. Changes based on rank and context.

Cultural Role: The language of law, grain, and the written word.

Fharan Tongues

Speakers: Desert caravans and incense kingdoms

Traits: Calculator cants for trade, poetic forms for ritual, and sharp bargaining phrases.

Cultural Role: The language of sand, star-watching, and commerce.

Sihai

Speakers: Empire-dwellers of the eastern continent

Traits:

- High Sihai — Court and ritual; precise and ceremonial.
- Low Sihai — Market and frontier; practical and flexible.

Cultural Role: The language of bureaucracy, harmony, and imperial order.

14.3 Language as a Tool

Knowing multiple languages in Fate's Edge is more than a skill—it's a form of social currency.

Advantages of Multilingualism

- **Social Edges** — Gain +1 die when negotiating with native speakers.
- **Cultural Insight** — Understand idioms, taboos, and hidden meanings.
- **Access** — Enter certain venues, read ancient texts, or join exclusive circles.

Dialects and Slang

Many languages have regional dialects or social variants:

- Vhasian courtly speech vs. Vhaston trader's patter.
- Dhaharan dialects that shift with monsoon seasons.
- Tulkani shadow-cant used among trusted allies.

14.4 Secret Languages and Codes

Some groups use **secret tongues** or **coded speech** to protect their interests:

Thieves' Cant — A subtle dialect of Common used by criminals.

Guild Signs — Non-verbal communication through gestures and marks.

Shadow-Cant — Tulkani whisper-language for covert operations.

Stone-Speech — Dwarven runes and numerical codes for engineering.

14.5 Summary

Language in Fate's Edge is alive and meaningful:

- It reflects culture, history, and identity.
- It can open doors—or slam them shut.
- It is a tool of diplomacy, deception, and legacy.

Choose your words carefully—the world is listening.

Chapter 15

Asset-Linked Backgrounds

In **Fate's Edge**, your character's past is not just flavor—it's **function**. **Asset-Linked Backgrounds** are optional, lore-forward packages that tie your character to a specific place, faction, or tradition. Each requires ownership of a specific **Asset** and grants a **Talent**, **Perk**, and narrative hooks that shape how you engage with the world.

15.1 What Is a Background?

A Background is a narrative package that includes:

- **Prerequisite Asset** — You must own or acquire the listed Asset.
- **Talent** — A full-cost Talent tied to the background's theme.
- **Perk** — One mechanical benefit, usable once per session.
- **Scene Keys** — Two venues where this background naturally appears.
- **Hooks** — Narrative pressure points where the GM can spend CP.
- **Invite** (optional) — A behavior cue that may earn a Boon.

Backgrounds do not add clocks, stance edits, or extra actions. They are tools for **roleplay and consequence**.

15.2 Example Background: Vhasian Gentry

Requires Asset: Vhasian Manor, Estate, or County

Talent (4 XP): Influence at Court (Vhasian) — +1 effect on formal petitions and protocol inside Vhasian courts and councils.

Perk (Choose 1, once/session):

- +1 effect on one opener in a keyed venue (ally or self).
 - Hazard 1 for one beat in a named environment.
 - Mitigate CP for the first on-theme twist.
 - Restore 1 follower (clear 1 Exposure or heal Harm 1).
- Free upkeep on one owned Asset.
 - Scene Keys:** Court/Audience, Noble Reception
 - Hooks (GM picks 1 on CP spend in keyed scenes):**
 - A rival house "assists" by rerouting your petition to their gatekeeper.

- Protocol demands a costly courtesy now (gift, sponsor, or public apology).
 - A jealous clerk bumps another case ahead; you owe someone a face to keep momentum.
- Invite (optional):** "Defer to protocol before acting."

15.3 Background Types

Backgrounds are grouped by region and theme. Below are examples from various cultures:

Vililan Backgrounds

Viterra Fenward Bailiff — Tied to marsh law and abbey rights.

Ubral Iron-Host Veteran — Veteran of frontier garrisons and winter drills.

Silkstrand Span-Factor — Master of bridges, processions, and quay politics.

Ecktorian Archivist — Keeper of stacks, vaults, and forbidden knowledge.

Aeler (Dwarven) Backgrounds

Aeler Tower Savant — Scholar of arcane theory and forbidden rites.

Oath-Pennant Keeper — Guardian of hospitality and sanctuary law.

Sepulcher Adept — Keeper of crypts, bells, and the restless dead.

Linnic and Theona Backgrounds

Linnic Tower Scholar — Master of star-reckoning and numerical harmony.

Theonan Beacon-Keeper — Guardian of coastal light and storm warnings.

Kahfagian and Mistlands Backgrounds

Kahfagian Spur Captain — Master of steppe law and relay routes.

Mistlands Warden — Keeper of bells, salt, and the Direwood border.

Cultural and Prestige Backgrounds

Some backgrounds are tied to specific cultures or Tier III Assets:

Tulkani Pit-Runner — Champion of quarry trials and masked contests.

Ykrul Moor Warden — Guardian of fog, barrows, and old warnings.

Grand Forge-Master (Prestige) — Sovereign of heat and hammer.

Storm-Beacon Lord (Prestige) — Master of lighthouses and sea-lanes.

15.4 Creating Your Own Background

To create a custom Background:

1. **Name It** — Give it an evocative title.
2. [Asset Requirement] — Tie it to a Minor/Standard/Major Asset.
3. [Talent] — Choose or design a thematically appropriate Talent.
4. [Perk] — Pick one mechanical benefit (session-limited).
5. [Scene Keys] — Name two venues where it naturally appears.
6. [Hooks] — List 2–3 CP sinks with suit markers ().
7. [Invite] (optional) — Behavior cue that may earn a Boon.

15.5 Summary

Backgrounds in Fate's Edge are about **belonging**:

- They tie you to a place, faction, or tradition.
- They offer mechanical benefits and narrative pressure.
- They make the world react to your presence.

Choose a Background—or craft your own. Let your past shape your future.

Chapter 16

Compendium of Talents

In **Fate's Edge**, **Talents** are the unique abilities that define your character's exceptional capabilities. This chapter provides a comprehensive list of Talents organized by tier and theme, from minor edges to mythic powers.

16.1 Design Principles

Talents in Fate's Edge are designed to:

- Enhance narrative positioning rather than raw power.
- Create story hooks and complications.
- Reflect cultural identity and personal growth.

Talents do **not**:

- Pierce the global +3 Assist cap.
- Create Diamonds (narrative leverage) directly.
- Add extra actions beyond normal Initiative rules.

16.2 Early Talents (3–5 XP)

Minor mechanical edges or rerolls that enhance niche situations.

Battle Instincts (4 XP) — Once/scene, re-roll a failed defense check.

Silver Tongue (3 XP) — +1 effect on negotiation or fast-talk openers in keyed venues.

Stone-Sense (5 XP) [**Dwarf/Stone-trained**] — Read flaws in stone; once/scene grant start Controlled to a move/breach.

Iron Stomach (3 XP) — Resist mundane toxins; Mitigate first CP 1 from poison/rot this scene.

Versatile (3 XP) [**Human**] — Once/session, treat adjacent untrained task as Trained.

Backlash Soothing (5 XP) [**Woodwise**] — Once/scene in natural terrain, reduce magical Backlash by 1 CP.

Blood Memory (4 XP) [**Ykrul**] — After violent scene, name tactic; next counter vs same style gains +1 effect.

Hand Signals (2 XP) — When you set silent plan, next ally gains +1 effect.

Route Whisper (2 XP) — On declared route, team's first crossing gains +1 effect or Escape 1.

16.3 Mid-Tier Talents (6–10 XP)

Significant edges or codified outcomes that deepen specialization.

Commanding Presence (8 XP) — When ally follows explicit order, start Controlled (once/ally/scene).

Warden of Lanterns (8 XP) — Night scenes near you reduce darkness penalties; once/scene name ally's opener Controlled.

Storm-Caller (8 XP) [Dhaharan/Sihai] — Once/scene, influence weather: Hazard 1 (wind/rain) or Mitigate CP 1.

Beast-Tongue (8 XP) [Ykrul] — Parley with local beasts; once/scene treat creature as Cap 2 follower.

Rune-Keeper (8 XP) [Aeler/Dwarf] — Once/scene scribe ward: Mitigate first CP 1 or Hazard 1 vs intrusion.

Blood-Ties Oath (8 XP) [Fhara] — When oath/honor at stake, first action gains +1 effect and Protected Turn.

Guild Ledgercraft (8 XP) [Oshiiran] — Once/scene at market, start Controlled for settlement or Mitigate CP 1.

Echo-Courtier (8 XP) [Aeler] — Once/scene in formal society, shift social rail 1 or Mitigate CP 1 from "memory".

Battle Chant (8 XP) [Ubral/Viterra] — Allies ignore first Fatigue 1 from exertion this combat.

Whisper-Lord (8 XP) [Sekogo/Oshiiran] — Once/session, ask pointed question about target's status; GM answers truthfully.

River-Sovereign (8 XP) [Dhaharan] — Once/scene on water, call right-of-way: Hazard 1 or start Controlled.

Tide-Walker (8 XP) — First surge in water scene counts as Controlled; once/scene Hazard 1 on 10-ft square.

16.4 Leadership Talents

Talents that enhance coordination and tactical control.

Coordinated Assault (8 XP) — When you Lead, direct up to two helpers (total Assist still +3).

Master Coordinator (15 XP) — Once/scene after successful Lead: +1 effect or open second Initiative window (take Fatigue 1).

Banner-Bearer (10 XP) — Once/battle, Mitigate first 2 CP from group result (distributed as narrated).

16.5 Prestige Talents (12+ XP)

Narrative-capstone powers that reshape the story.

Echo-Walker (18–20 XP) [Aeler] — Once/arc, transmute 1–2 CP into Omen: bank +1 effect next action.

Warglord (18 XP) [Ykrul] — Once/campaign, unify bands under one banner: treat allies as Cap 3 unit.

Spirit-Shield (15 XP) [Dwarf] — Once/scene, reduce ally's CP by up to 2; you mark Fatigue 1 and Backlash 1.

Shadowbinder (16 XP) [Tulkani/Veil] — Once/scene in dim/shadow, treat first detection as Controlled and Hunt 1.

Forge-Patriarch (18 XP) [Aeler/Dwarf] — Within Great Forge-Citadel, set cadence: one craft sequence starts Controlled.

Master of Coin (16 XP) — When presiding at exchange, settlements gain +1 effect; once/session Mitigate CP 1.

Warden of Storms (18 XP) [Sihai/Dhaharan] — Once/arc, anchor/dispose major storm; your side's first two Hazards 1.

Mask-Bearer (16–17 XP) [Nihon/Masked Courts] — Once/scene while masked, escape recognition or gain Protected Turn.

Star-Reader (18 XP) [Linnic/Sihai] — Once/arc under predicted sky, one action gains start Controlled and +1 effect.

Everflame Keeper (16 XP) [Ecktoria] — Once/scene, sanctify/purify: treat corruption Hazard as Hazard 1 + Protected Turn.

Resonant Architect (18 XP) [Dwarf] — Once/arc, animate place's will: treat venue as Cap 3 follower for one scene.

Sandseer (16–18 XP) [Fhara] — Once/scene in deserts, cancel/cvt enviro Hazard tick to +1 effect.

16.6 Magic Specializations

Talents that enhance spellcasting and magical arts.

Elemental Focus (8 XP) — Pick element (Fire/Water/Earth/Air). Once/scene: +1 effect or Mitigate Backlash 1.

Backlash Resistant (8–10 XP) — First Backlash each scene reduced by 1 CP (min 0).

Ritual Master (12 XP) — Lead multi-participant rituals without escalating Backlash tier; once/ritual convert 1 CP to Fatigue 1.

Spell Anchor (8 XP) — Once/session, stabilize failing spell by taking Fatigue 1; spell outcome stays current.

Conduit Walker (15 XP) — Once/arc, open conduit to Otherwhere: bounded question or subtle boon.

16.7 Cultural Skill Paths

Each culture has associated skill focuses:

Scholarly Arts — Lore, Research, Arcana, Craft, Ritual

Social Arts — Diplomacy, Sway, Performance, Subterfuge, Insight

Martial Arts — Melee, Ranged, Brawl, Athletics, Tactics

Wilderness Arts — Stealth, Survival, Navigation, Animal Handling, Scouting

16.8 Summary

Talents are the unique expressions of your character's journey:

- Early Talents offer small but reliable edges.
- Mid-Tier Talents deepen specialization and identity.
- Prestige Talents reshape the story at key moments.

Choose Talents that reflect your character's growth—and let them echo through the world.

Chapter 17

Compendium of Assets

In **Fate's Edge**, **Assets** are off-screen resources that extend your influence beyond personal capability. This chapter provides a comprehensive list of Assets organized by tier, from minor holdings to empire-shaping institutions.

17.1 Design Principles

Assets in Fate's Edge are designed to:

- Shape the world between sessions.
- Provide narrative leverage rather than direct mechanical bonuses.
- Create story hooks and complications through upkeep and neglect.

Assets do **not**:

- Act in scenes directly (that's what Followers are for).
- Create Diamonds automatically.
- Stack identical tags—take the best one.

17.2 Minor Assets (4 XP)

Small holdings or tools that provide basic leverage.

Signature Weapon — Named heirloom or masterpiece. Off-Screen: Mitigate gear-break CP 1; recovery scene clears Compromised.

Scholar's Cell — Quiet room with texts and desk. Off-Screen: One research opener starts Controlled or +1 effect.

Safehouse Network — Hidden bolt-holes in one city. Off-Screen: Clear Hunt 1 between scenes or start Controlled for entry.

Artisan's Workshop — Tools + bench for field repairs. Off-Screen: Clear Compromised from one item.

Courier Network — Trusty runners and dead-drops. Off-Screen: Deliver message; next parley starts Controlled or Mitigate CP 1.

Small Farm/Orchard — Larder and surplus. Off-Screen: Waive minor Supply complication or refresh "consumable" gear tag.

Local Tavern/Inn — Neighborhood hub. Off-Screen: First social opener starts Controlled.

Minor Shrine/Temple — Hearth for the spirit. Off-Screen: Clear Fatigue 1 or Mitigate first morale CP 1.

Fishing Boat/Barge — River/harbor skiff. Off-Screen: Water crossing starts Controlled or ignore first travel Supply loss.

Herbal Garden — Beds of restorative greens. Off-Screen: Remove Fatigue 1 from one character.

17.3 Standard Assets (8 XP)

Established holdings with regional influence.

Noble Title/Charter — Recognized rank and privileges. Off-Screen: Secure audience; first petition starts Controlled or Protected Turn.

Guild Membership — Standing in a working order. Off-Screen: Procurement/commission starts Controlled or Mitigate CP 1.

Merchant Stall/Front — Fixed face in the market. Off-Screen: Free upkeep on one Minor Asset or +1 effect on barter.

Spy Ring/Informants — Eyes and ears on retainer. Off-Screen: Targeted inquiry starts Controlled or +1 effect; GM adds social Hook.

Mercenary Contract — Reach for hired steel. Off-Screen: Introduce temporary Cap 2 unit for one beat (consumes Initiative).

Trading Charter — Right of trade along routes. Off-Screen: At customs/gates, Mitigate first Diamonds/Clubs CP 1 or start Controlled.

Library Archive — Stacks and custodian. Off-Screen: Deep topic research starts Controlled and +1 effect.

Craftsman's Quarter — Shop + apprentices. Off-Screen: Produce quality piece: clear Compromised or grant +1 effect once.

Temple Complex — Choirs, courts, care. Off-Screen: Among faithful, gain Protected Turn or Mitigate first Sanctity/Crowd CP 1.

Port Authority — Berths, booms, bells. Off-Screen: Priority handling: Mitigate first Curfew/Crowd CP 1 or loading starts Controlled.

17.4 Major Assets (12 XP)

Significant holdings with broad influence.

City District License — You run a ward's levers. Off-Screen: In-district, civic opener starts Controlled or set local rail 1.

Regional Monopoly — Exclusive right in a staple. Off-Screen: In market scenes, cancel first Diamonds CP.

Fortress/Stronghold — A hard place held by your banner. Off-Screen: In siege/raid, ignore first Spades complication.

Large Estate/Demesne — Fields, mills, crews. Off-Screen: No minor Supply complications or free upkeep on one additional Asset.

Naval Fleet Share — Oars, sails, signal flags. Off-Screen: Ensure safe passage: maritime travel starts Controlled and Mitigate CP 1.

University College — Faculty, quad, seal. Off-Screen: Downtime reduces one Skill advance cost by 1 (min 1).

Banking Charter — Letters, ledgers, liens. Off-Screen: In finance scenes, Mitigate first Diamonds CP 1; if clean, +1 effect.

Diplomatic Enclave — Flag, immunity, ink. Off-Screen: In foreign courts, ignore first Clubs complication or parley starts Controlled.

Mine/Quarry Operation — Raw stone, hard people. Off-Screen: Provide materials: clear Compromised on structure/gear or +1 effect.

Market Control — You set the bell. Off-Screen: Declare Surplus/Scarcity for staple; negotiation about it starts Controlled.

17.5 Tier III Assets (16–20 XP)

Empire-shaping institutions with vast reach.

Grand Forge–Citadel — City-sized heat and hammer. Off-Screen: Produce masterworks; ignore first gear complication or clear batch Compromised.

Harbor Light Consortium — Beacons from cape to cape. Off-Screen: Dictate right-of-way: ally's maneuver starts Controlled or 10-ft zone Hazard 1.

Grand Exchange Charter — Markets move when you breathe. Off-Screen: In halls, cancel one Diamonds CP; if clean, +1 effect.

Thepyrgosi Great Library — The north's memory palace. Off-Screen: Major inquiry starts Controlled and +1 effect; Mitigate first scholarly CP 1.

Kahfagian Fleet Command — Signals across sea lanes. Off-Screen: Declare blockade/corridor: hostile exits Escape +1 or friendly passage Controlled.

Oshiiran Hydraulic Empire — Water is wealth. Off-Screen: Set Irrigated tag for route; cancel first Supply/shortage Diamonds CP.

Ashaani Palace Complex — Keys to office and omen. Off-Screen: Political opener starts Controlled and gains Protected Turn.

Valewood Grove Sanctuary — Old roots, older vows. Off-Screen: Wilderness scenes, cancel natural Hazard tick or Mitigate CP 1.

Dwarven Mountain Hall — Deep law, deeper craft. Off-Screen: Engineering/crafting opener starts Controlled and +1 effect.

Ykrul Steppe Confederation — Ten thousand hooves. Off-Screen: On steppe, group movement starts Controlled and Escape 1.

17.6 Specialized Assets

Assets with unique thematic purposes.

Magical Laboratory (10 XP) — Arcane benches, wards. Off-Screen: Ritual Backlash 1 CP once; experiment starts Controlled.

Healing Sanctuary (8 XP) — Beds, herbs, bells. Off-Screen: Treat patient: clear Harm 1 or Fatigue 2 (downtime only).

Performance Venue (6 XP) — Stage + crowd. Off-Screen: Build reputation; first Performance opener starts Controlled or +1 effect.

Observatory/Star Tower (8 XP) — Ephemerides and lenses. Off-Screen: Predict timing; navigation/timing opener starts Controlled.

Alchemical Garden (10 XP) — Beds of rare reagents. Off-Screen: Produce draught; once/session Mitigate first toxin CP 1 or +1 effect salve.

Training Academy (12 XP) — Masters, drills, mats. Off-Screen: Downtime reduces one Skill advance cost by 1 (min 1) for one trainee.

Intelligence Bureau (10 XP) — Analysts and cut-outs. Off-Screen: Avoid surprise; first recon opener starts Controlled.

Hospitality House (6 XP) — Beds, bread, rumor. Off-Screen: Gain Protected Turn in hosted parley or Mitigate first Crowd CP 1.

Storage Vault (6 XP) — Locks, ledgers, layers. Off-Screen: Ignore first theft/sabotage complication targeting stored goods.

Communication Relay (8 XP) — Fires, flags, drums. Off-Screen: Coordinate afar: timed coordination starts Controlled or Mitigate CP 1.

17.7 Asset Upgrades and Variants

Enhance your Assets with additional investments:

Enhanced Security (+2 XP) — Hardened doors, better watchers. Effect: Mitigate first theft/sabotage CP 1 each session.

Expanded Scope (+3 XP) — Wider footprint. Effect: Use Off-Screen effect twice/session or across two adjacent venues.

Magical Enhancement (+4 XP) — Warded, sanctified. Effect: Add Mitigate Backlash 1 (once/session) for rituals OR Hazard 1 aura (10-ft, 1 beat).

Political Connections (+3 XP) — Papers, patrons. Effect: In civic/authority scenes, Mitigate first Clubs CP 1.

17.8 Summary

Assets are the tools of influence and legacy:

- Minor Assets provide personal leverage.
- Standard Assets offer regional reach.
- Major Assets shape politics and trade.
- Tier III Assets reshape the setting itself.

Choose your holdings wisely—and be ready to pay their price.

Chapter 18

NPC Companions

In **Fate's Edge**, you don't have to face the world alone. **NPC Companions**—from faithful familiars to hired muscle—can aid you in scenes, carry story weight, and create meaningful connections. This chapter explores the types of companions available and how they function in play.

18.1 Types of Companions

Companions in Fate's Edge fall into two broad categories:

Familiars and Pets — Spirit-bound or trained creatures with specific roles.

Hirelings and Followers — Professional allies who lend their skills to your cause.

All companions are purchased with XP and tracked through **Condition Tracks**.

18.2 Familiars and Pets

Familiars are spirits wearing physical forms—birds, beasts, or constructs—bound by vows, names, and roles. They require the **Familiar Bond** Talent to acquire.

Familiar Rules

- **Cap:** 1–2 (2 with Spirit Keeper prestige Talent)
- [Upkeep:] None
- [Stat Line:] Role • Cap 1–2 • Bond 1/2 • Exposure 0/2
- [Restrictions:] Cannot hold assets, trigger Diamonds, or act as Stewards

Familiar Roles

Scout — Routes, chases, timing the surge

Mimic — Voices, calls, baiting impostors

Distract — Crowd manipulation, misdirection

Fetch — Lines, keys, notes ferried under pressure

Sentry — Watch, warn, early hazard callouts

Familiar Initiative Actions

Once per scene (total across your Familiars), one may take a small independent action:

- **Scout Signal** — Change ally's next action position to Controlled or grant +1 effect.
- **Distract Draw** — Reduce kinetic rail (Hunt/Escape/Hazard) by –1 tick.

- **Fetch Carry** — Move small object through danger; recipient's next success advances target clock +1.

Cost: Mark Exposure +1 or Harm 1 on the Familiar.

Example Familiars

Shadow-Cat (Cap 2, Stealth) — Can climb, slip through cracks, carry small items. Backlash: draws bad omens.

Crow Messenger (Cap 2, Perception) — Delivers notes or warns of danger. Backlash: nosy, sometimes lies.

Hound of the Fens (Cap 3, Tracking) — Keen nose, loyal defender. Backlash: loud bark alerts enemies.

18.3 Hirelings and Followers

Professional allies who act in scenes and lend their specialty. Purchased with XP based on Cap (Cap²).

Follower Rules

- **Cost:** Cap² XP
- [Assist Bonus:] Up to min(Cap, your relevant Skill), max +3 total
- [Slot Limit:] Only one follower may assist a given action
- [Upkeep:] XP equal to Cap or Significant Time scene

Follower Assistance Tiers

In-Role Assist — +Cap bonus when specialty applies (plausible fiction enough).

Off-Role Assist — +1 bonus with intricate description (includes Sense, Method, Risk).

Initiative Action — Small independent action (see below).

Follower Initiative Actions

Once per scene (across crew), one on-screen follower may take a small independent action:

- **Scout Signal** — Change ally's next action position to Controlled or grant +1 effect.
- **Distract Draw** — Reduce kinetic rail (Hunt/Escape/Hazard) by -1 tick.
- **Fetch Carry** — Move small object through danger; recipient's next success advances target clock +1.

Cost: Mark Exposure +1 or Harm 1 on that follower.

Example Followers

Bodyguard (Cap 4, Melee) — Grants bonus dice in combat, but draws fire.

Scribe (Cap 3, Lore) — Keeps records, interprets contracts, whispers legal loopholes.

Scout (Cap 3, Survival) — Knows paths, extends party range, prone to wanderlust.

Quartermaster (Cap 3, Logistics) — Manages supplies, repairs gear, keeps trains running.

18.4 Condition Tracks for Companions

All on-screen companions track Bond, Exposure, and Harm:

Bond (2–3) — Narrative connection and loyalty level.

Exposure (2–4) — Heat, attention, or narrative stress.

Harm (1–2) — Injury or trauma.

States:

- **Maintained** — Engaged and reliable.
- [Neglected] — Strain shows; needs time or gesture.
- [Compromised] — Major story turn—capture, betrayal, departure.

18.5 Loyalty and Bonds (Optional)

Track a simple Loyalty tag per companion:

- **Wary** — Distrustful, requires careful handling.
- **Steady** — Reliable, responds to fair treatment.
- **Devoted** — Unwavering loyalty; may convert one CP targeting them into lesser setback.

18.6 Promotion and Replacement

- **Promote:** Pay difference in XP to raise Cap; requires brief training or milestone scene.
- **Replace:** Buying similar new follower costs full XP; loyalty starts Wary.

18.7 Summary

Companions in Fate’s Edge are **story agents**, not stat blocks:

- Familiars offer specialized aid with no upkeep.
- Followers provide flexible assistance but require attention.
- Both create narrative opportunities and vulnerabilities.

Choose your allies wisely—and remember: they have stories too.

Chapter 19

Deck Generators

In **Fate's Edge**, the **Deck of Consequences** and **Region Generators** are powerful tools for creating dynamic, unpredictable stories. This chapter provides ready-to-use deck generators for major regions, helping you seed adventures, complications, and rewards with nothing more than a standard 52-card deck.

19.1 How Deck Generators Work

Deck generators use a standard playing card deck to randomly determine narrative elements:

Spades — Places (locations, terrain, hidden dangers)

Hearts — People and Factions (NPCs, groups, rivals)

Clubs — Complications and Threats (obstacles, dangers, setbacks)

Diamonds — Rewards and Leverage (treasure, assets, advantages)

19.2 Drawing Procedures

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.

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 size.

Act Builder

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

19.3 Rank Severity and Clock Size

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

Rank	Clock Size
2–5 (Minor)	4 segments
6–10 (Standard)	6 segments
J, Q, K (Major)	8 segments
Ace (Pivotal)	10 segments

19.4 Color Influences

- **Black suits** () — Travel hazards, tangible threats, fatigue
- **Red suits** () — Social intrigue, reputational pressure

19.5 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

19.6 Regional Deck Generators

Each region has its own themed deck generator. Below are examples for major regions:

Viterra — "The Last Kingdom"

Spades — Places

- 2. Fen causeway stile with a toll-rod and a patient line of eel carts.
- 3. Hedgerow muster-green in the Dales; bows strung under apple trees.
- 4. Beacon hill above the Highlands; watch-fire grate and slate steps.
- 5. Belworth ferry-stairs with wet ledgers and a nervous horn.
- 6. Old iron-bloom quarry turned drill yard; hammer echoes carry.
- 7. Parish-stone maze where three maps disagree by a field.
- 8. Fairport tideworks at the river mouth; Dolmis swell under the planks.
- 9. Valora law quarter—archives, 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 and Factions

- 2. Fen reeve with a tally-rod; speaks for the dike guilds.

- 3. River-carter syndic who moves grain faster than rumor.
- 4. Parish surveyor with three maps and one opinion.
- 5. Quartermaster of the Dawn (logistics first, lances second).
- 6. Dales levy serjeant—longbow calm, cider breath.
- 7. Two-altars cleric-pair (Light circuit-preacher vs Everflame canon lawyer).
- 8. Fairport shipwright with Dolmis cousins and a quiet skiff.
- 9. Fenwood comptroller who can conjure wagons with a signature.
- 10. Queen's Justiciar—law on the road, polite as a gallows.
- J. Border routier-captain who reads ledgers as well as ambushes.
- Q. The Newly Crowned Queen 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 and Threats

- 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 and Leverage

- 2. Ferry priority at a named Belworth crossing (once).
- 3. Dike-work allotment—brotherhood labor on your timetable.
- 4. Market day license in Valora's square.
- 5. Dawn escort letter (four lances at first light).
- 6. River-carter line—guaranteed haul on the grain artery.
- 7. Parish-map correction—move a border a hedgerow over.
- 8. Fairport customs seal for Dolmis-bound cargo.
- 9. County Thing ruling in your favor; local teeth, real bite.
- 10. Salt allotment from a guarded depot (winter only).
- J. Wardship of a minor fen-keep; men-at-arms "for now".
- Q. Private audience with the Queen; one secret exits as policy.
- K. Fenwood ducal warrant to enforce Highway customs.
- A. Coronation writ—temporary amnesty tax-remission for those who align now.

19.7 Other Regional Generators

The complete set includes generators for:

- Acasia — "Broken Marches"
- Ecktoria — "Marble Fire"
- Ubral — "The Stone Between Spears"
- Thepyrgos — "City of a Thousand Stairs"
- Mistlands — "Bells, Salt, and Breath"
- Kahfagia — "Pilot's Mirror"
- Valewood — "Empire Under Leaves"
- The Wilds — "Roads, Ruins, and Weather"

Each generator is tailored to its region's themes, conflicts, and opportunities.

19.8 Using Deck Generators at the Table

1. **Seed the Scene** — Draw cards to determine location, actors, and initial tension.
2. **Set the Clock** — Use highest rank to determine primary challenge size.
3. **Play to Themes** — Let the suits guide the type of complications and rewards.
4. **Embrace Surprises** — When the deck gives you unexpected combinations, lean into them.

19.9 Summary

Deck generators are tools for **collaborative storytelling**:

- They introduce unpredictability and tension.
- They help GMs prep quickly and creatively.
- They make every session feel fresh and dangerous.

Let the cards guide your fate—but remember: you always have choices.

Chapter 20

Example Character Builds

In **Fate's Edge**, character creation is a blend of mechanical choices and narrative vision. This chapter presents ten fully-realized example characters, each representing a different archetype, culture, and advancement path. Use them as pregens, inspiration, or benchmarks for your own creations.

20.1 How to Read These Builds

Each character includes:

- **Concept** — Narrative identity and role.
- **Build Summary** — Attributes, Skills, Assets, and Followers spent.
- **Dice Pools** — Common rolls and their effectiveness.
- **Signature Move** — Unique approach or ability.
- **Complication Hooks** — Where the GM can apply pressure.
- **Advancement Path** — Suggested next steps for growth.

All builds use standard XP costs: Attributes ($\text{new} \times 3$), Skills ($\text{new} \times 2$), Followers (Cap^2), Assets by tier.

20.2 1. The Oath-Bound Blade (Paladin)

Concept: A holy knight whose power is tied to an unbreakable vow.

Build Summary (30 XP):

- Body 4 (12 XP), Spirit 3 (9 XP)
- Melee 4 ($2+4+6+8 = 20$ XP)
- Talent: Oath-Keeper's Word (6 XP)

Total: 47 XP (Start at 47 XP tables or adjust)

Dice Pools:

- Body + Melee: 8 dice (brutal combat)
- Spirit + Melee: 7 dice (focused strikes)
- Spirit + Resolve: 6 dice (resist temptation)

Signature Move: "By My Sacred Oath" — When protecting an innocent, start all defensive actions Controlled.

Complication Hooks:

- Breaking the oath brings spiritual backlash.
- Healing transfers harm to the caster.
- Binding evil leaves lasting scars.

Advancement Path:

- Short term: Presence 2→3 (9 XP) for better leadership
- Long term: Spirit-Shield Talent (15 XP) to protect allies

20.3 2. The Death-Speaker (Necromancer)

Concept: A master who bargains with the dead rather than commands them.

Build Summary (30 XP):

- Spirit 4 (12 XP), Wits 3 (9 XP)
- Arcana 3 (2+4+6 = 12 XP), Sway 2 (2+4 = 6 XP)
- Asset: Minor Shrine to Forgotten Gods (4 XP)

Total: 43 XP

Dice Pools:

- Wits + Arcana: 6 dice (ritual casting)
- Spirit + Sway: 6 dice (negotiating with spirits)
- Spirit + Resolve: 7 dice (resisting spiritual corruption)

Signature Move: "Whisper to the Departed" — Once per scene, gain insight from a willing spirit.

Complication Hooks:

- Summoning requires Boons or accepting Complications.
- Undead army is a Major Asset that can revolt if neglected.
- Local clergy views you as an abomination.

Advancement Path:

- Short term: Spirit 4→5 (15 XP) for greater resilience
- Long term: Deathless Servant Asset (12 XP) or Warghost Familiar (9 XP)

20.4 3. The Border-Warden (Ranger)

Concept: A sworn custodian of a liminal territory.

Build Summary (30 XP):

- Wits 4 (12 XP), Body 3 (9 XP)
- Survival 3 (2+4+6 = 12 XP), Stealth 2 (2+4 = 6 XP)
- Asset: Lodge (Minor, 4 XP)
- Follower: Scout (Cap 3, 9 XP)

Total: 50 XP (Start at 50 XP tables or adjust)

Dice Pools:

- Wits + Survival: 7 dice (tracking, navigation)
- Body + Stealth: 5 dice (ambush, escape)
- Scout Assist: Up to +3 dice on movement/stealth

Signature Move: "Territory's Eye" — In your domain, all perception rolls gain +1 effect.

Complication Hooks:

- Power is limited geographically.
- Every choice risks the balance of warded lands.
- Local spirits demand tribute for passage.

Advancement Path:

- Short term: Wits 4→5 (15 XP) for greater perception
- Long term: Valewood Grove Sanctuary (12 XP) or Beast-Tongue Talent (8 XP)

20.5 4. The Guild-Approved Shadow (Rogue)

Concept: A licensed operative of a Guild or Noble's Network.

Build Summary (30 XP):

- Wits 4 (12 XP), Presence 3 (9 XP)
- Skulduggery 3 ($2+4+6 = 12$ XP), Subterfuge 2 ($2+4 = 6$ XP)
- Asset: Guild Safehouse (Minor, 4 XP)
- Talent: Guild Ties (5 XP)

Total: 44 XP

Dice Pools:

- Wits + Skulduggery: 7 dice (locks, traps, dirty tricks)
- Presence + Subterfuge: 5 dice (deception, social manipulation)
- Intricate Actions: Re-roll all 1s for social/engineering rolls

Signature Move: "Guild Sanction" — Once per session, invoke guild authority for start Controlled.

Complication Hooks:

- Calling on Guild resources costs Boons/XP.
- Failure Compromises the Guild Asset.
- Rival guilds seek to expose your methods.

Advancement Path:

- Short term: Skulduggery 3→4 (8 XP) for master-level skill
- Long term: Spy Ring Asset (8 XP) or Shadowbinder Talent (16 XP)

20.6 5. The Spirit-Touched Outlander (Barbarian)

Concept: Rage is trance-possession by an ancestral spirit.

Build Summary (30 XP):

- Body 4 (12 XP), Spirit 3 (9 XP)
- Melee 3 ($2+4+6 = 12$ XP), Survival 2 ($2+4 = 6$ XP)
- Talent: Blood Memory (7 XP)
- Background: Ykrul Moor Warden (includes Talent)

Total: 46 XP

Dice Pools:

- Body + Melee: 7 dice (brutal combat)
- Spirit + Melee: 6 dice (focused strikes)
- Body + Survival: 6 dice (endurance, tracking)

Signature Move: "Ancestral Fury" — Once per combat, gain +3 dice but risk Complications.

Complication Hooks:

- Gain +3 dice but risk friend/foe confusion.
- Compulsive pursuit of worthy opponents.
- Rage ends with Fatigue and social isolation.

Advancement Path:

- Short term: Body 4→5 (15 XP) for legendary strength
- Long term: Warglord Talent (18 XP) or Spirit Shield (15 XP)

20.7 6. The Scholar of Fractured Truths (Wizard)

Concept: Power comes from contradictory fragments of lore.

Build Summary (30 XP):

- Wits 4 (12 XP), Spirit 3 (9 XP)
- Lore 3 (2+4+6 = 12 XP), Arcana 3 (2+4+6 = 12 XP)
- Asset: Grimoire (Minor, 4 XP)
- Talent: Ritual Master (12 XP)

Total: 53 XP (Start at 53 XP tables or adjust)

Dice Pools:

- Wits + Lore: 7 dice (research, ancient knowledge)
- Wits + Arcana: 7 dice (spellcasting)
- Spirit + Research: 6 dice (deep study)

Signature Move: "Fractured Insight" — Once per session, combine two incompatible magical theories for unique effect.

Complication Hooks:

- Each "spell" is a volatile truth.
- Activation requires Boons/XP.
- Grimoire Asset may be Compromised by theft or misuse.

Advancement Path:

- Short term: Arcana 3→4 (8 XP) for greater magical power
- Long term: Grand Forge-Citadel (20 XP) or Conduit Walker Talent (15 XP)

20.8 7. The Caretaker of Cycles (Druid)

Concept: A custodian of life-and-death balance.

Build Summary (30 XP):

- Spirit 4 (12 XP), Wits 3 (9 XP)
- Survival 3 (2+4+6 = 12 XP), Lore 2 (2+4 = 6 XP)
- Asset: Grove (Minor, 4 XP)
- Talent: Rune-Keeper (8 XP)

Total: 49 XP

Dice Pools:

- Spirit + Survival: 7 dice (nature connection)
- Wits + Lore: 5 dice (natural knowledge)
- Spirit + Resolve: 7 dice (resist corruption)

Signature Move: "Balance's Price" — Healing demands equal decay; choose the cost.

Complication Hooks:

- Using power creates counterweight Complications.
- Grove Asset reflects successes or failures.
- Seasonal changes affect abilities.

Advancement Path:

- Short term: Spirit 4→5 (15 XP) for greater divine connection
- Long term: Valewood Grove Sanctuary (12 XP) or Beast-Tongue Talent (8 XP)

20.9 8. The Chronicler of Consequences (Bard)

Concept: A living archive whose songs define history itself.

Build Summary (30 XP):

- Presence 4 (12 XP), Wits 3 (9 XP)
- Performance 3 (2+4+6 = 12 XP), Insight 2 (2+4 = 6 XP)
- Talent: Echo-Courtier (8 XP)
- Asset: Performance Venue (Minor, 6 XP)

Total: 51 XP

Dice Pools:

- Presence + Performance: 7 dice (inspiration, leadership)
- Wits + Insight: 5 dice (reading motives, social nuance)
- Presence + Sway: 6 dice (negotiation, persuasion)

Signature Move: "Song of Consequence" — Once per session, reframe a social situation through performance.

Complication Hooks:

- Inspiration weaves allies into a story.
- Failure twists it into tragedy.
- Patronage and audiences are fragile Assets.

Advancement Path:

- Short term: Performance 3→4 (8 XP) for master-level artistry
- Long term: University College (12 XP) or Whisper-Lord Talent (8 XP)

20.10 9. The Ascetic of the Unbound Body (Monk)

Concept: Detachment unbinds body and spirit.

Build Summary (30 XP):

- Body 3 (9 XP), Spirit 4 (12 XP)
- Melee 2 (2+4 = 6 XP), Meditation 3 (2+4+6 = 12 XP)
- Talent: Battle Chant (8 XP)
- Background: Sepulcher Adept (includes Talent)

Total: 51 XP

Dice Pools:

- Body + Melee: 5 dice (unarmed combat)
- Spirit + Meditation: 7 dice (resist harm, focus)
- Spirit + Resolve: 7 dice (mental fortitude)

Signature Move: "Flowing Stillness" — Ignore first Fatigue/Harm each scene by spending Boon.

Complication Hooks:

- Harm returns later as delayed Complications.
- Monastic Assets impose obligations and alienation.
- Physical detachment attracts unwanted attention.

Advancement Path:

- Short term: Spirit 4→5 (15 XP) for legendary resilience
- Long term: Resonant Architect Talent (18 XP) or Healing Sanctuary (8 XP)

20.11 10. The Petitioner of a Silent God (Cleric)

Concept: Miracles are interpretations of divine silence.

Build Summary (30 XP):

- Spirit 4 (12 XP), Presence 3 (9 XP)
- Faith 3 (2+4+6 = 12 XP), Diplomacy 2 (2+4 = 6 XP)
- Asset: Minor Shrine (4 XP)
- Talent: Everflame Keeper (16 XP)

Total: 51 XP

Dice Pools:

- Spirit + Faith: 7 dice (divine power)
- Presence + Diplomacy: 5 dice (negotiation, preaching)
- Spirit + Resolve: 7 dice (resist temptation)

Signature Move: "Silent Mandate" — Once per session, divine will speaks through apparent coincidence.

Complication Hooks:

- Each divine act requires justification.
- If logic falters, GM twists outcomes.
- Temple Asset demands obedience and testing.

Advancement Path:

- Short term: Faith 3→4 (8 XP) for greater miracles
- Long term: Temple Complex (12 XP) or Warden of Storms Talent (18 XP)

20.12 Using These Builds

These characters are designed to be:

- **Immediate Play:** Ready for any Fate's Edge game.
- **Flexible:** Easy to adjust for different XP starting points.
- **Inspiring:** Show different paths through the XP system.
- **Balanced:** Each has strengths, weaknesses, and clear growth paths.

Whether you're new to Fate's Edge or looking for fresh inspiration, these builds offer a window into the rich possibilities of character creation in a world of consequences.

Chapter 21

Enhanced Player Play

The Crown system becomes more engaging when you actively manage resources and participate in collaborative storytelling. These enhanced mechanics give you more agency and meaningful choices.

21.1 Player Resources

Manage these key resources to enhance your gameplay experience and create more collaborative outcomes.

21.1.1 Shared Leverage Pool

Participate in a collaborative economy where helping each other becomes strategic.

Pool Participation

- Contribute 1 leverage each to shared pool at session start
- Spend from pool to avoid complications or enhance actions
- Help other players by contributing to their successes
- Pool refreshes each session

Spending Options

1 Leverage: Avoid minor complication, gain small advantage

2 Leverage: Gain significant advantage, rewrite recent outcome

3+ Leverage: Major plot influence, introduce new element

Collaborative Spending

- Help allies by spending leverage on their behalf
- Pool leverage for group actions (costs 1 per participant)
- Trade leverage for information or favors from other players

21.1.2 Session Investment Tracker

Rate your engagement to earn collaborative rewards.

Investment Scale

Rate your session investment 1-3:

1 - Low Investment: Minimal roleplay, following others' lead

2 - Medium Investment: Active participation, some creative input

3 - High Investment: Leading scenes, creative problem-solving, strong roleplay

Investment Rewards

- Consistent 3s = Permanent +1 to relationship rolls
- Mix of investments = Bank 1 leverage per session average
- GM may offer bonus leverage for exceptional investment

21.1.3 Cultural Immersion Bonus

Earn mechanical benefits through immersive roleplay.

Earning Bonuses

Gain 1 leverage for:

- Using appropriate cultural terminology
- Engaging with generated cultural elements
- Making culturally consistent character choices
- Contributing to atmospheric scene-setting

Immersion Rewards

- 3 culture points = +1 to related rolls or 1 leverage
- 5 culture points = Diamond reroll or relationship bonus
- GM recognition = Additional narrative opportunities

21.2 Collaborative Play

Mechanics that make you active participants in narrative creation.

21.2.1 Information Trading

Negotiate for information using leverage and creative problem-solving.

Requesting Information

- Declare information need and offer leverage (1-3)
- Be specific about what you want to know
- Accept partial information for reduced cost
- Negotiate creative information-gathering methods

Information Value Scale

1 Leverage: Basic facts, surface details, common knowledge

2 Leverage: Strategic insights, tactical advantages, moderate secrets

3+ Leverage: Major revelations, plot-critical information, deep secrets

Creative Investigation

- Spend leverage for investigation assistance
- Use relationship dice to gain informant access
- Trade favors with other players for shared information
- Accept complications in exchange for clues

21.2.2 Clock Manipulation

Influence narrative pacing through strategic resource management.

Player Options

- Spend 1 leverage to slow clock by 1 segment
- Spend 1 leverage to hasten clock by 1 segment
- Maximum 1 segment change per player per scene
- Negotiate with GM for larger changes

Strategic Timing

- Slow clock when you need more investigation time
- Hasten clock when you want to resolve tension
- Coordinate with allies for maximum effect
- Accept GM counter-spending as part of negotiation

21.2.3 Complication Bargaining

Request specific challenge types to shape your narrative experience.

Challenge Requests

Request complications for engagement and reward:

- Social complications (feuds, negotiations, diplomacy)
- Physical challenges (combat, exploration, survival)
- Mystery elements (investigation, puzzles, hidden information)
- Moral dilemmas (ethical conflicts, difficult choices)

Bargaining Benefits

- Requested complications = +1 relationship die with relevant faction
- Creative complications = 1 temporary leverage
- Challenging yourself = GM investment in your story
- Collaborative complications = Group engagement bonus

21.3 Faction Awareness

Understand world state and make informed decisions about your actions.

21.3.1 Loyalty Recognition

Learn to read faction relationships for strategic advantage.

Loyalty Indicators

Watch for signs of faction attitudes:

Enemy (-3): Open hostility, active sabotage, public denunciation

Hostile (-2): Cold reception, bureaucratic obstacles, passive aggression

Unfriendly (-1): Minimal cooperation, guarded responses, neutral formality

Neutral (0): Businesslike interactions, standard procedures, indifference

Friendly (+1): Helpful suggestions, minor favors, warm reception

Supportive (+2): Active assistance, shared resources, personal attention

Ally (+3): Sacrificial support, privileged information, personal loyalty

Loyalty Shifting

Your actions change faction attitudes:

- Consistent help = Gradual loyalty improvement
- Betrayal = Immediate loyalty drop
- Neutral actions = Stable relationships
- Mixed actions = Complex loyalty patterns

21.3.2 Cross-Cultural Opportunities

Recognize when elements from different decks create synergy opportunities.

Synergy Recognition

Look for connections between:

- Maritime and criminal elements (Zakov + Kahfagia)
- Rural and supernatural elements (Aelaerem + Aelinnel)
- Urban and bureaucratic elements (Ecktoria + Aeler)
- Military and political elements (Black Banners + Acasia)

Synergy Benefits

- Recognize cross-deck connections = +1 to relevant rolls
- Create perfect matches = Bonus leverage or relationship die
- Suggest cross-cultural solutions = GM investment bonus

21.4 Advanced Techniques

Sophisticated approaches to resource management and collaborative play.

21.4.1 Momentum Banking

Strategic resource management for long-term benefits.

Earning Momentum

- Resolve conflicts under standard time = Bank 1 momentum per segment under
- Creative problem-solving = Bonus momentum opportunities
- Helping allies = Shared momentum benefits
- Strategic retreat = Preserved momentum

Spending Momentum

- +1 to any relationship roll
- 1 free leverage
- Reroll one diamond draw
- Minor narrative influence

21.4.2 Escalation Management

Strategic approach to conflict and tension.

Player Escalation Options

- Spend 1 leverage to de-escalate conflict
- Accept minor complication to avoid major threat
- Redirect conflict toward different target
- Negotiate temporary truce or ceasefire

Escalation Benefits

- Controlled escalation = Narrative investment
- Strategic retreat = Preserved resources
- Creative resolution = GM recognition bonus
- Collaborative conflict = Group advantages

21.5 Implementation Timeline

Gradual adoption of enhanced mechanics for smooth learning curve.

21.5.1 Getting Started (Sessions 1-3)

- Participate in Shared Leverage Pool
- Rate your Session Investment each session
- Request Information using leverage
- Try Complication Bargaining with GM

21.5.2 Building Skills (Sessions 4-6)

- Use Clock Manipulation strategically
- Earn Cultural Immersion Bonuses
- Recognize Faction Loyalty patterns
- Participate in Momentum Banking

21.5.3 Master Level (Sessions 7+)

- Strategic Cross-Deck Synergy creation
- Advanced Escalation Management
- Collaborative Resource Trading
- Leadership in Session Investment

These enhanced player mechanics transform you from passive participants to active co-creators of the narrative, with meaningful resources to manage and strategic choices that shape the story.

Chapter 22

Quick Reference Sheets

These condensed sheets summarize the core procedures, costs, and tables for use at the table. They are designed for GMs and players to keep the flow of play without flipping through sections.

22.1 Core Mechanic: The Art of Consequence

1. Approach

Player states intent and method (Attribute + Skill).

2. Execution

Roll dice pool of d10s:

- Each **6+** = 1 Success
- Each **1** = 1 Complication Point (CP)

3. Outcome

Compare Successes to Difficulty Value (DV):

Outcome	Effect
Clean Success	Intent achieved crisply (DV met, no CP)
Success & Cost	Intent achieved; GM spends CP for complications
Partial	Progress with fork (accept cost OR concede ground)
Miss	No progress; GM spends CP OR offers Devil's Bargain

Description Ladder

Basic Roll as-is; tally Complications.

Detailed Re-roll one 1.

Intricate Re-roll all 1s; add one positive flourish if successful.

CP Note. Re-rolling 1s does *not* erase their CP; any new 1s on the re-roll add more CP.

22.2 Attributes & Skills

Attributes (1–5)

Body Strength, endurance, physical force

Wits Perception, cleverness, reflexes

Spirit Willpower, intuition, resilience

Presence Charm, command, social force

Skill Ratings (0–5)

Rating	Meaning
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

22.3 XP Costs

Purchase	Cost
Attributes	New rating \times 3 XP
Skills	New level \times 2 XP
Followers (On-Screen)	Cap ² XP
Off-Screen Assets	Minor 4 / Standard 8 / Major 12 XP

22.4 Deck of Consequences

Draw from the deck when Complication Points are spent.

Suit Meanings

Hearts Emotional / Social fallout

Diamonds Resource / Wealth loss

Clubs Physical harm / Obstacles

Spades Mystical / Narrative twists

Rank Severity

Rank	Severity
2–5	Minor setback, scene continues smoothly
6–9	Moderate complication; new obstacle or clock
10–K	Severe twist; alters stakes of the scene
Ace	Catastrophic turn; reshapes narrative

22.5 Magic Casting Loop**1. Channel**

Roll **Wits** + **Arcana**:

- Each success = 1 Potential
- Each 1 = 1 CP immediately

2. Weave

Roll **Wits** + (**Art**):

- Apply Description Ladder
- Shape spell effect

3. Backlash

GM spends CP for thematic consequences.

22.6 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.

22.7 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

22.8 Boons

- Re-roll one die after seeing the result
- Activate an Off-Screen Asset (1 Boon or 2 XP)
- Convert 2 Boons = 1 XP (once per session)
- Max 5 Boons; overflow converts to XP

22.9 Travel Framework

Draw until all suits appear:

Spades Places

Hearts Actors

Clubs Pressures

Diamonds Leverage

Clock Size by highest rank:

Rank	Clock Size
2–5	4 segments
6–10	6 segments
J/Q/K	8 segments
Ace	10 segments

22.10 Supply Clock

Segments	Effect
0 (Full)	No penalties
2 (Low)	Minor complications
3 (Dangerous)	Each PC gains Fatigue
4 (Empty)	Severe penalties; starvation

22.11 Combat Consequences

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

Harm Integration

Harm tracks directly tie to the 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

Tactical Clocks

Persistent combat conditions 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

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

Combat 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 OR offers tactical bargain

22.12 GM Guidance at a Glance

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

22.13 Asset Activation

To activate any Off-Screen Asset:

- **Cost:** 1 Boon or 2 XP
- **Scope:** One clear outcome the asset can plausibly produce
- **Limits:** One activation per distinct ask; no auto-wins

22.14 Follower Assistance

- **In-Role Assist:** +Cap bonus (plausible fiction)
- **Off-Role Assist:** +1 bonus (intricate description required)
- **Cap:** Maximum +3 total assist bonus per roll

22.15 Initiative Actions

Once per scene (crew-wide):

- Scout & Signal — Ally starts Controlled or +1 effect
- Distract & Draw — Reduce kinetic rail by -1 tick
- Fetch & Carry — Move object through danger

Cost: Mark Exposure +1 or Harm 1 on follower

22.16 Condition Tracks

Assets/Followers

Maintained Full capability; no penalties

Neglected -1 die when used; requires attention

Compromised Unavailable; narrative consequences

Characters

Fatigue (1–4) — Re-roll successes; 4 = Collapse

Harm (1–3) — Narrative injury; 3 = Out of action

22.17 Over-Stack Rule

If crew enters scene with 2+ structural advantages:

- Start one named rail at +1, OR
- GM banks +1 CP for first Twist

22.18 Position and Effect

Position

Controlled — Low risk, high chance of success

Risky — Moderate risk, balanced stakes

Desperate — High risk, likely consequences

Effect**Limited** — Minor impact**Standard** — Expected result**Great** — Significant or lasting impact**22.19 Remember**

Every roll is a story beat.

Embrace the risk—and let the consequences unfold.

Chapter 23

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