

Fate's Edge First Play Kit

Rules reference characters and a one session adventure

A complete table package for 2 to 5 players and one Game Master

THE LAST LEDGER

The Velvet Court has surrounded the Silk Coin guildhall. Escape with the ledger, choose what it is worth, and leave Silkstrand before the city forgets your names.

Designed for a first session of Fate's Edge lasting 60 to 90 minutes. No character creation or setting preparation is required.

Nicholas A. Gasper | First Edition | September 2026

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Player Reference One

Fate's Edge resolves every risky action with the same five-step procedure. Say what you want, say how you do it, and let the roll change the situation.

The Core Loop

1. Declare your intent and approach. Name the outcome you want and the Attribute plus Skill you use.
2. The GM states Position, Difficulty Value, and likely consequences before the roll.
3. Roll Attribute plus Skill in d10s. A 6 to 9 is 1 success. A 10 is 2 successes.
4. Count every 1. Each gives the GM 1 Story Beat, even when you succeed.
5. Compare successes with the DV and apply the outcome.

Outcome Matrix

Roll	Outcome	Result
Successes at least DV and no SB	Clean Success	You achieve the intent without a new complication.
Successes at least DV and one or more SB	Success with SB	You achieve the intent. The GM may spend SB to complicate the situation.
Some successes but fewer than DV	Partial	You make meaningful progress and gain 1 Boon.
No successes	Miss	You do not make progress. If the meaningful roll generated SB, gain 2 Boons.

Position

Position	What It Means	Rule
Dominant	You hold the advantage	Re-roll one failure result of 5 or less.
Controlled	Risk is balanced	Roll normally.
Desperate	Consequences are severe	Re-roll one success result of 6 to 9.

A die showing 10 is never re-rolled. Position stops at Dominant and Desperate. If another advantage applies at Dominant, the GM may lower DV, increase Effect, or simply say yes.

Difficulty and Effect

DV	Use
2	Routine under pressure
3	Default challenge
4	Hard active resistance
5	Extreme dramatic gamble

DV ends at 5. For harder tasks, use Position, Effect, a timer, or a flat no. Effect is Limited, Standard, or Great.

Player Reference Two

Boons

- Gain 1 Boon on a Partial. Gain 2 on a meaningful Miss that generated at least 1 Story Beat.
- Hold no more than 5. At the end of a scene, reduce held Boons to 2.
- Spend 1 after a roll to re-roll one die and keep the new result. New 1s create more Story Beats.
- Spend 1 before a roll to improve Position by one step.
- Spend 1 to activate an Asset or an ability that names a Boon cost.
- Spend 1 to Assist an ally with plus 1 die. You share the stated risk.

If you have no Boon, you may usually mark 1 Fatigue instead for an immediate Boon effect. The GM may veto this when the fiction does not support it.

Critical Success

A 10 counts as 2 successes. If the whole roll succeeds, one 10 also lets you choose a free Boon, improve Position, or add a useful narrative flourish. Two 10s grant two benefits or one stronger effect.

Fatigue Harm and Armor

- Your Fatigue track equals Body. Each marked Fatigue worsens Position one step. Further Fatigue while already Desperate gives minus 1 die per point.
- When Fatigue reaches Body, raise Harm by 1 and clear Fatigue.
- Harm 1 gives minus 1 die when the injury directly matters. Harm 2 gives minus 1 die on most actions. Harm 3 incapacitates you.
- Armor converts incoming Harm to Fatigue before remaining Harm is applied. If Harm remains, clear existing Fatigue, raise Harm, then add converted Fatigue.

Armor	Harm 1	Harm 2	Harm 3
Light	Fatigue 1	Harm 1 plus Fatigue 1	Harm 2 plus Fatigue 1
Medium	Fatigue 1	Fatigue 1	Harm 2 plus Fatigue 1
Heavy	Fatigue 1	Fatigue 1	Fatigue 2

Actions and Range

On your turn, take 1 Action and 1 Move in either order. A Move shifts one band: Close, Near, Reach, Far. Use Attack, Disengage, Dash, Observe, Setup, Protect, Interact, or Defend. Charge and Skirmish use the full turn, move two bands, cost 1 Fatigue, and make your next defense Desperate.

Leaving an enemy's Close range without Disengaging provokes an opportunity attack. A ranged attack or an unprotected spell cast while engaged also provokes.

Game Master Procedure

Run the fiction first. Call for a roll only when the outcome is uncertain and both success and failure can change the situation. State the stakes before dice hit the table.

Before Play

1. Ask for Lines, Veils, and permission to use the X Card. Remove or redirect uncomfortable material immediately.
2. Give players the character sheets and ask each pair to choose one mutual Bond.
3. Put the Escape and Court's Net timers where everyone can see them.
4. Read the opening aloud and ask the first player what they do.

For Every Risky Action

1. Restate intent. Make sure everyone knows what success would accomplish.
2. Choose Position from the danger and DV from the resistance. Default to Controlled and DV 3.
3. Name the likely consequence of a Miss. Mention Limited or Great Effect when it matters.
4. Resolve the roll. Apply Position re-rolls, count successes, and bank every Story Beat from a 1.
5. Change the situation. Tick a timer, reveal leverage, move an NPC, separate an ally, or force a choice. Never narrate nothing.

Story Beat Menu

Cost	Complication
1 SB	Minor pressure, noise, trace, worse Position, or tick a 4 to 6 segment timer by 1.
2 SB	Alarm, lost cover, a lesser foe, a temporary split, or a hard bargain.
3 SB	Reinforcements, broken gear, a major twist, or a campaign consequence.
4 or more	A scene-changing turn such as authority arriving or the environment transforming.

Timer Procedure

- Clean Success or Success with SB normally fills 2 progress segments.
- Partial normally fills 1 progress segment and earns the player a Boon.
- Miss fills no progress and may advance the threat when the fiction supports it.
- When a timer ticks, describe the visible change. A full threat timer creates a worse situation, never a dead end.

Pacing cue. At 45 minutes, move to the final crossing even if Escape is not full. Missing progress becomes a concrete price at the quay.

Guided Example

The group needs the black ledger from a trapped cabinet before the Velvet Court reaches the guildhall.

Intent and Approach

Lyra says, "I want the ledger out without ringing the wire bell. I listen to the tumblers and lift the pins with my picks." The GM accepts Wits plus Craft.

Position Difficulty and Effect

The room is secure for the moment, but the Court is close. The GM says, "Controlled, DV 3, Standard Effect. On a Miss, the bell rings and Court's Net advances."

The Roll

Lyra rolls 5d10 and gets 9, 6, 4, 2, 1. The 9 and 6 are 2 successes. The 1 gives the GM 1 Story Beat. Two successes are fewer than DV 3, so the result is a Partial.

The Outcome

A Partial makes progress. Lyra gains 1 Boon. The GM says, "The lock opens and the ledger is yours, but the last pin squeals against the bell wire. Footsteps stop outside the door." Escape advances by 1.

The Story Beat

The GM spends the Story Beat for minor pressure and ticks Court's Net by 1. A Velvet Knife calls through the door, "Old Kes, open up. The Court has forgiven you."

The Boon Changes the Next Choice

Ellis wants to force the rear door while Lyra distracts the Knife. Lyra spends her Boon to Assist, giving Ellis plus 1 die and sharing the risk. If Ellis misses, both may be caught in the courtyard.

What This Demonstrates

Element	What Happened
Intent	The player named a concrete outcome before choosing dice.
Position	Controlled described the current danger and altered the roll procedure.
DV	Three measured resistance, not danger.
Partial	The ledger was recovered, so the story moved forward.
Story Beat	The player's own die created new pressure.
Boon	The setback gave the players leverage for the next decision.

The Last Ledger

A 60 to 90 minute introductory adventure for the five included characters. It adapts the fall of the Silk Coin and the Velvet Court's Gambit from Blood and Silk The Complete Saga.

Premise

The Velvet Court has surrounded the Silk Coin guildhall. The guild's black ledger names bought magistrates, protected smugglers, and every client the Court could destroy. Old Kes asks the characters to take it to a waiting boat at Lantern Quay. The Court offers them survival if they surrender it.

The Question

Who deserves protection when every name in the ledger belongs to someone compromised?

Table Boundaries

Default Lines are sexual violence and harm to children. Veil torture and detailed injury. The X Card is always available. Replace drugging or coercive bargains if requested.

What the Characters Know

- The Silk Coin tried to keep one honest rule in a dishonest city: never sell a client's name.
- Madam Serafine's Velvet Court has bought the Watch and closed the bridges.
- The black ledger can expose the Court, but exposure could also destroy people who had no safe choice.
- A narrow dye barge called Gray Moth waits at Lantern Quay until the ninth bell.

Opening Read Aloud

The bell wire across the guildhall door trembles once. Outside, boots settle into the rain. Old Kes places a black silk ledger on the table and pushes it toward you. "They bought the bridges, the Watch, and two of our own. Gray Moth waits at Lantern Quay. Take this, burn it, sell it if you must. Just do not let Serafine decide whose names survive." The wire trembles again. This time, someone on the other side laughs.

The Two Timers

Escape 6 [] [] [] [] [] []

Court's Net 4 [] [] [] []

- Escape fills when the characters secure what they need, open a route, or overcome meaningful resistance.
- Court's Net fills through delays, loud failures, spent Story Beats, and bargains that give the Court leverage.
- If Escape fills first, the crossing begins Dominant; otherwise Controlled. A full Court's Net takes priority: Desperate, and the Silken Blade appears. Lock this state before the crossing roll. Resolve it before spending its new SB; those affect subsequent fallout, never its declared Position or DV.

Adventure Structure

Scene One The Guildhall

Ask what each character takes and which route they create. Use one or two rolls, including any Setup rolls, then move. Do not require every task.

Approach	Suggested Test	On Progress
Open the trapped cabinet	Wits plus Craft DV 3 Controlled	Recover the ledger and fill Escape by 2.
Study the cordon	Wits plus Insight DV 3 Controlled	Identify one weak route and improve its first Position.
Rally frightened guild members	Presence plus Sway DV 3 Controlled	Gain the Guild Remnant Asset and fill Escape by 1.
Break through the rear wall	Body plus Craft DV 4 Controlled	Open the Dyehouse route and fill Escape by 2.

Guild Remnant Asset. Spend 1 Boon to create a distraction, conceal one person, or provide a useful tool. The asset can be used once.

Old Kes

Tired, exact, and unwilling to leave. He burned the page containing his own name years ago. If pressed, he admits a child of the Watch captain appears in the ledger as a protected client. He will not say why.

Scene Two The City Route

Offer all three routes. Let players combine them or invent another. Resolve at most two substantial actions, including Setup, before the crossing. Assists modify an action; they do not add another roll.

Route	Opportunity	Risk
Dyehouse roofs	Wits plus Stealth DV 3	Broken tiles expose the group above Needle Bridge.
Dyewater canal	Body plus Athletics DV 3	The current separates someone or ruins gear.
Watch checkpoint	Presence plus Deception or Sway DV 4	A guard recognizes a name or asks for the ledger.

Mara Venn's Offer

At the route's midpoint, a Velvet Court factor waits beneath a red umbrella. She offers safe passage, new names, and 8 XP worth of future training if the group gives her the ledger. She is calm because she believes everyone has a price. Accepting fills Escape by 2 and Court's Net by 1. The choice remains reversible until the quay.

Opposition

Velvet Knives

Use one Knife per two characters, rounded up. They want the ledger and witnesses, not corpses. They retreat if publicly exposed or if half are taken out.

Trait	Rule
Threat	TL 3 with Resilience 3
Fatigue	3
Pools	Melee 4d and Athletics 4d
Attack	Harm 1 knife or restraint with Standard Effect
Armor	Light armor converts Harm 1 to Fatigue 1
Patrol Training	Plus 1 die when searching a known route

Knife Story Beat Spends

Cost	Move
1 SB	A Knife blocks the safest path or marks a character with red dye, worsening their next Position.
2 SB	A hidden Knife appears at Near range or cuts off one exit.
3 SB	The Watch arrives and treats the characters as thieves unless shown leverage.

The Silken Blade

Use her only when Court's Net fills. She is a scene pressure, not a fair fight. She begins Far or hidden, moves toward the ledger, and offers one final bargain before striking.

- TL 5. Primary pool 6d. Fatigue 3. Resilience 8. Light armor. Harm 2 poisoned stiletto.
- 1 SB Poisoned Cut: after a successful attack, the target tests Spirit plus Endurance DV 3 or marks 1 Fatigue.
- 2 SB Shadow Meld: she disappears until she attacks or a character succeeds on Wits plus Insight DV 4.
- Defeating her means escape, exposure, surrender, or trapping her. Reducing Resilience is only one option.

Running NPC Action

Only the player rolls against NPC opposition. Set DV 3 for a Knife, or DV 4 for the Blade's hard resistance; adjust for the actual task. Describe the threat, set Position and consequences, then resolve the player's response. New independent ordinary attacks cost 1 SB; named moves cost their listed SB and require their trigger. A declared failed-defense consequence is not a second attack. See Adversary Resolution at the end of this kit for damage and examples.

Final Crossing

The ninth bell begins as the characters reach Needle Bridge above Lantern Quay. Gray Moth is casting off. Mara Venn blocks the bridge. If Court's Net filled, the Silken Blade stands behind them. Put the ledger in the center of the table and ask what the group does with it.

Three Clear Choices

Choice	Immediate Result	Legacy
Deliver	Gray Moth takes the ledger beyond Silkstrand.	The Court loses control, but protected names may become targets.
Burn	The names vanish in black smoke.	The Court survives, but nobody can weaponize the ledger.
Bargain	Trade the ledger for lives, passage, or power.	The group leaves owing a String to the Velvet Court.

Players may invent a fourth choice. Ask what it protects and what it surrenders. That answer is the ending.

Resolve the Crossing

- Escape full first: Dominant, DV 3. The group's preparation controls the bridge.
- Neither timer full: Controlled, DV 3. The group has one clean chance before the boat leaves.
- Court's Net full: Desperate, DV 4. The Silken Blade threatens the crossing. Announce the price of failure and any unavoidable cost before rolling.
- A Partial reaches the chosen outcome but leaves a person, asset, or promise behind.
- A Miss does not cancel the choice. It makes the characters pay for it through capture, debt, exposure, or separation.

Closing Questions

- Whose name did you protect?
- Who now believes you betrayed them?
- What did Silkstrand take before letting you leave?
- Where will you go when the story reaches Millhaven?

Scaling

- Two players: one Velvet Knife at a time. Give one automatic Escape segment after Scene One.
- Three or four players: use the scenario as written.
- Five players: begin Court's Net at 1 and let Mara Venn bring two Knives to the final crossing.
- Under 60 minutes: run one city-route roll and cut directly to the bridge.
- Over 90 minutes: add a second route obstacle or let a named client beg the group to remove one page.

Ellis

FRONTLINE DEFENDER AND STRIKER

A surface-bound Aeler who believes an oath should survive the person who swore it. You joined the Silk Coin because its one honest rule sounded like stone-law.

Character Numbers

Body	Wits	Spirit	Presence	Fatigue	Harm	Boons
3	2	2	1	0 of 4	0 of 3	0 of 5

Skills

Melee 2 | Athletics 1 | Endurance 1 | Craft 1 | Insight 1

Talents

- Weapon Master Warhammer: plus 2 dice with the warhammer; once per scene increase its Effect by one step.
- Conditioning: Body counts as 1 higher for the Fatigue track, giving you 4 Fatigue boxes.
- Defensive Survival: plus 1 die to Defend in melee; once per scene convert Harm 1 from melee to Fatigue.

Equipment

- Warhammer, Medium melee, Harm 2, plus 1 die at Close and plus 2 at Near.
- Iron half-plate, Medium armor.
- Mason's tools and a breath-counter bell.

What You Do Well

Approach	Pool	Use
Warhammer at Near	8d cap	Break a threat or barrier with high Harm.
Hold the line	5d	Body plus Melee before talent or armor effects.
Force a passage	4d	Body plus Craft against doors and stone.

Bond Prompts

- Mara dressed your wounds after the Court's first raid. You promised she would not have to do it twice.
- Lyra taught you that a law can be picked like a lock. You have not decided whether that makes it false.

Choose one bond with another player. Once this session, acting meaningfully on that bond can earn 1 Boon.

Lyra

ROGUE AND SCOUT

A Vilikari rover who learned to read two ledgers before she could write her name. You carry secrets because cargo is easier to replace.

Character Numbers

Body	Wits	Spirit	Presence	Fatigue	Harm	Boons
2	3	1	2	0 of 2	0 of 3	0 of 5

Skills

Stealth 2 | Deception 2 | Insight 1 | Melee 1

Talents

- Keen Senses: plus 1 die to spot danger or hidden details.
- Silk Palms: when you bribe a minor official, gain the temporary String Bought Silence. Use it to reduce DV by 1 on one related social action.
- Backstab: once per scene, an attack from stealth deals plus 1 Harm and ignores 1 point of Armor.

Equipment

- Paired daggers, Light melee, Harm 1, plus 2 dice at Close and plus 1 at Near.
- Padded leather, Light armor.
- Lockpicks and a false manifest.

What You Do Well

Approach	Pool	Use
Slip unseen	5d	Wits plus Stealth.
Read an ambush	5d	Wits plus Insight plus Keen Senses.
Strike from hiding	6d	Wits plus Melee plus Light weapon at Close, then Backstab.

Bond Prompts

- Sera's forbidden scroll once saved you from a customs trap. You stole it back before she knew it was gone.
- Choose another character whose real name you removed from the ledger. They do not know why.

Choose one bond with another player. Once this session, acting meaningfully on that bond can earn 1 Boon.

Sera

FREE CASTER AND INVESTIGATOR

A Lethai-thora archivist who touched a forbidden scroll and now hears whispers between written words. The ledger may contain a sentence addressed to you.

Character Numbers

Body	Wits	Spirit	Presence	Fatigue	Harm	Boons
2	3	2	1	0 of 2	0 of 3	0 of 5

Skills

Arcana 2 | Lore 2 | Insight 1 | Deception 1

Talents

- Spellcraft: weave and cast freeform magic. The three signature spells below are ready for this session.
- Ritual Mastery: major rituals take half the usual time, but the GM banks 1 Story Beat on ritual backlash.

Equipment

- Quarterstaff, Light melee, Harm 1.
- Scholar's robes with no armor.
- Sealed scroll case and brass inkpot focus.

What You Do Well

Approach	Pool	Use
Read the ledger	5d	Wits plus Lore.
Identify a ward	5d	Wits plus Arcana.
Cast a signature spell	5d	Wits plus Arcana against the listed DV.

Signature Spells

Whisper Light uses FIRE and ILLUMINATE at DV 3 to create a small silent light. Memory's Veil uses WATER and VEIL at DV 3 to obscure one small object or door. Scroll's Rebuke uses FATE and STRIKE at DV 3 to deal ranged Harm 1 that ignores mundane armor. Casting normally takes two actions. Mark 1 Fatigue to compress it to one action.

Bond Prompts

- Lyra stole the scroll that condemned you. You have never asked whether she read it.
- Toren believed you when nobody else did. You now recognize a lie they tell themselves.

Choose one bond with another player. Once this session, acting meaningfully on that bond can earn 1 Boon.

Mara

HEALER AND FIELD LEADER

A former Watch medic who chose the Silk Coin after learning what the Watch protected. You can keep people alive, but you cannot make their choices for them.

Character Numbers

Body	Wits	Spirit	Presence	Fatigue	Harm	Boons
1	2	2	3	0 of 1	0 of 3	0 of 5

Skills

Sway 2 | Craft 2 | Insight 1 | Ranged 1

Talents

- Field Dressing: once per scene, use your reaction to keep an ally at Harm 2 instead of becoming incapacitated.
- Medic's Hand: when you stabilize an ally, clear 1 Fatigue or reduce Harm 2 to Harm 1. Spend 1 Boon to do both.
- Inspire: once per scene, spend 1 Boon to strengthen a bonded ally or give every ally at Near plus 1 die on their next roll.
- Tactical Relay: once per scene, spend 1 Boon so allies acting at Near improve Position on their next action.

Equipment

- Light crossbow, Light ranged, Harm 1.
- Padded coat, Light armor. With Body 1, even 1 Fatigue fills your track: clear it and raise Harm by 1. Armor-converted Fatigue and Fatigue-for-Boon substitution both do this.
- Healer's kit with three uses and an old Watch whistle.

What You Do Well

Approach	Pool	Use
Command openly	5d	Presence plus Sway.
Treat wounds	4d	Wits plus Craft.
Read a divided crowd	3d	Wits plus Insight.

Bond Prompts

- Ellis held a doorway while you treated three guild members. You promised to tell him when courage becomes waste.
- Choose the character whose file you falsified when you left the Watch.

Choose one bond with another player. Once this session, acting meaningfully on that bond can earn 1 Boon.

Toren

MOBILE CONTROLLER AND UNARMED SPECIALIST

A bridge duelist who stopped fighting for applause after the Velvet Court bought the result of your final match. You now use movement to decide who gets hurt.

Character Numbers

Body	Wits	Spirit	Presence	Fatigue	Harm	Boons
3	2	2	1	0 of 3	0 of 3	0 of 5

Skills

Melee 2 | Athletics 2 | Endurance 1 | Insight 1

Talents

- Disciplined Body: plus 1 die to unarmed attacks; once per scene convert Harm 1 to Fatigue; once per scene improve Position by one step.
- Open Hand Technique: once per scene after a successful unarmed attack, knock the target prone, push them one band, or make them drop an item.
- Perfect Timing: twice per scene improve Position by one step; plus 1 die to reaction rolls.

Equipment

- Wrapped hands, unarmed Harm 1.
- Quilted bridge coat, Light armor.
- A bridge token cut in half.

What You Do Well

Approach	Pool	Use
Unarmed strike	6d	Body plus Melee plus Disciplined Body.
Cross a gap	5d	Body plus Athletics.
Read the opponent	3d	Wits plus Insight, often as Setup.

Bond Prompts

- Sera believed your claim that the Court bought your duel. You still have not admitted that you accepted the money first.
- Choose the character you carried across Needle Bridge during the first raid.

Choose one bond with another player. Once this session, acting meaningfully on that bond can earn 1 Boon.

Sources and License

Prepared from the canonical Fate's Edge rules and platform materials in the Fate's Edge Toolkit repository.

Primary Sources

- Fate's Edge Toolkit: <https://github.com/Chronophage-net/fates-edge-apps>
- Canon decisions: CANON.md
- Core mechanic: <utilities/javascript/fates-edge-web-client/data/docs/srd/index.html>
- Character creation: <utilities/javascript/fates-edge-web-client/data/docs/srd/characters.html>
- Equipment and combat: <utilities/javascript/fates-edge-web-client/data/docs/srd/combat.html>
- Running the game: <utilities/javascript/fates-edge-web-client/data/docs/srd/running-the-game.html>
- Talent reference: <utilities/javascript/fates-edge-web-client/data/docs/srd/talents.html>
- Play tables: <utilities/javascript/fates-edge-web-client/data/docs/srd/quick-reference.html>
- Example characters: <utilities/javascript/fates-edge-web-client/data/docs/srd/examples.html>
- Blood and Silk saga: <utilities/javascript/fates-edge-socket-server/data/adventures/blood-and-silk-saga.json>

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Edition

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Adversary Resolution

Use this procedure whenever the Knives or the Silken Blade oppose a character. The existing player outcome matrix, Armor table, and Boon limits still apply.

Adversary damage and Fatigue

Adversaries track their listed Fatigue and Resilience, but never player Boons or a player Harm-level track. Harm printed on an adversary is damage it deals. Its Fatigue track uses the listed capacity (or the listed governing Attribute).

Resolve a damaging hit

Before rolling, state the attack's Harm, Position, DV, Effect, and consequences. On a successful damaging hit, start with weapon or ability Harm and apply explicit Harm bonuses. Effect describes what the action accomplishes; it does not secretly multiply Harm. Any change to damage from Effect must be stated before the roll. A Partial grants the stated lesser progress, not automatically full weapon damage.

Armor, then Resilience

If Armor applies, use the Armor Conversion Table. None or ignored Armor leaves all incoming Harm unconverted and creates no armor Fatigue. Ignoring 1 point of Armor means one category lower for that hit: Heavy becomes Medium, Medium becomes Light, and Light becomes None. An ability that ignores Armor entirely uses None. For incoming Harm above 3, convert the first 3 using that column and leave the excess as Harm. Subtract remaining Harm from Resilience, clearing existing Fatigue if any Harm remains. Then add the converted Fatigue. Do not also subtract one Resilience merely because the attack hit.

NPC Fatigue overflow

When Fatigue reaches or exceeds its capacity, subtract 1 Resilience, clear Fatigue, and discard excess Fatigue. Check once per resolved hit or separate Fatigue event; do not loop over discarded excess. Fatigue never increases the adversary's outgoing Harm. In a player-facing test, each marked NPC Fatigue improves the opposing player's Position by one step, capped at Dominant; excess improvement adds no dice and does not lower DV. Apply the player's own penalties as usual.

Ending the opposition

At zero Resilience the adversary is defeated in the manner established by the fiction. For a phased adversary, end that phase and start the next with its listed Resilience and cleared Fatigue; excess damage does not cross phases unless its rules say so. A puzzle adversary with no Resilience still requires its stated Resolution. Bargains, escape, surrender, and decisive fictional solutions can end opposition without attrition.

Worked hits

The Silken Blade has Resilience 8, Fatigue capacity 3, and Light Armor. A successful Harm 2 hit becomes 1 Harm and 1 Fatigue: Resilience 7, Fatigue 1. A later unconverted wound clears that old Fatigue before adding its new armor Fatigue. Three separate Harm 1 hits against her Light Armor each add 1 Fatigue; the third fills the track, clears it, and removes 1 Resilience. Against her Light Armor, a Harm 3 Backstab ignores its one category and removes 3 Resilience and clears existing Fatigue.

Player-facing opposition

Adversaries have no separate initiative turn. Describe their intent and ask how the player responds. Before the player rolls, set DV by the actual opposition (normally 3, or 4 for hard resistance), set Position, and name the consequence. A printed NPC pool is a competence reference, not a second roll or a formula converting dice into DV. For NPC opposition, references to an opposed test mean this player-facing test.

Resolve the response

Use the usual player outcome matrix: meeting DV achieves the declared intent; a Partial makes the declared lesser progress; a Miss makes none. Apply any stated consequence through that outcome and the relevant SB procedure. A successful defense avoids the threatened hit; it does not deal retaliatory weapon Harm unless that was the declared action. A Partial defense uses the lesser protection agreed before the roll. Never charge damage twice for one consequence.

When the GM spends SB

A threat, warning, or demand is free to describe. Harm from a previously announced failed response is the consequence of that response, not a free extra NPC attack. To introduce a new attack or special complication independently, spend SB: use the creature's listed move, or 1 SB for an ordinary attack that prompts a player-facing response. Pay a named move's printed cost and respect its trigger; Poisoned Cut's 1 SB buys the poison after a hit, not a second attack. An expressly free opportunity attack remains free and prompts the same response procedure. A paid move does not bypass a defense or automatically inflict Harm unless it expressly says so.

Lock stakes before rolling

Position, DV, Effect, and the announced consequence are fixed when the roll is framed. Resolve that roll before spending its newly generated SB. Those SB can change the next action or subsequent fallout, not retroactively change the roll's Position, DV, success, or damage. Earlier SB may shape a new test only before its stakes are locked.

Setup and the short scenario

A successful Setup gives the next action +1 Position or a step up in Effect, not +1 die. Use the strongest applicable Setup benefit for one action; repeated Setups do not stack numeric benefits. A Setup roll counts toward the scene's action allowance. Assist is separate: spend 1 Boon for +1 die and share the risk, within the pool cap. Do not roll safe repetition to farm resources.

A defense against a Knife

The GM spends 1 SB on a fresh Knife attack and describes a slash toward Lyra. Lyra tries to slip behind a dye vat. Agree Controlled, DV 3; success reaches cover without the hit, a Partial reaches cover but takes Harm 1, and a Miss leaves her exposed with the Knife's Harm 1. Lyra alone rolls. Her Armor resolves any incoming Harm normally. The GM banks her 1s but spends them only after this response resolves. The SB that bought the attack cannot also pay a named follow-up move.

Optional combat practice

For a group that wants to try combat, offer a brief confrontation with a Knife before the crossing and count it as one city-route action. Explain that evasion, disarming, surrender, and exposure can work too. Keep the original short route for groups that avoid a fight; the Blade is pressure, not a mandatory boss. Do not add free enemy attacks to force a demonstration.