Phase 3: Crisis

Duration: From first King until Resolution deck exhausts (or alternate end conditions)

Tone: Tested, strained, consequential

Focus: The settlement faces existential challenges. Growth has created vulnerabilities; success has attracted attention or exhausted reserves. Core questions about identity, sustainability, and survival demand answers. Not all challenges can be solved—some require difficult choices and sacrifice.

Mechanical Notes:

- Tension rises faster
- Characters face hard decisions
- Projects may fail or succeed at great cost
- Deliberate actions tackle fundamental dilemmas
- The settlement's long-term viability is genuinely uncertain

King Effects (when first drawn):

- **King of Hearts** — Community fractures or someone important leaves; internal crisis
- **King of Diamonds** — Critical resource failure or technological breakdown; infrastructure crisis
- **King of Spades** — Environmental catastrophe or dangerous native phenomenon; Duskara strikes back
- **King of Clubs** — A terrible truth revealed or irreversible change occurs; transformation crisis

Design Note on Crisis: This isn't about punishing the players. It's about creating stakes that matter. The settlement may emerge stronger, transformed, or fractured—all are valid outcomes. The key is that choices during Crisis define who the community becomes.

Phase Ends: When the Resolution deck exhausts, or the settlement collapses (15 Tension), or the table unanimously agrees the story is complete.

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