Fronts Guide

All the information you need to create fronts for your West Marches game.

# About this Section

The West Marches setting features groups, faction and communities that have their own interesting agendas and values. These people’s agendas and values may align with the players or oppose them, it’s up to you. A good mix of moral alignments and diverse goals can really help bring the West Marches setting to life. In this section we will give advice on generating and maintaining Fronts that will affect the world of West Marches.

*“Fronts are secret tomes of GM knowledge. Each is a collection of linked dangers—threats to the characters specifically and to the people, places, and things the characters care about. It also includes one or more impending dooms, the horrible things that will happen without the characters' intervention. 'Fronts' comes, of course, from 'fighting on two fronts' which is just where you want the characters to be—surrounded by threats, danger and adventure.”*

-Dungeon World

## Front Generation

### Timekeeping

Generating Fronts for your campaign is important for maintaining the illusion of a living world. In order for you to fully incorporate Fronts into the world you need to keep track of in game time. However you do this is up to you, but you need to have some form of reference to make sure you know when the BBEG is going to blow up the princess. We would suggest keeping a calendar and marking off the days that the players are actively playing and the days when the world is progressing without them. Make sure to allow for interaction with the Fronts and account for the fact that these Fronts should both progress or be able to be thwarted right up until the finale stage.

### Where to start?

Wait until at least after the first session so you have time to determine what your group(s) of PCs are interested/invested in. I would suggest giving it 3 sessions of exploration before starting to create fronts. Use the things that came up in these sessions to seed your fronts. Any towns they went to having problems with the wild creeping back in? Any Crypts or tombs been unsealed by the party and left exposed to nature? Does that small cult have a power hungry leader, who wants nothing but to gain control over other people? What will happen if these things are left unchecked?

**Mira’s Ascension (MA)**

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| **Catalyst:** Mira’s Disease goes untreated. One night she has a fit of thaumaturgic nightmares. When she wakes she is no longer human.**Step 1:** Near by game becomes rare and what is available is sickly, covered in weeping sores.**Step 2:** Grifter and loners vanish from nearby towns and villages in the Central Elin Plains, captured and given plague before being devoured.**Step 3:** Dretch flesh beings begin creeping through villages at night, belching clouds of disease.**Step 4:** Plague wracks multiple villages simultaneously. Disease Prophets spout apocalyptic apocrypha from street corners and along roads.**Finale:** The Ziggurat becomes a living temple to Mira, Our lady of Pain. |

Example of String Fronts Planning.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Mon** | **Tue** | **Wed** | **Thurs** | **Fri** | **Sat** | **Sun** |
| **1-4** | - | - | - |  | MA: Catalyst |  |  |
| **5-11** |  | MA: Step 1 |  |  |  |  |  |
| **12-18** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **19-25** |  | MA: Step 2 |  |  |  |  |  |
| **26-30** |  |  |  |  | MA: Step 3 | - | - |

Example of Calendar Fronts Tracking.

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## Step By Step Front Creation

1. **Faction:** Either create a new faction or utilise one that already exists.\*
2. **Catalyst:** Based on what this faction wants, needs or is prone to do, determine a catalyst that can lead the faction to affect the world and by extension the players. An example is a
3. **Finale:** Decide where you think this faction should end up, if unopposed. What changes the will the world see because of it.
4. **Fill in the Gaps:** Next create 2-4 steps between these two points. These can be simple increases in already existing activities of the faction or entirely new actions with new consequences as long as they move the faction from the catalyst to the finale.
5. **Reaction:** Think about ways that the world would react to the things that this faction is doing and how the PC’s would hear about their activities while out adventuring.
6. **Timeline:** Decide an appropriate timeline for each step. Generally you want to give the PCs a decent chance of doing something before the end step is reached, however don't be afraid to let bad things happen if the PCs don't do anything about it.
7. **Set the wheel spinning:** Set the Fronts in motion by placing the catalyst in the world. Put it in a position so that the players have ample chance to affect it before it progress to the finale. Make sure to also provide them with information surrounding how the world around them is changing, this should allow for maximum player interaction with the Fronts.\*\*
8. **Maintenance:** Most front are going to go through several iterations during the course of play. Its a good idea after every couple of sessions to review them and make any changes that need to be made to keep the front in line with the world.

\* See World Generation for assistance on creating a new faction.

\*\* Remeber doing nothing is still a choice.

### Kill you darlings

Remember if something isn't working or doesn't go in a way that is fun or interesting don't be afraid to cut it up and reuse the pieces or just throw it out entirely. Most games are better for having some of the fat trimmed and the experience streamlined a little.

For more help creating Fronts see the Dungeon World rule book and the Apocalypse World rules.