



AN EASY MARK

A STARTER ADVENTURE FOR THROUGH THE BREACH

Starting a roleplaying game can be a bit of a tricky experience. You need to go through character creation, after which you're thrown into a world you don't really know. All the players have to start working together, and they have to work with the Fatemaster in order to tell a successful story.

I understand how difficult the first session or two can be, and it is made even more complicated when players don't know the rules. In order to help get the *Through the Breach* pistons firing, I've created this introductory adventure designed to highlight the rules of the game. Maybe it'll help you start on the right foot when you've crossed the Breach.

Reading this adventure may help you understand the game even if you don't actually play it, so I'd encourage anyone considering the journey into Malifaux to read this story.

This starter adventure includes a couple of pre-generated characters to use: Barnabus Hatrick and Francis DuMont. Feel free to substitute these characters with your own, use them as is, or add more characters to the story. It can support up to four players.

SET UP

Since this is your first time playing *Through the Breach*, we'll spend a moment talking about set up. You'll need a couple of Fate Decks to play, and each player should have a copy of their character sheet. If players are playing Barney and Francis, copy the shortform character sheets out of *Chronicles* to use. The only other thing you need is a copy of this adventure, but a copy of the *Fated Almanac* could come in handy in case you want to look something up.

You'll need at least two people to play: one to be the Fatemaster and one to play a Fated. The Fatemaster's job is to host the story, and this adventure is written for the perspective of the Fatemaster. Anyone playing one of the Fated are focusing on just one character and trying to navigate the story and challenges the Fatemaster presents.

If you've never played a tabletop RPG before, this may sound a bit confusing. I'd encourage anyone looking to know more about RPGs in general to look around on the net. There are a lot of great sources out there that will help explain the genre to you. Here's a link with some videos that may help:

<http://learntabletoprpgs.com/see-how-a-game-is-played.html>



OK. Let's get on with set up. Grab one of the Fate Decks. Start by sorting the cards by suit and number, as this deck is going to end up as four individual decks called Twist Decks. Any players (i.e. not the Fatemaster) should take the 1, 5, 9, and 13 of one suit, the 4, 8, and 12 of a different suit, the 3, 7, and 11 of a third suit, and the 2, 6, and 10 of the remaining suit. Players will not be able to choose the same suit as another player in this set-up as we're only dividing up one deck (in a normal game you could, you'd just need more Fate Decks to divide up).

Once each player has their cards, they should combine and shuffle them. Now you have your Twist Decks for play. You'll notice that the two Jokers aren't used here, so you can just set them aside.

The remaining Fate Deck should be shuffled and placed in the middle of the table (with all of its cards). This deck is referred to as the Fate Deck below, and is how most conflict will be resolved.

The last thing we need is for each player should draw the top 3 cards of their personal Twist Deck. They'll be able to use these cards during the course of the game.

THE GAME

Estimated time to play: 20 minutes/player

Tarot tie-ins: CRSC 12X

Summary: The Fated are at a train station looking for a way to get on the train to go to Malifaux.

When we present TTB adventures, we'll give you this information as a quick summary, which may help you in your own games. The Tarot tie-ins, in particular, might be useful for you. The CRSC 12X, for example, is the Cross Roads Tarot Southern Card: "As you strain to see through the high noon veil". This adventure will take place at noon, thus the tie-in.

The goal of this information is to make Fatemastering as simple as possible so that you can focus on the experience and enjoyment of the game. This example is fairly straightforward, but there are a lot of creative ways you can weave the Destiny Steps into your game!

PROLOGUE

This session focuses on Barnabus Hatrick, a small-time criminal and petty thief looking to escape his past. Paraphrase the below or read it aloud:

You've been living on Earth since your momma brought you into the world, and you're not convinced it's so great. Living's hard, and you've tried to scratch out what livelihood you can, but it's just not borne any fruit. You've managed to do OK 'borrowing' things from others, but it seems this time maybe you borrowed the wrong thing... and wouldn't you know it, before you could put it back people were calling you thief. What's the world coming to?

So last night you made your way to the station, looking to hop on the high noon to Malifaux. Surely any place is better than this... At night, the station was gloomy and mostly deserted, so you took your meager possessions and fell asleep on a bench. Come morning, you're out of here come hell or high water.

Sometime during the night and early morning, a few others drifted in, finding their way to the station. Everyone who comes here is looking to leave, and in a few hours, you'll all be gone... assuming you can get a ticket.

Players would normally pick their Pursuits here. As this is the first adventure, the pre-generated characters already have their starting Pursuits chosen and factored in, as this happens during character creation. If you have multiple players in the game, you can have each player describe what their character looks like as they make their way in at night.

The Prologue is used in *Through The Breach* to set the scene for the adventure. It lets the players know not only what type of conflict they'll face, but also which Fated's destiny is in play. In this example, Barnabus is the key player, and the conflict revolves around wanting to get a ticket on the train. You don't need to spell everything out in the Prologue, but it can really help set the tone you want for the game.

If you've read the Fatemaster's Almanac, this is Phase 1 of an adventure, "Awareness" mentioned on page 21.



SCENE 1

The morning mist is just beginning to break as the players all wake up (or start paying attention if they didn't sleep). Give the players some time to greet each other and get to know a bit about each other. If they're not inclined to do so, give them a few indicators that these fellow vagabonds may also not have a ticket, and maybe working together is the best course of action.

It's not long until the noon train will thunder into the station. Take a moment to remind Barnabus that his past is after him, and the other players may have similar trouble coming their way. Essentially, you want the Fated to know that it's this train or no train. It's important to convey a sense of urgency, otherwise the players might just see it like a morning commute (which is unpleasant and not really the stuff of stories).

You can let the players talk to the disinterested clerk selling tickets, but the price is set in stone. Roleplay this out a bit, with the clerk barely answering their questions and have his eyes glazed over. None of the players should have more than 10 Scrip on them from character creation, and all the tickets into Malifaux cost 20 Scrip. More and more travelers are beginning to arrive at the station now.

In the Fatemaster's Alamanc, this is "Establishing the Stakes". It is important to the story that the players know that getting on that train is important to them, and if they don't bad things might happen. The exact reason for their motivation will vary by Fated; for Barnabus, some thugs have been sent after him because of something he recently stole.

One of the travelers arriving is hard to ignore. He is a wealthy man, possibly an aristocrat, in a brightly colored outfit with a veritable gaggle of assistants. You should stress the casual wealth this man displays, and the way he is dismissive of his servants. This man, Barnabus should note, is an easy mark.

Do what you can to point the players in this man's direction. His name is Cornelius Trefast, and he is fairly easy to dislike. That said, he's also an easy

target for a con, a simple pick pocketing, or maybe even convincing his servants to just let the Fated have something to help them get a ticket. Any of these are possibilities, and you should let the players determine how they want to proceed.

Make sure that you are describing Cornelius to the players. The way in which you present the narrative will help give the players the clues they need to complete their journey, but the answers aren't just dropped in front of them. It's important that players have a sense of agency and choice!

This might be a good time to try out describing the scene, but if you're not quite ready you can paraphrase or read the below:

A man walks into the train station, and the people milling about seem to make way for him. He walks with an air of authority, and he is followed by a number of individuals that, based on their dress and deference to him are clearly his servants.

The man suddenly blurts out "I will not ride in anything but first class, Larot! How dare you even suggest it!" You can see the servant, presumably Larot, frown deeply. "To think that you'd suggest Cornelius Trefast ride with the likes of these... people." Cornelius looks around at the other people in the station with disdain in his eyes. "Give the clerk whatever amount is necessary that I can be left to my own devices, Larot. Another mistake like this and you'll be fired just like Ollander!"

Cornelius seems to puff himself up with his own air of self-importance while Larot talks to another servant. A large purse is pulled out and some money handed to Larot as both servants shake their heads, casting sidelong glances at Cornelius.

With the outburst finished, activity at the station has resumed, but people are giving Cornelius Trefast an even wider berth.

However the players approach Cornelius, they'll need to see if they are successful getting on the train. They'll do this by flipping cards off the top of the Fate deck (the communal deck each player flips from).



How they approach Cornelius makes a difference in how the card is interpreted. If they try to con him, they'll be using their Deceive skill. If they try to steal from him, it should be Pick Pocketing. If they try to convince a servant, it should be the Convince skill. Regardless, the player will flip a card off the Fate Deck for their character and add their skill.

For the purposes of this game, we'll assume that any Duel (which is what flipping a card is called) against Cornelius needs an 8 to succeed. If the player to approach him flips a card and the total of that card plus their relevant skill is 8 or more, then they'll succeed.

If it's not, the player can use one of the cards in his hand instead of the card they flipped. If he does, reveal that card and discard it next to your Twist Deck. This is now added to the skill instead of the card from the Fate Deck.

It is not difficult for the players to succeed against Cornelius, but you should try to play out the scene as a narrative. Describe the conversation and circumstances, and let the player (once successful) describe how they pulled off getting the money to buy some tickets. It is possible for one player to steal enough Scrip for all the players, but it's your job as Fatemaster to make the scene both entertaining and challenging, even if the Duel itself isn't particularly challenging.

SCENE 2

The Fated succeeded (or not) against Cornelius, but it's not long before he realizes he's been had. Cornelius will loudly and melodramatically call for the guards, who will come jogging over to him to discover the issue.

It will quickly become apparent that the guards are going to be checking through the milling travelers looking for any shady individuals. Unfortunately for the players, not only are they largely shady individuals but they ALSO happen to be guilty.

This is establishing "Fear" in the Fatemaster's Almanac. The players need to know there is a legitimate chance of failure here, and that this will be a challenge. This is how you'll build tension, which will make the upcoming "Climax" phase a reward even without them gaining experience points.

Feel free to paraphrase or read the below to help set this scene:

If you look over at Cornelius, he seems lost in thought. Slowly, his eyes get wider and wider, and his jaw slowly drops open. It reminds you for all the world like a slow motion version of surprise – maybe Cornelius is just a bit slow himself.

"GUARDS!" his scream cracks into your thoughts. "GUARDS!" Cornelius starts looking frantically around the station as two guards rush over to him. He begins talking hastily to them, gesticulating wildly. You can't make out every word from where you're standing, but the word "robbed" really stands out in your head.

Cornelius' head swings back toward the crowd, and he's clearly looking for you. You try to slink back into the crowd, but more guards have arrived and they're starting to question the nearby onlookers. With more guards probably on the way and the train not in the station, it's only a matter of time before they start asking you questions.

The guards will start coming through the crowd. Describing the way they are coming closer to the players and how more guards seem to be arriving will ratchet up the tension. The train is not at the station yet, and the players will need to figure out what to do about the guards (and they might each try something different).

If they try to hide, they will need to flip a Stealth Duel against the guards' Notice skill (6). Make the players make a few flips, broken up by narrative of them going through the crowd, before the train arrives. Remember that the players can use their hand to increase their Duel total!



This is an example NPC guard that can be used for these Duels.

GUILD GUARD (MINION)

Character Breakdown... straight from the Fatemaster's Almanac page 139.

For example, this Guard would have a Notice of 6: Notice 2 + Cunning -1 (it's associated Aspect) + NPC rank of 5. This means the Fated needs to get a Stealth + flip number equal to or greater than 5 to succeed.

If they try to fight, they will need to flip Defense against the guards' melee (9) to avoid getting hurt. They can attack back by flipping their own AV, or Attack Value, against the guards' defense (9). A fight will be difficult for the players at this phase, so if they go this road make sure the other guards are distracted. The guards will not use their guns if the players decide to fight.

A player that gets hit by an attack or succeeds at an attack will need to flip for damage.

If they try to convince the guards they are legitimate, they'll need to use Convince or Deceive (their choice) against the guards' Scrutiny (-1). This is by far the easiest way to go, and if you're worried about your players surviving through a fight try to coax them in this direction.

This is the Climax and Dramatic Ending mentioned in the *Fatemaster's Almanac*. They've encountered some challenges now and risked failure, and now it's all on the line in these final moments. Will they succeed or fail? By following the steps of Awareness, Establishing the Stakes, and Fear, you've created enough tension to allow the climax to really shine.

Feel free to paraphrase or read the below, regardless of which actions the players took:

"Oh. Oh! OH! THERE THEY AARRRRRRRRRRRRRRRE!" Cornelius' voice is shrill and unfortunately carries well over the sound of the huge steam engine pulling into the station. You risk a glance and see Cornelius pointing you out to a couple of guards, and they start to run over.

Your heart starts beating wildly, knowing there are few ways out. A huge burst of steam is released from the train behind you, and for a moment you lose sight of the guards. But a moment is enough for you to get your bearings and realize the train is finally here.

The steam clears quickly, and you see the incoming guards pulling their guns from their holsters as you hear your salvation from behind: "All aboard!" You turn and begin to move toward the train, fighting past the crowd trying to board.

The guards should take a few shots at them. The guards would normally have an AV 9, but because of the crowd of people they'll receive a -2 if the Fated use the crowd for cover. This will make it an AV 7 against the Fated's defensive flips. After a few flips and some discussing what is happening, the train's doors should open and the players should safely make it on the train.

WHAT IF THE FATE DECK RUNS OUT OF CARDS?

If this happens, the Fatemaster should shuffle the discard pile to create a new Fate Deck, and each player should draw a card from their Twist Deck into their hand.

EPILOGUE

The whistle blows and the train pulls away from the station, heading toward the Breach. The Guild Guards stand glancing around the platform, some of them looking in the windows of the train, rapidly speeding up. Cornelius is standing there screaming at them, seemingly unconcerned about missing his own train. Thank goodness you'll be in Malifaux soon, things have to be better there.



Discuss with the players, and Barnabus in particular, whether or not his destiny of “As you strain to see through the high noon veil” was accepted or rejected. The veil can mean many things here, and high noon probably refers to the train. Did Barnabus see where the train was really taking him? Did he accept his destiny to go *Through the Breach*?

Barnabus, since his destiny was in play, can choose to increase one of his Aspects by 1 or to gain a Manifested Power. We won't go into Manifested Powers here, but suffice it to say that this is a large decision for Barnabus to make and should not be made lightly.

Only Barnabus gets the above options, but every player gets something. Each player will receive 1 Experience Point for their characters. It is possible to earn more for particularly significant story milestones, but that didn't occur this game.

Players may spend their Experience Points on skills, but players may only choose from 4 different skills per session. You should choose 3 skills that you feel were relevant to the player during the game, and they have those choices plus 1 choice from their Pursuit. It costs the current level in Experience Points to raise a skill by 1, including a free skill if one is offered that the player has at 0. A player cannot gain more than 1 free skill per session.

Finally, players will gain one Step in their Pursuit, giving them access to a Pursuit specific Talent or a general Talent, as described by their Pursuit. Once chosen, the Epilogue is complete and the session is concluded.

With that, you've learned the basics of *Through the Breach*, and have taken the first step toward your destiny. Your next adventure will be *Breachside* as you learn to navigate the dangerous world that is Malifaux.

CHARACTERS

In the characters presented below, the Skill already includes the relevant Aspect, so you are always flipping based on the number presented.

BARNABUS HATRICK

Fated Character, Pursuit: Criminal
Might -2, Grace +3, Speed 0, Resilience -1
Charm +1, Intellect 0, Cunning +3, Tenacity -2
Defense 2, Walk 4, Height 2
Willpower 2, Charge 4, Wounds 4

Skills: Barter (0), Convince (1), Notice (6), Art (4), Literacy (4), Music (2), Lockpicking (6), Scrutiny (6), Pick Pocket (1), Pugilism (-1)

Talents: Just a Graze – This character may Cheat Damage Flips that he suffers, as long as the Damage Flip has no .

(1) Bowie Knife: AV (-2), Rg:  1, Resist: Df
Target suffers 1/3/4 damage.

(1) Maucher Three-Barrel: AV (3), Rg:  6. Resist: Df
Target suffers 2/2/5 damage.

Other Equipment: Lockpicking toolkit, watch, banjo

Notes: If this character fails an Expertise duel (any duel involving: Appraise, Doctor, Explosives, Forgery, Gambling, Husbandry, Lockpicking, Music, Navigation, Pick Pocket, Scrutiny, Track, or Wilderness), he may draw a card. During the Epilogue, this character may advance in any Expertise skill.

FRANKIE WALLAGE

Fated Character, Pursuit: Wastrel
Might +1, Grace +1, Speed 0, Resilience 0
Charm -1, Intellect +1, Cunning -2, Tenacity +2
Defense 2, Walk 4, Height 2
Willpower 4, Charge 4, Wounds 4

Skills: Appraise (1), Melee (3), History (4), Barter (5), Literacy (0), Deceive (3), Pistol (3)

Talents: Luck of the Draw – This character draws 2 cards when the Fatemaster shuffles the deck, instead of 1.

(1) B&D Pocket: AV (3), Rg:  6, Resist: Df
Target suffers 2/3/3 damage.

Other Equipment: Forgery toolkit, 3 scrip

Notes: If this character fails an Expertise duel (any duel involving: Appraise, Doctor, Explosives, Forgery, Gambling, Husbandry, Lockpicking, Music, Navigation, Pick Pocket, Scrutiny, Track, or Wilderness), he may draw a card. During the Epilogue, this character may advance in any Expertise skill.