

The Hag's Panopticon

A One-Shot for Fate's Edge

Designed for 3–4 hours; Tone: paranoia, social intrigue, folk-horror

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1 How to Use This Document

This packet is ready-to-run. Sections are ordered the way you'll need them at the table:

1. **Overview & Themes** — the premise, mood, and core tensions.
2. **Character Creation** — prompts and guidelines for building characters suited to this scenario.
3. **Act Structure** — four acts with beats and decision points.
4. **NPC Roster** — named roles with open/secret agendas.
5. **Key Locations** — quick, evocative details and map prompts.
6. **Scene & Encounter Frames** — tension beats and soft clocks.
7. **The Hag's Low Rites** — paranoia-fueled tools (Mab-flavored, twisted).
8. **Corruption: The Hag** — subtle tells to catch servants.
9. **GM Tools** — SB spends, sample clocks, and reveals menu.
10. **Player Handouts** — table-friendly summaries.

Fate's Edge Fit: Use *Position* (Dominant/Dominant/Desperate), *Boons/SB economy*, and *scene clocks*. Keep the Hag felt, not always seen.

2 Character Creation

2.1 Recommended Backgrounds

Players should consider backgrounds that emphasize:

- **Social manipulation** (Sway, Deceit, Command)
- **Insight into human behavior** (Notice, Insight, Lore)
- **Stealth and infiltration** (Stealth, Mobility)
- **Resilience to mental strain** (Resolve, Spirit)

2.2 Suggested Drives

- **Uncover the Truth** — You seek to expose the hidden mechanisms of control.
- **Escape at Any Cost** — Freedom is your only goal; others may be sacrificed.
- **Protect the Innocent** — You believe some here are truly innocent and must be saved.

2.3 Skill Suggestions

- **Investigation Skills:** Notice, Insight, Lore
- **Social Skills:** Sway, Command, Deceit
- **Stealth Skills:** Stealth, Mobility
- **Resilience Skills:** Resolve, Spirit

3 Overview & Themes

3.1 Premise

Shipwrecked (or captured), the PCs awaken on an island “rehabilitation colony” run by a Hag. The colony’s social order is engineered so no one can say who is *prisoner* and who is *guard*. Roles invert

mid-scene; memory and narrative contradict. Escape is possible, overthrow is possible, submission is tempting.

3.2 Themes

- **Masks and Roles:** Identity is a costume; truth is a performance.
- **Paranoia as Power:** Doubt fuels control; trust becomes a resource.
- **Bargains Over Bars:** Walls exist, but *social architecture* is the real prison.

3.3 Tone Guide

Folk-horror unease, candlelit communal halls, whispers through the walls, public rituals of “confession,” kindness with a hook.

3.4 Outcomes at a Glance

- **Escape:** Flee by sea; the Hag’s influence lingers.
- **Overthrow:** Break her control; inherit a broken community.
- **Submission:** Walk free as her agents beyond the island.

4 Act Structure

4.1 Act I: Arrival & Orientation

Hook: PCs awaken in the infirmary; they are “new arrivals.” A communal meal follows.

- **Read:** smiles, contradictions, missing names.
- **Tell:** no one states their role plainly.
- **Clue seeds (choose 1–2):**
 - A “guard” takes orders from a “prisoner” without comment.
 - A hymn switches verses mid-phrase, as if someone else is speaking.
 - A masked figure watches from a reflection, not the doorway.

4.2 Act II: The Crack in the Facade

Assign mundane labor (wall repair, kitchens, docks). During the task, reveal the first *break*.

- **Factions:** Conspirators (escape), True Believers (devotion), Traders (barter to survive).
- **Beat:** a public “discipline” where roles invert: today’s enforcer is punished as a traitor.

4.3 Act III: The Hag’s Game

The Hag contacts a PC (dream, whisper, or proxy). Offer three bargains:

1. **Submission:** Serve as her watchers (leave later as agents).
2. **Escape:** She opens a path if they betray someone.
3. **Overthrow:** “If you think you can.” (She tightens the screws.)

4.4 Act IV: Resolution

- **Escape:** Reach the sabotaged skiff; storms and watchers oppose you.
- **Overthrow:** Confront the Hag’s locus (chapel mirror, cistern, or masked warden). Shatter the mechanism of control.
- **Submission:** The Hag grants passage; PCs bear her mark.

Positioning Advice: Social scenes start Dominant; a public reveal pushes to Desperate. Use Boons to step up Position or seed Assists; 1s feed your SB.

5 NPC Roster

5.1 The Hag (Warden Mother)

Face: Rarely seen directly; appears in reflections, as a masked “warden,” or as a kindly voice.

- **Agenda:** Preserve the panopticon; harvest secrets and bargains.
- **Levers:** Role inversion, dream-bargains, public rituals of confession.
- **If cornered:** She does not flee; she *recasts the scene*: who is confessing now?

5.2 Seris (The Kindly Healer)

Mask: Prisoner (nurturing, soft-spoken). **Truth:** Senior watcher.

- **Wants:** Convert PCs into cooperative assets.
- **Tells:** Always sits with her back to mirrors; never states a role.
- **Offer:** Protection if you “help” identify agitators.

5.3 Gorvik (The Gruff Enforcer)

Mask: Guard (stern, dutiful). **Truth:** Desperate conspirator.

- **Wants:** Out—but won’t risk others lightly.
- **Tells:** Winces when giving orders; works hardest at menial tasks.
- **Offer:** Quiet favors; asks for proof PCs won’t betray him.

5.4 Three Quick Extras

- **The Believer:** Reports everything. (Is it piety, or leverage?)
- **The Skeptic:** Knows too much; paralyzed by fear.
- **The Ghost:** Swears they died here and woke up again.

Portrayal Note: Swap an NPC’s displayed role mid-scene once per act. Let the table feel the rug-pulls.

6 Key Locations

6.1 Longhouse (Common Hall)

Read: Smoke-sweet air, communal benches, masks hung like trophies. **Secrets:** A slat behind the choir dais hides a crawlspace to the Chapel. **Tension Beat:** A public confession each evening; roles invert mid-ritual.

6.2 Infirmary (Wards & Whispers)

Read: Herb-bitter linen, quiet footfalls, mirror above the washbasin. **Secrets:** The mirror is her favored locus; speaking a name to it summons a watcher. **Tension Beat:** A “patient” orders a “nurse”; no one reacts as if odd.

6.3 Chapel (Masks & Reflections)

Read: Beeswax, iron bell rope, a silvered altar. **Secrets:** The altar’s reflection reveals the Hag’s masked warden even when she is absent. **Tension Beat:** The hymn shifts voice mid-verse as though the island sings back.

6.4 Workyard (Labor & Leverage)

Read: Salt air, pile of nets, wall repair scaffold. **Secrets:** A loose stone conceals a smuggled lockpick and a conspirator’s note. **Tension Beat:** An enforcer is punished as a traitor—today’s guard is tomorrow’s prisoner.

6.5 Docks (Hope & Sabotage)

Read: Splintered skiff, barnacled pilings, treacherous reef. **Secrets:** The only seaworthy skiff needs a sparkstone (kept in the Chapel). **Tension Beat:** Fog arrives unnaturally fast; a watcher “was always here.”

7 Scene & Encounter Frames

7.1 Soft Clocks (Examples)

- **Trust Frays** (4-tick): Allies refuse to Assist; social Position worsens.
- **Watcher’s Eye** (6-tick): The Hag acts directly (insert a bargain/punishment).
- **Sabotage at the Docks** (4-tick): Skiff rendered useless until repaired.
- **Riot Spark** (6-tick): Crowd turns; public violence or purge.

7.2 Social Pressure Frames

Start *Dominant*. Any public reveal, accusation, or role inversion can drop to *Desperate*. Award Boons on Partial/Misses to keep momentum; every rolled 1 seeds GM SB.

7.3 Custom SB Spend Menus

7.3.1 SB Spend: Social Paranoia (Common Hall / Chapel)

| SB | Spend (Social) |
|----|---|
| 1 | A bystander “remembers” the PCs differently; worsen Position by 1 for the current exchange. |
| 1 | A trusted NPC hesitates; remove 1 Assist die from the next ally roll. |
| 2 | Seed a <i>Trust Frays</i> tick (2); the targeted PC must answer a pointed question or take -1 die on next social roll. |
| 2 | A mask changes hands off-screen; an NPC’s apparent role flips for the scene. |
| 3 | Public Confession: someone is forced to accuse a PC or ally; all social rolls against True Believers are <i>Desperate</i> this scene. |
| 4 | Command Performance: the Hag speaks through a reflection; she names a cost (betray X or accept a Mark). Refusal advances <i>Watcher’s Eye</i> by 2. |

7.3.2 SB Spend: Escape Pressure (Workyard / Docks)

| SB | Spend (Escape) |
|----|--|
| 1 | Sudden fog; worsen environmental Position for stealth/scan checks. |
| 1 | A rope snaps; mark 1 Fatigue on the acting PC unless they drop gear. |
| 2 | Sabotage blooms: tick <i>Sabotage at the Docks</i> twice. |
| 2 | Witnessed: a watcher appears where no one was; next action vs. the watcher is <i>Desperate</i> . |
| 3 | Panic spreads; introduce a hostile crowd complication (DV +1 until dispersed). |
| 4 | The Hag’s Command: choose—abandon one conspirator now, or <i>Watcher’s Eye</i> fills. |

7.3.3 SB Spend: Overthrow & Confrontation (Chapel / Locus)

| SB | Spend (Overthrow) |
|----|---|
| 1 | Mirror-flash blinds; -1 die to the next direct action against the locus. |
| 2 | Role Collapse: one PC momentarily believes they are a guard; they must Act to shake it or suffer -1 die for the scene. |
| 2 | Echoed Orders: an ally repeats the Hag’s phrasing; sow -1 die to all Teamwork actions this exchange. |
| 3 | Mask Shatter: an NPC ally is revealed as a watcher; they impose a hard choice (retreat or split the party). |
| 4 | Recast the Scene: immediately flip the fiction (swap who is “accused”); everyone’s Position drops by 1 for their next action. |

8 The Hag's Low Rites (Paranoia-Fueled)

All are *Low Rites* intended for social/intrigue tension. They mirror Mab's toolkit but twist toward gaslighting and identity flux.

8.1 Wear the Mask

Scope: Scene; Self; Resisted. **Materials:** Mask/veil/shadow-smear. **Effect:** Present as guard or prisoner at will; NPCs accept it unless violently contradicted. **Push:** Learn one target's secret (GM supplies). Costs 1 Corruption on a *Miss*.

8.2 Whisper of Betrayal

Scope: Scene; Close; Resisted. **Materials:** Shared water; hushed phrase. **Effect:** Target treats an ally as suspicious; -1 die to Assist/Teamwork with that ally. **Push:** Paranoia spreads to the whole group for one exchange.

8.3 Exchange of Shadows

Scope: Instant; Near; Unresisted. **Materials:** Overlapped shadows. **Effect:** You and a target swap apparent roles; onlookers "remember" it as true. **Push:** Lingers into Downtime; fallout scene required to clear.

8.4 Eyes in the Walls

Scope: Scene; Self; Unresisted. **Materials:** Crack, keyhole, splinter. **Effect:** Observe a nearby scene remotely. **Push:** Receive one *truth* and one *lie*; you don't know which is which (GM marks 1 SB).

8.5 The Hag's Bargain

Scope: Scene; Touch; Resisted. **Materials:** Blood drop or mirror shard. **Effect:** Grant an ally +1 die; if they *Miss*, you mark 1 Corruption. **Push:** If they *Crit*, you still mark 1 Corruption (the Hag always profits).

9 Corruption: The Hag (Masks & Paranoia)

9.1 Subtle Tells (Narrative)

- **Stage 1:** Whisper-twitch; face-covering habits; compulsive "are you lying?" asides.
- **Stage 2:** False titles; aversion to mirrors; tattletale reflex to unseen authorities.
- **Stage 3:** Shadow out of sync; gaslight instinct; her tone slips into your voice.
- **Stage 4:** Mirror-glint eye; role amnesia; compulsion to spread her bargains.

9.2 SRD Track (Condensed)

1–3 Corruption Subtle habits emerge: covering the face, pausing as if listening, probing others for lies.

4–6 Corruption Roles blur: false titles, mirror aversion, reflex to report others' actions.

7–9 Corruption Paranoia deepens: shadow slip, memory-twisting, the Hag’s tones in your speech.

10+ Corruption Revelation: one eye mirrors dim light; you doubt your role and dream of spreading her bargains.

10 GM Tools: Paranoia & Control

10.1 Reveal Ladder (Escalation Cues)

Use these stages to track how overt the Hag’s influence becomes.

1. **Masks in Motion:** PCs notice minor behavioral tics in NPCs (whisper-twitch, compulsive reporting).
2. **Role Confusion:** Guards and prisoners invert in public scenes; records contradict themselves.
3. **Living Walls:** PCs catch the island itself “watching” — whispers in cracks, faces in reflections.
4. **The Hag’s Voice:** Commands ripple through NPCs; PCs hear her in their own speech.
5. **Revelation:** One PC or ally is unmasked as her agent. This is a turning point — confrontation, betrayal, or bargain.

10.2 Clock Suite (Examples)

- **Trust Frays** (4): Allies hesitate to Aid; social Position worsens.
- **Watcher’s Eye** (6): The Hag intervenes directly; insert bargain/punishment.
- **Sabotage at the Docks** (4): Escape route collapses unless countered.
- **Identity Collapse** (6): One PC begins to doubt their own role; must Act to recover.

10.3 Downtime SB Spend Menu (After Each Session/Scene)

| SB | Spend (Downtime) |
|----|--|
| 1 | A rumor spreads in the cells: PCs suffer -1 die to the next social action unless they quell it. |
| 1 | Nightmares visit: mark 1 Fatigue unless a PC takes Watch. |
| 2 | A mask “migrates” overnight: swap two NPC roles at the GM’s choice. |
| 2 | A PC receives a whispered bargain in their dreams; accept a small boon, or mark 1 Corruption. |
| 3 | An ally NPC vanishes; next session they return with subtle Stage 2 Corruption. |
| 4 | The Hag herself appears in a dream tribunal; one PC must confess or face a scene start at <i>Desperate</i> . |

10.4 GM Reminders

- Always spend SB to destabilize trust, never just to “add hit points.”
- Swap roles subtly; the fiction should feel like sand slipping through fingers.
- Corruption is narrative fuel; feed paranoia slowly, then escalate into overt reveals.
- Use Clocks sparingly; fewer, more visible ones emphasize mounting tension.

11 Player Handout: The Island of Masks

11.1 Premise (What You Know)

You are confined on an isolated prison island ruled by a mysterious Hag. No one can say with certainty who is a prisoner and who is a guard. Every face wears suspicion; every mask hides a bargain. You have one goal: **survive long enough to find escape or overthrow her hold.**

11.2 Your Immediate Goals

- Identify potential allies and conspirators.
- Avoid exposure as traitor or pawn.
- Secure a path off the island — skiff, dock, or revolt.
- Decide whether you will confront the Hag directly or flee her grasp.

11.3 What You Suspect

- The Hag’s servants are hidden among you.
- Masks and roles may shift without warning.
- Bargains are binding, but always slanted in her favor.

Sidebar: Spotting the Hag’s Servants

Tells in Plain Sight Keep watch for these subtle behaviors:

- Covering the face or speaking in half-pauses, as if “listening.”
- Refusal to meet mirrors or reflective surfaces.
- Compulsively reporting on others’ actions to anyone listening.
- Shadows that move just slightly out of step.
- Speech that slips into strange tones or repeats the Hag’s phrases.

Each of these hints may mark a servant already sliding under her influence. It is up to you whether to expose them, trust them, or bargain yourself.

11.4 Player Reminders

- Your Position (Dominant/Dominant/Desperate) matters more than raw damage.
- Boons fuel team momentum; Fatigue and Corruption are long-term costs.
- The Hag thrives on paranoia — play into it, but remember: **cooperation is still your strongest weapon.**

12 Closing GM Section: Flow & Resolution

12.1 Adventure Flow (3 Acts)

Act I: Arrival & Unease

- Introduce the Longhouse or Infirmary; emphasize masks and role confusion.
- Clock: *Trust Frays* (4). Every misstep fuels suspicion.
- Seed subtle corruption tells (whisper-twitch, false titles).

Act II: Fractures & Conspiracies

- PCs navigate shifting alliances. Push SB spends from the Social Paranoia table.
- Clock: *Watcher's Eye* (6). Advance it whenever bargains are refused.
- Include a reveal ladder step (Role Confusion or Living Walls).

Act III: Escape or Overthrow

- Scene pivot to Docks or Chapel. Choose *Escape* or *Confrontation*.
- Escape uses the *Escape Pressure* SB menu; Overthrow uses *Overthrow & Confrontation*.
- Endgame corruption: highlight one PC or ally tipping into Stage 3 or 4.

12.2 Final Confrontation Options

Escape PCs secure the skiff or another route. Costs: Fatigue + SB; some prisoners left behind.

Bargain PCs accept a deal from the Hag. Corruption flows, but safe passage is granted.

Overthrow PCs confront the Hag in her locus (Chapel/altar reflection). Use Overthrow SB menu.

12.3 Aftermath Table

Roll 1d6 or decide based on play outcomes.

| Roll | Aftermath |
|------|--|
| 1 | The Hag's power fractures; she vanishes, but masks linger across the isles. PCs gain infamy. |
| 2 | Escape succeeds, but one PC carries her Stage 4 Corruption — a new vector for her influence. |
| 3 | Bargain accepted: safe passage in exchange for a permanent Mark (all PCs +1 ongoing Corruption track). |
| 4 | Prison revolt succeeds; the Hag's locus destroyed. Survivors establish a fragile new order. |
| 5 | The Hag withdraws, promising return. PCs carry whispers of her bargains into future play. |
| 6 | PCs overthrew her utterly. Yet a mirror shard follows them, glinting with potential return. |

12.4 GM Wrap Reminders

- Escalate paranoia gradually: from subtle habits to overt reveals.
- Use SB to warp trust and identity, not to simply add “difficulty.”
- Always end with a clear player choice: flee, bargain, or confront.
- Corruption is the long shadow — even victory may carry her mark forward.

A Generators & Quick Tables

A.1 NPC Generator (Prisoner or Guard?)

Roll 1d6 or choose.

| d6 | NPC Trait |
|----|--|
| 1 | Innocent Face: Claims ignorance; insists they are wrongly confined. Wears a mask too large. |
| 2 | Confessor: Always eager to whisper someone else's sins; "helps" by reporting. |
| 3 | Silent Watcher: Speaks rarely, but always seems to be in the room you enter next. |
| 4 | Bargainer: Offers aid for a price (a mask, a secret, a wound). |
| 5 | Masked Twin: Looks exactly like another NPC; denies it. |
| 6 | Bleeding Voice: Occasionally slips into the Hag's tones; Stage 2 corruption evident. |

A.2 Island Location Generator

Roll 1d6 or choose.

| d6 | Location Detail |
|----|---|
| 1 | Collapsed Tower: Half-fallen into the surf; stairwell ends in mist. |
| 2 | Mirror Pool: Still water that reflects someone absent rather than present. |
| 3 | Mask Garden: Broken masks hang from posts, swaying as if in wind. |
| 4 | Sealed Cell: Door bolted from inside; scratching still audible. |
| 5 | Hollow Tree: Whispers echo; a prisoner once hid messages here. |
| 6 | Chalk Circles: Faded ritual markings, refreshed when no one watches. |

A.3 Consequences Generator (Deck of Consequences)

Roll 1d6 or choose when a *Miss* or severe cost must land.

| d6 | Consequence |
|----|--|
| 1 | Fractured Trust: Allies refuse to Aid until convinced otherwise. |
| 2 | Lost Identity: For one scene, the PC must act as though they are a guard. |
| 3 | Corruption Surge: Mark +2 Corruption immediately. |
| 4 | Mirror Mark: A PC's reflection is missing in one surface; others notice. |
| 5 | Broken Escape: A rope, key, or tool fails at the worst possible time. |
| 6 | The Hag's Whisper: GM declares a bargain offer. Refusal advances <i>Watcher's Eye</i> clock by 2. |

A.4 Usage Note

These generators are lightweight tools:

- Use NPC traits to blur the line between ally and enemy.
- Island details create unease and reinforce the shifting setting.
- Consequences escalate paranoia without stalling play.