

FATE™

SYSTEM TOOLKIT



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RULES, GLORIOUS RULES!

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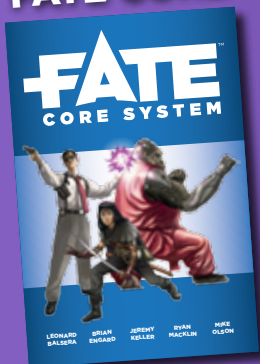
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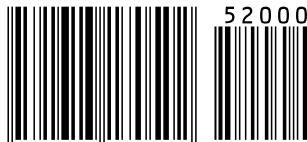


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This is a game where people make up stories about wonderful, terrible,
impossible, glorious things. All the characters and events portrayed
in this work are fictional. Any resemblance to real people, fantasy
adventurers, wizards of the arcane, supernatural cops in a China-colonized
Hong Kong/America that never was, cybernetic super-intelligent apes,
or squirrel mechanics is purely coincidental, but kinda hilarious.

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FOREWORD: “A” NOT “THE”

This book is *a* FATE SYSTEM TOOLKIT. It is not *The* FATE SYSTEM TOOLKIT.

What do we mean by that?

This FATE SYSTEM TOOLKIT began as a stretch goal for the FATE CORE System kickstarter. Originally, it was only the magic system section of the book. As the funding for that campaign grew, so did this book. And close on its heels, far outstripping the capacity of this book, came the requests for what *should* go into this book.

It was damn flattering to think folks thought we could take on all those topics. Impossible, mind you—but damn flattering.

That said, we knew we had to fulfill the *spirit* of all those requests, even if we couldn't match the *letter* of them. And so, expanding outward from our magic toolkit, is this FATE SYSTEM TOOLKIT.

True to its name, our TOOLKIT is not a device that does exactly what you want right out of the box. But it is a collection of ideas, approaches, and other fiddly bits that can get you there. To put it another way, when folks asked us for the moon, we decided instead to offer them a variety of methods for building rockets. (We build rockets now. Rockets are cool.)

When looking for the right fit for your game, don't get suckered by appearances. Say something in here talks about handling giant monsters as maps or as collections of characters, rather than as a single “scaled-up” character. While it says on the tin “this here's a method for handling giant monsters,” that's just how the idea was packaged. It *also* offers you a method for how to handle “boss fights” in general. Or a strafing run against an orbital death satellite. Similarly, ways to take on the topic of superheroes in your FATE game are covered by a variety of concepts and sections within this book—only one of which is labeled “superheroes.”

This is not to say that every tool out there could be in here, but there are enough ideas and hard surfaces to push off of that you're sure to find something that gets you going. And when you do find yourself with a new idea, *please* don't keep it to yourself. There are many places where great, excited conversation is happening *right now* that could use your voice and ideas, whether it's the FateRPG Yahoo Group, the Fate Core community on Google+, the tabletop gaming forums on RPG.net and RPGGeek, or elsewhere online or off. FATE's audience is thousands strong and full of smart people, a whole passel of whom are way smarter than the folks who made FATE in the first place.

More than anything, this FATE SYSTEM TOOLKIT is a training guide for your brain. In this kit you'll find dozens of ways to add something new, something else, something different to your FATE CORE game. In a few cases it will be exactly the right thing. In the vast majority of circumstances, it will be a starting point for further tinkering. Roll up your sleeves. You've got a master collection of tools to work with here. Now let's see what you can make with them!

— Fred Hicks
July 15, 2013



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INTRODUCTION

WHY WE'RE HERE

Think of FATE as a machine, built to produce a specific outcome. Like many machines, FATE can be adjusted to produce other outcomes; it contains a system of dials, a network of rules that can be adjusted up, down, and to the sides to achieve the result you're looking for. It's robust, flexible, and—most importantly—hackable.

What does that mean, that it's "hackable?" First, it means that you can change rules. This is true of any game—if you're playing MONOPOLY, allowing players to collect money when they land on Free Parking would be a hack. It changes the nature of the game's economy and makes the game a little more forgiving, so it's a little harder to lose the game early due to lack of funds. FATE is like that—it can be altered. Do you want the GM to have more fate points? The players to have higher skills? Want to change the way aspects work? All of these things are possible with a little effort on your part.

The second part of being hackable is that FATE doesn't resist your changes. In fact, it's adaptable enough that it can take smaller changes in stride without anything breaking, and even major changes require only a few tweaks to other parts of the game. It's not just that you *can* hack FATE, it's that FATE is *easy* to hack—if you're willing to do the work.

To get the feel you want, some changes may be necessary. FATE is a system of dials, and FATE CORE presents default settings for all of those dials. Maybe those settings aren't right for your game. Maybe you need to adjust some of those dials or even add new ones, but you're not sure what changes to make, or what other parts of the system those changes might impact. Don't worry—that's why we're here.

The FATE SYSTEM TOOLKIT is a book about how to hack FATE, what happens when you do, and what you can do when you start monkeying with the way stuff works. If that sounds like your kind of thing, then this book is for you.

RULES VS. RULINGS

Sure, you *can* hack FATE, but should you? Sometimes the answer is yes. If you're playing a supers game, you'll need to add some super powers. If you're playing a game about street racing, it might be good to have a few rules regarding vehicles.

Sometimes you don't need a new rule, though. Sometimes all you need is a *ruling*.

A ruling is a decision that your playgroup makes—usually guided by the GM—about how something works in your game. Rulings cover special cases that aren't explicitly covered by the rules of the game, cases that require some interpretation. A new *rule*, on the other hand, is a change to one or more of the sub-systems within the game, or the addition of a new one. Where a ruling is an interpretation of how the game works, a new rule is a change to how the game works.

For example, when you tell a player that his character can't take that long-range sniper shot because the boat he's on is bobbing up and down too much, you're making a ruling. When you explicitly state that *no one* can make long-range sniper shots from a boat, you're adding a rule. See the difference? One affects the current situation and may have ramifications later on, the other affects all such situations.

So when do you use one or the other? Use a new rule if you're addressing something that comes up a lot. Whether you're finding something problematic or you want to be able to do something new, if it happens a lot, it's often a good case for a rule. Use a ruling if you're not sure a situation will come up again, or if you think it'll be rare.

If you make a new rule for every situation, you'll wind up with so many rules that you can't keep track of them all. If you make rulings for the edge cases, on the other hand, you're freer to change them later. Sure, you can change a rule later, but some players will call foul on this—and rightly so! Worse, you make your rules even harder to remember and keep track of, especially if you're changing them all the time.

Here's the secret—rulings can *become* rules. If you make a ruling about sniper shots on boats, and you find that situation comes up again and again, turn it into a rule. If you've made a ruling multiple times, your players will probably remember it, so there's less chance of a rule that just gets forgotten.

THE BRONZE RULE

There's one more thing you should ask yourself before you make an entirely new rule for something—can I represent this with the Bronze Rule (FATE CORE, page 270)?

In FATE, you can treat pretty much anything as if it were a character. Your gun? Sure. The storm outside? Absolutely. The scene itself? Why not? You can give anything aspects, skills, stunts, and stress boxes, and here's the thing that makes this technique really cool—they don't have to be the same ones the PCs get. It doesn't make sense for the storm outside to have Fight and Physique, but what about Cold and Sleet? Your gun doesn't need a physical or mental stress track, but what about an ammo stress track? And scenes already have aspects all over the place!

If you can represent a new thing as a character, it's typically easier to do that than to create a new rule out of whole cloth. Not *everything* works this way, and there are some things you might not want to represent this way, but it's a powerful tool that you can apply to a wide variety of situations.

There's another extension of this technique—new rules for characters can be represented using the existing components of a character. You can represent magic through skills, super powers using aspects or stunts, and being corrupted by an ancient and seductive force with a stress track.

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FATE™ CORE SYSTEM

ID

Name	
Description	

Refresh

ASPECTS

High Concept	
Trouble	

SKILLS

Superb (+5)				
Great (+4)				
Good (+3)				
Fair (+2)				
Average (+1)				

EXTRAS

--

STUNTS

--

PHYSICAL STRESS (Physique)

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

MENTAL STRESS (Will)

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

CONDITIONS

FLEETING

1	Angry
---	-------

1	Frightened
---	------------

Goes away when you get a chance to catch your breath and calm down.

STICKY

2	Exhausted
---	-----------

2	Hungry
---	--------

Stays checked off until a specific event occurs (Get sleep, eat food).

LASTING

4	4	Broken
---	---	--------

4	4	Wounded
---	---	---------

Takes a recovery action to begin removal.
Second box may be checked only if the first isn't.