

FATE

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 4
OCTOBER 2016

CODEX

TIME OF THE HORSEMEN

ORDINARY PEOPLE FIGHT THE END
OF DAYS BROUGHT TO EARTH BY
THE RIDERS OF THE APOCALYPSE



THE ARCH

SALVAGE ADVANCED
TECHNOLOGY FROM A
DANGEROUS ALIEN GATE

GAMEMASTER MOVES

ADD APOCALYPSE
WORLD GM MOVES TO
YOUR FATE TOOLKIT

SETTING THE STAKES

USE VARIABLE
CONDITIONS TO SET UP
MEANINGFUL CONFLICTS



FATE **CODEX**

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 4 OCTOBER 2016

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ABOUT *THE FATE CODEX* – VOL. 3, ISSUE 4

by MARK DIAZ TRUMAN

This month's issue feels a bit like getting the band back together, albeit with a new rhythm section. We're excited to feature two *FATE CODEX* old-timers—André La Roche and June Shores—alongside a brand new contributor—Andrew Tuttle—who has been working with us for months to perfect his first Quick Start. A few more issues like this, and I think we'll be ready to take our show on the road.

We're about halfway through our third volume, and writing my piece for this issue made me reflect a bit on our journey so far. It's hard to believe we're nearly three years into *THE FATE CODEX*! It's been an honor to work with so many awesome folks over the years, and an even greater honor to see so many of them—André and June included—return to write for us a second or third time.

For this issue, I've written a piece with similar themes—what can Fate players and GMs learn from *APOCALYPSE WORLD?*—to my work in “At What Cost” in Volume 2, and I'm thrilled to continue contributing to the awesome conversation our community is having when evaluating what the two systems have to offer. Never before has our community had so many great systems available for hacking, reusing, and adapting, and I can't wait to see what the next generation of systems has to offer.

Once again, thanks for your support! *THE FATE CODEX* Patreon makes so much great work possible for a diverse and exciting group of designers, and it's an honor to helm the project each and every issue. Special thanks, as always, to Tara Zuber for helping make this issue a reality!



Editor in Chief
Mark Diaz Truman



THE ARCH

by ANDRÉ LA ROCHE

The Founders

Long ago, a collective made up of a dozen highly-evolved species, known as the Founders, seeded all other life across the universe—possibly even across the multiverse. Their influence is ubiquitous; their culture, however, is dispersed across ruins and locked in fragments of radically advanced technologies. Yet despite their reach and power, the Founders all seemed to venerate and fear some incomprehensible and greater power that lurked outside of most dimensions. In order to protect themselves (or perhaps master such enemies), they built powerful devices and edifices that are every bit as dangerous as they are potent.

FOUNDER-TECH

Founder-Tech is a catchall term that applies to the items and artifacts left behind by the Founders. Despite coming in a variety of shapes and forms, it can almost always be identified by its biomechanical appearance and the thick black ichor it generates. Salvaged Founder-Tech has been responsible for nearly every major technological advancement—from remote sensor technology to teleportation, terraforming, and energy technologies. Founder-Tech, misused, has also been responsible for retroviral plagues, quantum destabilization, and temporal guerrilla warfare.

THE RACE FOR FOUNDER-TECH

Eventually, the Founders disappeared, leaving behind their powerful tools. These tools can be found across the entire universe, in the unlikeliest

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of corners at the most surprising of times. Any time someone discovers a new piece of Founder-Tech, they trigger a goldrush as stakeholders from across the universe scour and salvage what they can from the discovery, reverse-engineering its secrets. Chaos reigns as societies across the galaxy leapfrog technological, political, and sociological advancements through secrets that would have stayed locked away for generations.

The Arch

The Arch is an extremely powerful and volatile piece of Founder-Tech. It's a mobile gateway portal across all possible times and space. Its appearance is biomechanical, resembling a ring of metallic tubes, internal organs, and jagged teeth. The Arch is well-known in the universe as a *source* of Founder-Tech. The Galactic Mercantile Confederacy's (GMC) Code of Universal Trading allows the first discoverers of an Arch appearance to stake claim to all Founder-Tech items that emerge from the gateway. Since the Arch inevitably disappears to reappear somewhere else, these claims are fleeting, albeit highly lucrative occurrences.

The Arch

ASPECTS

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL GATEWAY • VOLATILE AND UNPREDICTABLE
COVETED BY TRADERS AND PIRATES ALIKE

SKILL MODES

GREAT (+4): Creating wormholes across time, space, and dimensions; causing chaos

POOR (-2): Sustaining stable wormhole connections

STUNTS

Countdown to Disappearance. Every time something or someone exits the Arch, the Arch takes a shift of stress. Consequences taken by the Arch cause it to bend reality around it such as *Poisoned Oxygen* or *Slowed Time*. Stress and consequences accrued by the Arch are not recovered normally at the end of a scene. Every time something or someone enters the Arch, the Arch recovers a shift of stress. If the Arch is ever taken out through accumulating stress, it disappears in a flash of destructive energy, appearing somewhere else across space, time, and reality, with all stress and consequences cleared.

Random Destination. Whenever something or someone enters the Arch, it exits at a random time and location on the other side.

STRESS

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2) | Moderate (4) | Severe (6)

Front: The *GSS Pandora*

The *GSS Pandora* is a salvage and scientific exploration ship. Its captain recently learned that the Arch has reappeared within the solar system. The captain decided that the *Pandora* would be the first ship to lay claim to this appearance of the Arch and collect its spoils, and hopes to beat the neighboring Krulz Imperium to claim this particular Arch sighting. All the while, the *Pandora* is unaware that tachyon particles from a nearby red dwarf star are affecting the Arch in unpredictable and dangerous ways.

What Is a Front?

A **front** paces the plots and schemes of villains or the terrible doom awaiting the PCs if they don't engage with the problems emerging within the setting. Think of a front like a train, hurtling down the tracks toward a brick wall, ready to smash through everything unless the PCs get in the way.

Each front features a **countdown clock**, a prescriptive and descriptive measure of both what will happen if the front is left unchecked and how much more time is left before the front is fully realized. If the front is ignored, you tick down each section of the clock until it reaches the doom that awaits the PCs (prescriptive); if something achieves a portion of the front's future plans early, move the clock directly to that section (descriptive).

As the clock gets closer to midnight, the action becomes more elevated and the stakes become more dire. If the PCs can stop the front early, they may be able to avoid the worst of the consequences; waiting until the clock is nearly exhausted to intervene means that the front will have permanent effects on the setting even if the PCs manage to stop it.

DESCRIPTION

The *Pandora* is, indeed, the first GMC-chartered ship to find its way to the Arch, and immediately sends an away team to the surface. What the *Pandora* hasn't counted on, though, is that the nearby red dwarf star is emitting tachyon particles that have caused the already unstable Arch to malfunction. Worse yet, a Krulz Imperial Cruiser is also on the trail of the Arch. The Krulz have, at best, a relaxed relationship with the Code of Universal Trade, and are willing to usurp the *Pandora's* claim to the Arch by any means necessary.

CAST

The *Pandora* away team, point-of-first-contact for the science ship

- Uthak, captain of the Krulz Imperial Cruiser
- Krulz away team of a dozen individuals

COUNTDOWN CLOCK

1500-1800: The *Pandora*'s sensors discover the Arch on a nearby planet. The captain rushes to claim the sighting before the Krulz Imperium and orders an away team to secure the site.

1800-2100: The Arch begins to visibly crackle with energy—something that's never before been described. It releases a cloud of hallucinogenic gas onto the away team, causing them to fall unconscious and experience vivid dreams of their greatest desire. Any attempts to move affected individuals away from the Arch causes them to go into shock and their vital signs to plummet.

2100-2200: The Krulz Imperial Cruiser enters orbit looking for the Arch. They mean business and aren't afraid of a little bloodshed. They send a transmission to the *Pandora* claiming the Arch and warning the *Pandora* against any resistance.

2200-2300: Captain Uthak of the Krulz personally leads an away team planetside to attempt to secure the Arch. They kill anyone who gets in the way of staking claim to the Arch. Meanwhile, scientists aboard the *Pandora* conclude that tachyons from the nearby red dwarf star are impacting the Arch's functions in unpredictable ways.

2300-0000: The *Pandora* away team's vitals show no signs of changing. Meanwhile, the Arch's energy crackling grows wilder, and it begins to hum loudly. It produces a biomechanical monstrosity resembling an animated tangle of razor wire. It attacks all lifeforms around it. Later, the away team finally wakes up, sobbing and reporting that it felt like they were experiencing heaven while incapacitated. They can finally be moved away from the Arch without doing any harm.

0000: The Arch uncontrollably spews energy into its immediate vicinity. Captain Uthak panics and directs the Krulz to forcefully unmoor the Arch from its surroundings, causing an explosion. The Arch, and anyone within two-hundred meters of it—including the Krulz—disappear to an unknown place in space and time.



SPECIAL RULES












In addition to a countdown clock, fronts also contain a number of special rule revisions that focus play on the important themes of the setting.

Black Ichor: The Arch generates a black ichor that, when ingested, grants a mental connection to the Founders across time and space. Those who imbibe it gain a +2 to all overcome or create advantage rolls when attempting to understand Founder-Tech. However, consuming the ichor has a

THE ARCH

downside: the consumer grows more alien and Founder-like, their body slowly becoming a biomechanical monstrosity with a psychology distant and removed from the present temporal concerns of its current universe.

Arch Activity: In addition to the events described in the front, every two hours there's a chance of Arch activity occurring. Roll four fate dice. Starting in the top-left corner, move one column right for each , and one row down for each . The result determines what, if anything, comes out of the Arch.

ARCH ACTIVITY TABLE						
						
	No Arch Activity	No Arch Activity	Founder-Tech Debris	Powerful Founder-Tech	A Sullen-Eyed Barbarian	
	Savage Insectile Aliens	A Bunch of Damn Nazis!	A Scared Child	A Benevolent Energy-Being		
	A Gout of Flame or Acid	No Arch Activity	A Baby Space-Dragon			
	Vicious Snake-People	Evil Mirror Versions of the PCs				
	Catastrophic Founder-Tech					

Fronts in Play

As events in the front tick down toward the 0000 doom, make sure the PCs are aware of the events. Depending on their position in the fiction, they are likely planetside at this point, but could possibly be aboard either the *Pandora*, the Krulz Imperial Cruiser, or another ship. Give them chances to interrupt and get mixed up in the plot!

Engaging the Arch

The Arch is a remnant of an older, more powerful, and more dangerous time and place. It connects those around it to an infinite number of dimensions. Its gifts are as often threatening and disturbing as they are beneficial. Any attempt at claiming spoils from the Arch should best be treated with caution and care.

GMC REPRESENTATIVES

The PCs might be representatives sent by the governing body of the GMC to further understand and catalogue the Arch's function. As the appearance of the Arch can produce travelers from distant times and places, the GMC might have an official corps dedicated to integrating these travelers into their new place in the universe.

Examples: diplomats, scientists, *Pandora* crew members

CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE

The PCs might have no connection to either the *Pandora* or the Krulz. They might have heard of the Arch's whereabouts through other channels, or it might have appeared on top of their heads. For example, they might be the native inhabitants of the planet that the Arch appeared on, or a competing GMC trading ship.

Examples: other GMC space traders, planetary inhabitants, space pirates

ARCH TRAVELER

The PCs might have encountered the Arch at a different time or place, and foolishly entered it, emerging into a new time and dimension. Depending upon where the PCs come from, the existence they've now entered could be similar to what they knew, or radically different. One thing's for sure: the struggles to acclimate into a new universe will challenge them profoundly.

Examples: World War II soldiers, lost children, fantasy warriors

SCIONS OF THE FOUNDERS

The PCs might have some connection to the Founders; the exact nature of that connection might be known or unknown to the PCs. It's their job to shepherd the responsible use of Founder-Tech, and to try to do damage control when the Tech meets with great volatility, such as due to the interference of the red dwarf's tachyon particles.

Example: alien heralds, recipients of Founder-Tech, super-scientists

Adapting the Arch

The Arch is a perfect fit for any kind of game you run. As a mobile, multi-dimensional object, it has a ready-made reason to appear anywhere you can think of. Here are some ideas for adapting the Arch to other environments. Note the alternate stunts that would make the item a more natural fit for the alternate setting.

SWORD AND SORCERY

Evil cultists and the snake people they worship have designated the Arch a holy relic. They receive fantastical and magical items from the Arch, and tame the horrific beasts that it sends through, offering “sacrifices” into the Arch to appease it. They now believe that they can use the Arch to summon their Elder Serpent God, and usher in a dark age of reptilian rule.

Alternate Stunt

Summoning Circle: The Arch’s chaos subsides momentarily and it acts as a stable multidimensional gateway. Once per game session, by succeeding at an overcome roll at difficulty 4, someone on one side of the Arch can successfully use it to summon a being from another time, dimension, or place known to the summoner. If that being attempts to resist the summoning, the roll becomes a contest.

WORLD WAR II

Hitler, obsessed with the occult, has heard of the Arch and believes that he could use it to turn the tide of the War. The Allies have received intel from their spies that Hitler has located the Arch in Antarctica, and has sent a group of his most loyal and highly-trained assassins and soldiers to recover it for him. The Allies have assembled their own best and brightest, and the race is on to prevent the Arch from falling into damned Nazi hands!

Alternate Stunt

Enhanced Understanding: The Arch subtly bends its surroundings in ways that aid in scientific understanding or advancements. Anyone nearby with scientific background or training gains a +2 bonus to all create advantage or overcome rolls when attempting to achieve a scientific breakthrough.

URBAN HORROR

The Arch has appeared in an abandoned warehouse near the Southside slums. It seems to call out to vulnerable youth who feel its pull from across the city. They resist it for a time, but ultimately succumb to the siren’s song of entering through the Arch. How will the PCs prevent any more children from falling prey to it? Will they be able to handle the monstrous creatures and items that have been exiting the Arch?

THE ARCH

Alternate Stunt

Such Sights: The Arch calls out to the minds of the weak or vulnerable. It grants +2 to all overcome rolls made by individuals who seek it out with a skill, skill mode, or approach rated Average (+1), Mediocre (+0), or worse. 🎲



FATE GAMEMASTER MOVES

by MARK DIAZ TRUMAN

While much praise is heaped on Powered by the Apocalypse (PbtA) games for making the player experience more accessible—playbooks! moves! 2d6 rolls!—I was first drawn to PbtA games because of the tools they offer GMs. Instead of the vague, amorphous advice that plagues many roleplaying games, *APOCALYPSE WORLD* includes specific mechanics for the GM that make running the game easy.

In this article, I lay out a system for incorporating similar *GM moves* into Fate Core, giving GMs specific actions to take to make the game awesome. Roleplaying games are a conversation—a discussion about a fictional world through which players and GMs build a collaborative story—and this tool is designed to make that conversation easier on the GM by providing prompts and direction for what to say and when to say it.

Make no mistake: these are radical changes to the Fate Core engine, adaptations that build on the basic tools described in *FATE CORE SYSTEM* (pages 177-223) to give you, the GM, new ways to keep your game moving and provide your players with dynamic stories in which their choices matter. Be prepared for a bit of a learning curve while you master these new tools!

The Moves

At their core, moves are simple: *when “x” happens, do “y.”* In the context of *GM moves*, this means that you’ve got an easy formula to follow whenever the players take actions (or avoid taking action) during a game session:

- When a player character *succeeds on a roll* ...give them what they've earned.
- When a player character *ties on a roll* ...impose a minor cost for success.
- When a player character *fails a roll* ...pick: impose a major cost for success or describe their failure with a twist.
- When there is a *lull in the action* ...introduce a twist.
- After each move, ask “What do you do?”

Easy right? Let's break it down a bit and talk about each of the moves in turn.

Narrow Success

If you're interested in seeing more mitigated successes—outcomes similar to 7-9 results in APOCALYPSE WORLD—treat results ranging within one point of the difficulty (that is, between -1 to +1 from the difficulty or opposed roll) as *narrow successes*: the heroes get what they want, but at a minor cost. Ties in Fate Core are already fairly common, but employing narrow successes can add a lot of nuance to your story.

SUCCESS AND SUCCESS WITH STYLE

For the most part, you don't have to do anything differently when a player character succeeds on a roll. If someone tries to overcome opposition or create an advantage, follow the rules in FATE CORE SYSTEM (page 130-143) for success and success with style. Success is easy: the player characters simply change the world with their actions.

MINOR COSTS

In the event of a tie, give the player character the success they wanted at a minor cost (FATE CORE SYSTEM, page 189). Perhaps they take stress while cutting down a squad of armed assailants or their escape from the burning building leaves them vulnerable to people who are pursuing them. Either way, the minor cost doesn't invalidate the success; it merely complicates the narrative.

Here is a list of minor costs you might use in your game, along with some examples drawn from a 007-style superspy setting:

- Inflict a stress or minor condition
- Announce an approaching twist
- Give the opposition a boost or aspect

Inflict a stress or minor condition

Stress is often the perfect minor cost: it pushes the PCs toward interesting decisions about consequences and failure without stealing the spotlight from their success. Remember to tie the stress to the fiction! A player should always have a sense of why they are marking stress long before you tell them to mark it.

You see the goon with a rocket launcher just in time to swerve your sports car off the main road and into the alley. The rocket narrowly misses your spoiler, but you feel the impact as it slams into the wall just behind your car. Mark a stress. What do you do?

Give the opposition a boost or aspect

Since aspects have both hard mechanical attributes and fictional impacts, they can be used to simultaneously impose costs and move the fiction forward. For a minor cost, you can either give the opposition a boost—a temporary bonus—or an aspect without any free invokes—useful, but not overwhelming. As with stress, aspect costs are a great way to impose costs without invalidating success.

*Your deft driving gets you off the streets quickly, but your phone—pre-emptively hacked into the local police scanner—reveals that Lord Kiel's political connections have alerted the local authorities. The police are on the lookout for the car you stole. I'm adding the aspect **Stolen Car** to your vehicle. What do you do?*

Announce an approaching twist

Twists are dramatic moments in the fiction that you create as the GM to push the story forward. We'll talk more about twists on page 17, but announcing an impending turn in the story is an excellent way to set the stage for future action. As a minor cost, you're not bringing the twist to bear yet; you're just letting the player characters know that the twist lurks on the horizon, ready to strike when the time is right.

You slip out of the car, rolling out of sight as the vehicle zooms toward the edge of town. Your pursuers follow, none of them realizing that they're chasing a ghost. Yet... who was the woman you saw in the passenger seat of the lead car? She seemed familiar. Is she an MI6 agent? You'll have to consult the database and pull her file. What do you do?

MAJOR COSTS

When player characters fail a roll, it's time for you to choose: success at a major cost or failure with a twist. Note that this choice isn't in the hands of the players; it's up to you to decide how the story pushes forward. Do the characters get what they want at a major cost or is it time for a twist?

In the event that you choose a major cost, give the PC the success they wanted at a serious cost. A major cost—like a minor cost—shouldn't invalidate the success, but it will push the characters to make tougher choices or use up serious resources to get what they want.

Here's a list of major costs that you might use in your game, along with some examples drawn from that 007-style superspy setting:

- Inflict stress, conditions, or consequences (as established)
- Give the opposition an aspect with free invokes
- Take away one of their things

Inflict stress, conditions, or consequences (as established)

Major costs can hit hard and fast, escalating conflicts suddenly or bringing the full weight of the opposition to bear. Follow the fiction and tell the players what those costs are in mechanical terms by inflicting stress, conditions, or consequences.

*You see the goon with a rocket launcher just in time to swerve off the main road and into the alley. The rocket slams into wall just behind the car, showering shrapnel into the side of the vehicle and pushing you forward down the alley away from Lord Kiel's men. Take a mild consequence: **Shaken by Shrapnel**. What do you do?*

Give the opposition an aspect with free invokes

While basic aspects and boosts are great minor costs, major costs require a bit more juice. When you impose a major cost in the form of an aspect, give the opposition an aspect with one or two free invokes.

*Your deft driving gets you off the streets quickly, but your phone—pre-emptively hacked into the local police scanner—reveals that Lord Kiel's political connections have already blown your cover. The police are on the lookout for you...and they know you work for MI6. I'm adding the aspect **Blown Cover** to the scene with two free invokes. What do you do?*

Take away one of their things

Major costs give you the opportunity to hit the PCs where it hurts: their stuff. Perhaps a prized tool slips from their fingers at a crucial moment or they simply run out of bullets after emptying an entire clip at the villain. Either way, a major cost can leave the PCs at a concrete disadvantage for future rolls or even make some actions impossible until they overcome a particular problem.

Be careful here not to invalidate the success the PC wanted—you can't take away the object they're trying to protect or save—or violate a PC's high concept or other aspect. Spider-Man is still a *Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man* when he's out of web fluid, but *Iron Man* is just a genius, billionaire, playboy philanthropist if you take away *all* his suits.

You pull off the road a few miles ahead of your pursuers, your stolen sports car sputtering to a halt. You smell motor oil and burnt rubber as you step out of the vehicle; one of Lord Kiel's goons was able to put a bullet through the engine. It looks like you'll have to escape on foot from here. What do you do?

TWISTS

If you decide on failure (instead of success with a major cost) when a PC fails, it's time to introduce a twist, a dramatic moment that reshapes conflicts, adds a new dimension to the drama, or pushes the PCs in new directions. Twists aren't rare, but it's important to remember that they tend to escalate and expand conflict instead of resolving it. Use them when you're ready for a scene to get more complicated instead of moving forward easily.

Note that the trigger for a twist can be a failure, but it might also be a point in the fiction when things get boring or dull. If you find the players sitting around, avoiding taking action or stuck in routine conflicts...it's time for a twist. This is a rule you probably already follow as a GM; there's a reason random encounter tables date back to the origins of roleplaying!

Unlike costs, twists need to reflect the fiction of your particular setting, a list of common dramatic moves specific to the game you and your players want to play. You should always think about customizing your costs to better suit your setting, but you *must* customize your twists to ensure that your moves match the story you want to tell. *Complicate a social situation* is a terrible twist for a Fate game about dungeon crawling, and *reveal a secret identity* only works in Fate games where secret identities matter.

Here's a short list of twists I might use in the superspy setting:

- Put an agent in a spot
- Surface a secret, ancient or modern
- Expand or reinforce the opposition

Put an agent in a spot

Twists require escalation: few things keep a spy story moving like placing agents into physical or social danger. Note that this move doesn't require you to put player characters in direct trouble! It's equally valuable to reveal that other agents have gotten themselves into a tight spot and need the PC's help.

Lord Kiel's men block off the road in all directions, keeping you from fleeing the immediate area. You pull into an alley as your phone chirps. It's a text message from Agent Ramirez: "I think Kiel knows that I'm working with you. He just called me into his office." What do you do?

Surface a secret, ancient or modern

Failure is always just the beginning of the story. Use twists to introduce new information about the setting and the deep web of secrets that surrounds each and every superspy. For extra effect, remember that betrayal always cuts deepest when it comes from the PC's closest allies and friends.

They catch you in minutes, disabling your car with road spikes and swarming the vehicle with armed men. They haul you in front of Lord Kiel. "You didn't think you would get away that easily, did you? I'm afraid that I've already hacked into the MI6 mainframe, gaining access to an infinite number of your secrets...including the tracking program that follows you everywhere you go. Did you know about that protocol? Of course you didn't." What do you do?

Expand or reinforce the opposition

Twists can also be used to make a bad situation worse. If a PC is already in a tight spot, you can reveal that the opposition is larger or better prepared than they first appeared to be, escalating the conflict without fundamentally changing the stakes.

You've had little luck shaking your pursuers. As you skid to a halt in heavy traffic, you spot a glint from a rooftop: a sniper. Before she gets off a shot, you realize you recognize her! It's Sokolov, the Russian agent you left for dead in Moscow. Is she working for Lord Kiel now? What do you do?

Getting the Most from Moves

If used correctly, moves merely codify what you're probably already doing as a GM: figuring out how to complicate the story in ways that your players find interesting and holding them accountable to the choices they make. The power of moves lies in their reliability, the way they give you easy prompts to keep the action interesting session after session.

More Costs? More Twists?

The lists of minor and major costs in this article are sample lists that you can customize or expand for your own game. Think of them as a jumping off point, not an exhaustive list of costs that you could include at your table!

MAKE YOUR MOVE, BUT MISDIRECT

One of your main jobs as a GM is to attach fictional motivations to characters, plots, and actions in the story. Players want to feel like the world is real, that the people who populate it are driven not by the needs of the story but by the needs of their hearts. You're a magician, creating emotional connections to mechanical pieces of a game system.

When it's time to make a move, make sure that the fictional outcome caused by your move springs from a fictional action. You might decide to inflict stress, but describe the source of the stress before you talk about the mechanical effect; you might decide to award an aspect to the opposition, but tell the players what it looks like before you write anything on an index card.

NEVER SPEAK YOUR MOVE'S NAME

Whenever possible, avoid telling the players the name of your move. Let them wonder! You're a magician—conjuring characters and conflict from thin air at a moment's notice—so don't ruin the trick by explaining how it works. Don't say "I'm going to surface a secret now about your past"; surface the secret in the fiction and let the players react.

Obviously, you need to be straightforward with some parts of the system: aspects, consequences, stress, etc. But allow these mechanical elements to be driven by the fiction you create based on what the moves prompt you to add to the story. Don't reduce the narrative you're building with your players to a few index cards and a stress track.

STAY COLLABORATIVE; ASK QUESTIONS

While you're making decisions as the GM to keep the story moving, your players should still have a strong creative role in every session. To that effect, don't use the moves to cut players out of the process of creating aspects and building fiction! Fate with moves is still a collaborative game.

One way to avoid too much GM control is to focus on questions. Before you *reinforce the opposition* during a conflict, ask the players "What kinds of troops did your briefing warn you about?" Build on the answer, using the moves to draw the players' contributions into the fiction in a concrete way.

Moves, Moves, and More Moves

Like all things Fate, this system is designed to be hacked, modded, and altered to fit your local campaign. I look forward to seeing folks use these moves to give GMs all new tools to make their Fate games awesome! 🎲

.....
Special thanks to Brendan Conway for his help in developing this system for WICKED FATE, a new setting for Fate Core based on John Wick's WICKED FANTASY.



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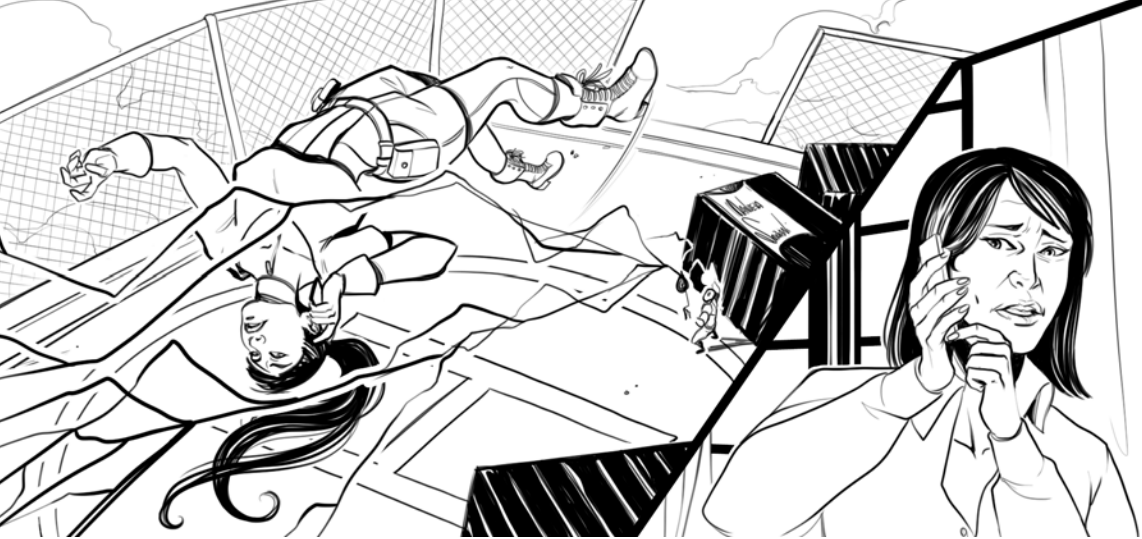
Mental Stress

Consequences

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- 4 moderate
- 6 severe

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SETTING THE STAKES

USING VARIABLE CONDITIONS TO SET UP MEANINGFUL CONFLICTS

by JUNE SHORES

Have you ever played through a conflict that felt like a slog? Where you weren't sure what the actual circumstances were? Where the whole thing felt jarring and disconnected? You probably know the feeling in movies, too. The obligatory scene of violence that happens when a producer thinks that the audience is getting bored—the equivalent of the obligatory conflict in a Fate Core session that nobody seems to know what to do with. Both these things suck, and they come from the same sort of place. The game's GM, like the movie's producer, wants the game to be exciting so they put things in danger. However, what often happens is that the group becomes confused and goes through the motions, without quite knowing why they're fighting in the first place.

This isn't a unique problem to Fate Core, but Fate has special tools that can help the issue. Conditions (page 18 in the FATE SYSTEM TOOLKIT) can be used to keep play focused on conflicts, contests, and challenges that matter. By defining conditions in play—during scenes of exposition and other times where things aren't blowing up—you can lend conflicts, contests, and challenges the weight and clarity that they deserve.

Initial Preparation

To use conditions to keep play focused on meaningful conflicts, start off by using the guidelines from the Fate System Toolkit to create a set of condition slots and include them on the character sheet. Don't label them with an aspect, though. Leave them blank for now.

During play, blank conditions cannot be checked off to absorb stress.

They're the untapped potential for the stakes of your narrative. When a player eventually fills in the label on a condition, it acts just like conditions normally do. When the condition is recovered—all stress boxes emptied—the player clears the slot and makes the label blank again. The condition label must be replaced with something new before it can be used again. You'll find more on filling in condition labels and erasing them through recovery below.

Setting the Stakes in Non-Conflict Scenes

In between big scenes of getting things done and coming to emotional, mental, and physical blows, you'll have quieter scenes where things get set up and you learn about the characters' motivations. These scenes don't have to be long, but they should illustrate something that the characters have to lose. If it's part of a character or campaign aspect, that's all the better.

Before setting scenes, you should ask directly about the things that each PC fights for. Then, choose one PC's answers and frame a scene around them, focusing on the elements and characters they draw attention to. Throughout the scene, prod the players to ask themselves "What's the worst thing that could happen?" That worst-case scenario tells the player what happens when they lose a conflict around the object they care about, and therefore what their condition should be.

After playing the scene to its conclusion, tell players to write in something tangible that could be risked about the object of their care inside one of their blank conditions. The risk shouldn't be the death or loss of that thing—extremes like that are the result of failing conflicts outright. Rather, the condition ought to be a description of something in the situation around the fictional element getting worse.

Your friendly neighborhood Spider-Man, Peter Parker, has the aspect **Caring for Aunt May**. His Aunt May can't pay the bills with her fixed income and she worries about where he goes at night. So, early in the first session his player writes in the sticky lasting condition **Losing Aunt May's Trust**. Later, his player decides that he wants to highlight Peter's misfit nature in high school, so he writes in a fleeting condition, **Humiliation**.

Suffering Conditions

The process of suffering conditions is more flexible than consequences. From the FATE SYSTEMS TOOLKIT:

You suffer from a condition when the GM says you suffer from a condition—usually as a result of your narrative situation—but you can also use them to soak stress... You can check off as many conditions as you'd like for a single hit.

As a result, players have some more freedom to go to conditions as a cost for a success on a failed overcome an obstacle or create an advantage roll, such as those in a contest or challenge.

Doing so gives contests and challenges more teeth and excitement because there is a risk beyond failure going into them. The player has the choice to have an adjacent situation get worse, or to lose ground in the present situation.

Spider-Man has gotten into a fight with the nefarious Enforcers. To escape them, he has to win a contest. However, he ends up failing a crucial roll and runs out of webbing to swing with. He checks off his **Losing Aunt May's Trust** condition and ends up embroiled in the fight. Because he spends so much time in this brawl, he gets home very late. Aunt May is left to worry.

Recovering Conditions

Recovering conditions follows the same process as in the FATE SYSTEM TOOLKIT (page 18), with slight adjustments. When a player wants to recover a condition, you should frame a scene around it. Sticky conditions will go away after they've been resolved in the fiction. For lasting conditions, once a player has started recovering one, then you should work together to rewrite it and reflect the resolution that comes out of the recovery scene.

Peter Parker comes home late after his battle with the Enforcers and Aunt May is waiting for him. She explains that she worries and that she can't take him staying out all night. She gives him a curfew and the recovery process for the lasting condition **Losing Aunt May's Trust** begins. The aspect is renamed to **Curfew** and Peter's player clears the first box, while the second remains checked, as per the standard rules.

SETTING THE STAKES

Sticky and lasting conditions stick around until fully recovered, checked off and unable to absorb stress. However, compels on them can still be used to complicate the situation. In this case, the condition intrudes on the current situation and raises the stakes of the conflict, contest, or challenge.

While Spider-Man fights Electro, he's about to create an advantage. However, the GM decides to compel his **Curfew** condition and have a cross Aunt May call in the middle of the fight. Now he'll have to talk to Aunt May and fend off her questions while battling Electro.

When a condition is fully recovered, erase it completely. It isn't an issue anymore and can be replaced with something new.

Rhythm

The flexible conditions system highlights a pattern of natural act breaks in a Fate game. Establishing conditions makes for the first two acts, the exposition and the conceit; the twist comes at the big conflict or challenge when conditions are marked; the spiral comes out of the compels on leftover sticky and lasting conditions; and the resolution comes with recovery scenes.

These pieces come together to make a certain rhythm. You transition between quieter scenes—where you establish the character and their stakes and deal with fallout—and more chaotic scenes—where the situation is changed irrevocably, characters come to blows, and conditions are checked. The pattern helps to reinforce the stakes of the campaign and the arcs of the characters. When they recover their conditions, especially social conditions, they find time for reflection and changing course as they process what happened. When they establish new conditions, they spotlight how their character and the things they care about have changed over time.

Changing conditions, when used to their fullest, can dramatically alter the focus of the game. Instead of the immediate concerns of broken limbs and bruised egos—standard consequences—they instead build in complex, lasting effects that have a real impact on how the story moves forward. Because the players took the time to write them beforehand, when the things that their characters care about are fresh in their minds and they're not preoccupied with a fight scene, those conditions can carry a lot more narrative weight. They're also more well defined, so they can be compelled more easily.

Options

This basic system of establishing conditions, spending them, and recovering them can make the context of the characters shine. However, there are plenty of dials to turn regarding the specificity of the conditions and what systems interact with them. Here are a few ways that you can change conditions to work differently in your game.

STAKES TYPES

The kinds of conditions that you include can inform the tone of your campaign. In a mostly bloodless soap opera, perhaps one involving pastel-colored magical ponies, social and emotional conditions may be the most common. However, in a darker, bloodier game, physical wounds might be more appropriate.

To use this tweak, tell the players what kinds of conditions are fleeting, sticky, and lasting. In a superhero game, you could tell them that a rumor is fleeting, while in a courtly romance game it would be a dire lasting condition.

Mark each slot with a broad category, like “physical” or “reputation.” That way, you guide the players toward the subject matter that you want for conflicts, and the kind of violence—soft, hard, social, etc.—that you want to feature.

UNLOCKING STUNTS

Sometimes you want characters to hold off on using the big guns until some condition is met, like when the circumstances are dire and they have little choice. Sometimes, checking the condition triggers a dangerous power that they can’t quite contain. This is a common trope in shonen martial arts manga and can be tricky to pull off in a game.

To emulate this, attach stunts to certain conditions. Only once a player has marked off the condition, or compelled it if it’s already marked, does the player have access to the stunt. The stunt is then available for the rest of the scene afterward. This requirement creates a bottleneck that keeps a powerful character from steamrolling the opposition by attaching a cost to their power.

MINOR MILESTONES THROUGH RECOVERY

Minor milestones are often overlooked. One way to highlight each PC’s changing nature, and to highlight minor milestones as a valid option, is to tie them into recovery instead of the break between sessions. Whenever a PC recovers a condition they get a minor milestone and all the

perks that come from that. By presenting this as a more interactive part of the game, you make minor milestones more attractive.

Wrapping Up

The context of a conflict is important. Without that context of the character's status quo and the things they care about, the conflict will flail like a wet noodle. Using flexible conditions will help to make conflicts, contests, and challenges relevant and tense by default. The changing conditions highlight the context of the character's decisions, bringing the stakes—whether they be social, emotional, physical, or mental—to the fore. It also makes conflicts work faster and hit harder, because you don't have to think about wording or an appropriate cost in the middle of a scene. It's all there before the dice hit the table, freeing you up to do more awesome stuff and think about all the ways the situation could get worse. And the worse the odds, the better a PC looks when they triumph. 🍀

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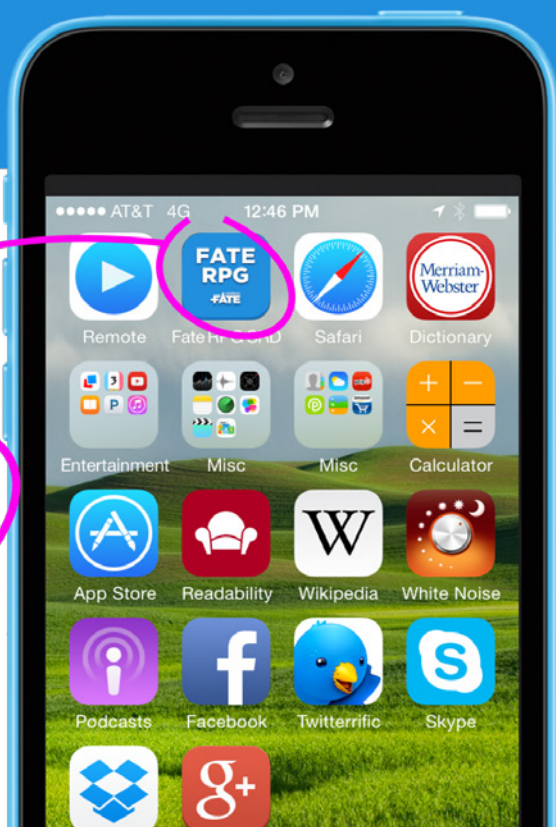
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TIME OF THE HORSEMEN



TIME OF THE HORSEMEN

by ANDREW TUTTLE

We knew the day would come when your home, Earth, would become the battlefield for the War in Heaven. We told ourselves we loved you, as our Father loves us all. We told ourselves we were giving you insights and abilities to defend yourselves. We lied to ourselves and we lied to you. What we did we did for pride, envy, lust, greed...

Consumed by our sins, we fell. Some became as beasts, knowing nothing but their own desire. Some clung to their lies, claiming to be righteous and worthy of redemption. A very few of us became human. Well, very nearly human, I suppose. And humanity taught us Hope. And Hope has brought us here.

The End of the World

On the news they say a Near-Earth object made a dangerously close pass, leaving a trail of meteor showers and tidal disruptions. There was a certain amount of panic and it seemed like a lot of people just stopped coming into work. There was some talk of forming an international agency to defend against future NEO dangers, but that faded away and things sort of slid back to normal.

Until the nightmares began.

Around the world, people reported apocalyptic nightmares and demonic delusions. Celebrities and other public figures were gripped by grandiose obsessions, declaring themselves to be prophets, gurus, angels, and gods. Some national governments banded together with international agencies and multinational corporations, trying to hold back the madness. Other groups claimed sovereignty, becoming armed enclaves and city-states. Everywhere lines are being drawn and allegiances declared.

While nations and states are falling apart, local communities grow stronger. Schools, churches, libraries, police stations, firehouses, hospitals, even coffee houses, diners, and mini-marts become cornerstones for new communities. Blackouts and shortages are commonplace but gas, water, and electricity still seem to run. Ground beef is becoming a luxury item but chicken, rabbit, and goat are all available. Of course the upper class somehow manages to get their delicacies.



THE RIDERS

Seen only in nightmares, the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse have begun the conquest of mankind. Everyone has been touched by dark dreams featuring iconic figures demanding obedience and submission. Ancient warrior kings, identified as “the Horsemen,” promise wealth and prosperity in exchange for servitude. Refusal is met with visions of violence, disease, and death. But even in the face of overwhelming supernatural force, mankind will not be conquered.

The Rider of the White Horse

Short-sighted and narcissistic, he fires his poison arrows far and wide through the channels of modern media. He bribes his drones and sycophants with cheap thrills, co-opting media superstar celebrities to be his Emissaries. His philosophy brings a life lived on impulse where actions have no consequences, only instant gratification. He tempts with dreams of fame and lust. He threatens with nightmares of disfiguring disease and public humiliation. His Emissaries hold lavish parties and public events. They seek positions of public acclaim and alternately flatter and cajole to enact the will of their Master.

The Rider of the Red Horse

Paranoid and bellicose, this Rider preaches strength but practices only pain. His philosophy of absolute power and rigid control brings a life of mindless, reactionary conflict against enemies and allies alike. He tempts with dreams of power and dominance. He threatens with nightmares of horrific, torturous violence. His Emissaries hold positions of authority as community or gang leaders. They enforce strict order and rigid hierarchies through public law or private codes of honor.

The Rider of the Black Horse

Arrogant and overbearing, he stands always in the shadows, directing Byzantine plots aimed at the acquisition of more—more power, more wealth, more resources... His philosophy brings a life of wretched hunger for most, and bloated stagnation for a few. He brings dreams of wealth and influential secrets. He threatens obliquely, preferring to strike at loved ones and cherished ideals with his corrupting influence. His Emissaries guard their identities zealously with complex networks of intermediaries. They offer influence and wealth, but always at a steep price.

The Rider of the Pale Horse

Soft-spoken and relentless, with a calm presence and somewhat faulty logic, the final Rider makes a near-irresistible case for self-destruction. Appearing at times as a generalized authority figure but more often as a loved one long passed, his philosophy of morbid predestination and resignation brings a life of slow, spreading decay. Unlike the other Riders, the Pale Rider doesn't enact grand schemes against entire communities. In dreams he rarely appears as a medieval icon of death, preferring to appear as a relative or friend who has recently died or whose life has been touched by death. He doesn't present threats, just simple examples from everyday life subtly shaded with inevitability. His Emissaries in the waking world, his "Hollow Men," are quiet and plain-spoken fatalists with a knack for catching people alone and off-guard.

THE EMISSARIES

Those who choose to serve the Horsemen may find themselves in positions of power. Most people suppress the knowledge that they serve a supernatural master and are quick to profess allegiance to "the greater good." The Horsemen grant a chosen few supernatural gifts, abilities clearly beyond the human realm.

- The Emissaries of the White Rider are often Clever/Arrogant, with stunts reflecting impossibly high charisma and physical beauty. They may have gifts allowing them to grant beauty and health or cast curses of disease.
- The Emissaries of the Red Rider are Forceful/Angry, with stunts reflecting physical strength and martial skill. They may have gifts of god-like strength or the ability to hurl fire or lightning.
- The Emissaries of the Black Rider are Sneaky/Treacherous, with stunts reflecting manipulation and misdirection.

TIME OF THE HORSEMEN

Their gifts are subtle, such as deceptive illusions or the ability to impose luck or misfortune.

- The Emissaries of the Pale Rider are Careful/Fearful, with stunts reflecting their deep but twisted understanding of psychology and the human condition. They may have gifts of uncanny insight, precise knowledge of a person's fears and desires.

It isn't easy, struggling every day to find your hope, faith, and belief. But it is possible, and every day more people find the inner strength to refuse the treacherous "gifts" of the Horsemen. Every day mankind grows stronger and the Time of the Horsemen comes closer to its end.

THE WATCHERS

Other forces have made themselves known in dreams and even the waking lives of the people. In ancient times these Watchers intervened directly, but their interference led to tragedy in the form of war, cataclysm, and plague. Now the Watchers act subtly, living beside humanity, granting aid and support when needed.

A Watcher's high concept is a Dedication aspect (page 36) which defines a Watcher's area of expertise. A Watcher has a deep connection to a specific area of human endeavor, like the Muses of Greece or the Apsaras of India. Watchers are attracted to people with Dedication aspects similar to their own.

Watchers have a physical form, but on principle, Watchers rarely take action in the waking world. They provide information and inspiration in dreams. They can make their presence known in nightmares, providing refuge from the threats of the Riders (page 31).

Setting Creation

Time of the Horsemen is a Quick Start Adventure with everything you need to jump right into your first session. Before you start, discuss the broader setting with your group, perhaps even reading aloud the descriptions of the Horsemen, their Emissaries, and the Watchers, so everyone is on the same page.

At the start of play, explain the **current issue** to your players and ask them to fill in one or two additional faces associated with *The Horsemen Ride*. These additional characters provide new plot hooks and twists that tie your players more deeply to the strange phenomena they face at the end of the world.

Then ask your players to choose from one of the two available

TIME OF THE HORSEMEN

impending issues: *Guns or Butter* or *Special Election*. Have them fill in one or two additional faces for their chosen impending issue as well, rounding out the larger cast of characters with their suggestions.

CURRENT ISSUE: THE HORSEMEN RIDE

Your city has become a patchwork of factions as both the Riders and the Watchers spread their influence to battle over territory. The players are an enclave of survivors, unaligned with Riders or Watchers, doing what they can to survive and contribute to the community at large.

Faces:

People are aware of the Riders as they appear in their dreams, but very few people admit that the Riders affect their everyday lives.

The White Rider: a person of god-like beauty wearing a golden crown offers the dreamer a seat at a banquet table laden with rich food and drink

The Red Rider: an armored giant offers a gleaming sword with one hand and a line of chained slaves with the other

The Black Rider: a shadowy figure in a poorly lit room offers a simple deal, a favor now for a favor to be collected later

The Pale Rider: a deceased loved one assures the dreamer that the end is coming soon



GUNS OR BUTTER?

SEMEN

Adin Joz

Emissary of the
Black Rider

Wikvaya Porter

Urban Farmer

Regina Benton

Ambitious
Lieutenant

Nathaniel duRance

Emissary of the
Red Rider

SPECIAL ELECTION

Grace Allbright

Emissary of the
White Rider

Ernest Phelps

Local Allbright
supporter

Catherine Stephenson

Police Lieutenant

Impending Issue: Guns or Butter?

Adin Joz's black markets are tightening their control of local resources, including Capt. duRance's covert arms trade. Regina "Rage" Benton is on a personal mission to break Capt. duRance's long established hold on weapons trade and ruin his tough, moralistic reputation. Her fierce ambition has brought her in conflict with community leader Wikvaya Porter, who in turn brings more pressure on Capt. duRance.

Faces:

Adin Joz: secretive plutocrat, Emissary of the Black Rider

Nathaniel duRance: police captain, Emissary of the Red Rider

Wikvaya Porter: urban farmer, dietitian, deeply concerned about the availability of fresh milk and other issues regarding children's health

Regina Benton: ambitious lieutenant for Adin Joz with a grudge against Capt. duRance

Impending Issue: Special Election

Grace Allbright seeks to rebuild the city council. As an Emissary of the White Rider, her only real concern is adding to her power base, and your block is on her short list of desirable properties. Mrs. Allbright is calling for “responsible, respectable community leaders” to form a “transition council.” Police Captain Nathaniel duRance supports Mrs. Allbright “in principle” but thinks her actions are premature, in light of the “growing threat of gang violence.”

Faces:

Grace Allbright: charismatic lawyer, Emissary of the White Rider

Ernest Phelps: local Allbright supporter and campaign worker, honestly hoping to change the world

Catherine Stephenson: Police Lt. Stephenson coordinates the activities of patrol officers and local authorized block watch groups, torn between ideals of justice and the violence of a collapsing social order

Character Creation

Time of the Horsemen is written for Fate Accelerated characters. Players take the roles of community members, part of an enclave in a moderate to large city.

About Pre-Generated Characters

If your players wish to play pre-generated characters, you can use the four sample characters provided on page 46 of this adventure. Stats are provided for Fate Accelerated versions of each character, including their individual aspects, approaches, and stunts. The sample characters don't have their full allotment of aspects or stunts, allowing for personalization during play.

NEW EXTRA: DEDICATION

Dedication is an aspect that reflects the strength of a character's values. These are ideals like truth and justice or values such as family or tradition—things that a character would strive and fight for. The Dedication aspect replaces a character's high concept. They can draw on this extra for strength when needed, and most importantly, it can be used to reverse the effects of corruption (page 39). Players may also choose a single Dedication stunt.

Dedication Stunts: Characters may begin to manifest supernatural

powers. Dedication stunts go well beyond the human norm. Low end powers would be hysterical strength, uncanny luck, and danger sense. If the players desire a more fantastic story, PCs can manifest miraculous healing powers and sprout angelic wings.

Dedication and Corruption

The Dedication aspect and Dedication stunts can't be invoked to affect the outcome of an action using a corrupt approach (page 39). A player may try to redeem a corrupt approach by facing a challenge (FATE ACCELERATED EDITION, page 19) of three to five steps. The challenge should be based on the subject of the character's Dedication aspect and the character can't use a corrupt approach during the challenge.

Playing the Game

NIGHTMARES

While the characters try to sleep, the Riders use nightmares to corrupt the PC's values. In a nightmare scene, a Rider creates scenarios forcing or tempting the character into accepting a corrupt approach. Nightmares present horrific worst-case scenarios centered on important people in the PC's life. The themes of the nightmare are drawn from the attacking Horseman and the PC's Dedication aspect.

Playing a nightmare has some mechanical differences. Unlike ordinary dreams and nightmares, taking place in one character's mind, multiple characters can share a Rider-inspired nightmare. A nightmare is a mental zone where characters are locked in a contest with a Rider (FATE CORE SYSTEM, page 150). Within a Rider's nightmare zone, a character's aspects (except for Dedication aspects) only add +1 when invoked, and stunts (except for Dedication stunts) add nothing. A character's friends may create advantages for them, and a Watcher may make itself known by creating advantages.

The nightmare ends when:

- The character or character's team wins three victories.
- The Rider wins three victories.

There is a penalty when the Rider wins. All characters who participated in the nightmare begin their next scene with a mental consequence in their lowest available consequence slot. This consequence reflects the nature of the Rider and one of the corrupt approaches such as *Afraid of Someone or for Someone*, *Angry at Someone*, *Reckless Impulses*, etc. The imperiled loved ones also suffer a mental consequence directed at the

challenged character.

Any of the characters accept a corrupt approach to succeed at serious cost.

When all the members of a group or residents of a building or other area are under the influence of a Rider, the Rider can create a waking nightmare, which functions identically to a sleeping nightmare. A Rider uses this tactic when their real-world influence is under attack. Servants of the Rider have a weird monstrous or demonic appearance and behave in a way that reflects their master's predilections. NPCs call these incidents "hallucinations" or "mass hysteria."

Nightmares, both in dreams and waking, are visceral, immediate, life-or-death challenges with no "good" resolution, only "less bad."

PLAYING THE WATCHERS

Watchers begin the game more like situational aspects. Watchers provide support and aid for every aspect of human life, from core values like family, community, and diligence to achievements like music and engineering. A Watcher spirit is attracted to a character's Dedication aspect and aids and enhances the effects of those aspects. If the community has attracted a Watcher, nightmares become less intense, injuries heal faster, and critical machinery like generators and refrigerators stop breaking down. Watchers are prone to human weaknesses; a character manifesting Watcher gifts may still fall to corruption and Fallen Watchers offer play-

Sample Watcher

Like the muses of old, the Watcher known as Cali devotes herself to inspiration and heroic endeavor. She watches over Cressida's dreams (see *Nightmares*) and does what she can to make life easier for Cressida and her friends. She seeks out stories of "ordinary heroes" and makes sure that Cressida learns about them.

ASPECTS

WATCHER OF HEROIC INSPIRATION
LITERAL DRAMA QUEEN

APPROACHES

CAREFUL:	Average (+1)
CLEVER:	Average (+1)
FLASHY:	Fair (+2)
FORCEFUL:	Fair (+2)
QUICK:	Good (+3)
SNEAKY:	Mediocre (+0)

REVELATIONS

A significant question at the start of a *Time of the Horsemen* story is which of the Riders is making trouble. At the climax of a story, Riders can be revealed when their Emissaries are confronted directly. The Emissary loses power over their followers and waking nightmare aspects vanish as the spectral form of the rider appears. Once seen, this is a hard thing to repress.

The characters face the Emissary in a contest to force or trick them into revealing the Rider who's backing them. Winning the contest reveals the Rider in their spectral form and disperses their influence from the area. This is a major milestone. Losing the contest inflicts mental consequences as in a nightmare, plus any real-world consequences, like being arrested.

Riders may look impressive in their spectral form, but they're at their weakest at this point. Dispersing a Rider may involve confronting an Emissary with evidence of their crimes or organizing an impromptu community sing-along. Convincing a group under the influence of a Rider to question the Rider's authority or behave counter to the Rider's desires will weaken the Rider's influence. This will bring much-needed relief from nightmares and ease community tensions.

GIFTS OF THE RIDERS: CORRUPTION

The main tool of the Riders is to offer power in exchange for servitude. They draw the PCs into dangerous situations through the manipulations of their Emissaries or they provoke them in Nightmares (page 37). As characters are tempted by the Riders, their approaches may become corrupted.

The corruption system was written by Clark Valentine and presented in a previous issue of FATE CODEX. Excerpts are included here. For more information about the corruption mechanic, check out *Corruption in Fate Accelerated* in FATE CODEX, Issue 2.2, pages 6-12.

From "Corruption in Fate Accelerated"

This corruption system is based on the idea of "success at great cost" as an option for failing a roll. FATE ACCELERATED EDITION doesn't discuss this option much, but FATE CORE SYSTEM does—see page 132 for a review. When you really want a failed action to succeed, corruption can be the great cost you accept to convert it to a success.

Once you declare that you're accepting corruption to succeed at great cost, the GM can't spend additional fate points or invoke additional

aspects to alter the outcome—it's decided. If the number of shifts matters, consider your success is considered to be by 2 shifts.

Changing Your Approach

Accepting corruption fundamentally changes the way you approach conflicts. On your character sheet, find the approach you rolled for the action where you accepted corruption. Keep the bonus the same, but *change the name of that approach*. Yes, you change the word written on your character sheet, according to this table:

Corrupt Approaches

Uncorrupt	Corrupt
Careful	Fearful
Clever	Arrogant
Flashy	Aggressive
Forceful	Angry
Quick	Reckless
Sneaky	Treacherous

Fearful: You act out of Fear when you obsessively plan for every contingency, when you are cautious and suspicious to a fault. Fearful actions are ruled by anxiety and paranoia.

Arrogant: You act with Arrogance when you're convinced you're the only one who can do it, when your brilliant plan is clearly superior to anything anyone else can do.

Aggressive: You act with Aggression when you show no mercy, when you get them before they get you. Aggressive actions are often disproportionate to what provokes them.

Angry: You act out of Anger when you let hatred and vengeance rule your actions. If you hate the target of your action, you might be acting Angrily.

Reckless: Your actions are Reckless when you act without considering the consequences to anyone else or, sometimes, to yourself. Reckless actions are frequently ruled by immediate gratification.

Treacherous: Treachery is deceit plus malice. It respects no loyalty, debt, or allegiance. It's not just being sneaky, it's being *mean* about being sneaky.

TIME OF THE HORSEMEN

If the approach you're using is already corrupt, choose a different one. In either case, the bonus remains the same, but the name—and the fiction implied by its use—changes.

Quicker, Easier

Corrupt approaches aren't more powerful than uncorrupt approaches, but they can sometimes lend an advantage. The corrupt approach becomes a permanent character aspect, in addition to your existing aspects, that you can invoke. If the fact that you're not just being Aggressive, or Angry, or Treacherous, but *evilly* so would work to your advantage, describe how, spend a fate point, and benefit in the same way you'd benefit from invoking any other aspect.

On your character sheet alongside your other aspects, note what corrupt approaches you have, so that you remember they're available to invoke (and to be compelled, as we discuss in the next section).

More Seductive

GMs, just as players can invoke their corrupt approaches as aspects, you can use them to make life interesting. You can compel a corrupt approach that a player is rolling (or the player can suggest a self-compel), suggesting how their action is laced with malice and hatred and how that complicates things for them. Do this frequently—make sure there are consequences to becoming corrupt that the player can't ignore. Make it sting, especially if the corrupt character's comrades are more virtuous.

Usually a compel earns a player a single fate point. In this case, it might earn them more, depending on how many corrupt approaches they have. It's also the number of fate points they need to spend to buy off the compel.

Fate Point Cost for Corrupt Approach Compels

Number of Corrupt Approaches	Fate Points Per Compel
1, 2	1
3, 4	2
5, 6	3

Cooperation with Corrupt Characters

...[W]hen a character embraces corruption, characters with fewer corrupt approaches cannot cooperate with them during the remainder of that scene. Aspects that the newly corrupt character creates can't be invoked by more virtuous allies, and vice versa. ...[R]oleplay the mistrust.



Starting Scene: Shootout at OK-Mart

The PCs awake from dreams of blood and thunder to the sounds of gunshots and sirens. The OK-Mart, a nearby convenience store, has been robbed. The OK-Mart owners, Donald and Kenya Katz, have supported the community since the beginning of the troubles; violence here strikes at the heart of the community.

Vigilante intervention has left three dead, Donald Katz and two gang members. As the police take control, word spreads quickly that a third gang member fled the scene and is at large in the community. The vigilantes, notorious braggarts, are curiously silent and unresistant as the police take them away. If the PCs don't investigate, an officer finds them to get a statement from possible witnesses and to solicit their assistance. If you're using the pre-generated characters, Cressida receives hints from the Watcher Cali that there's more to the story.

- The Red Rider has agents everywhere in this: the gangs, the vigilantes, and the police. Capt. duRance is his Emissary, and he wants the violence to escalate while publicly preaching the need for greater control.
- The Emissary of the White Rider, Mrs. Allbright, wants to capitalize on the spectacle: to be seen consoling the bereaved and publicly condemning the violence.
- The Black Rider wants the store itself and sends agents to alternately threaten and bribe the storeowner's grieving family—or perhaps his Emissary, Adin Joz, is already a “silent partner” in the business.
- The Pale Rider takes advantage of the death of Don Katz and his friendly relationship with the community. He

TIME OF THE HORSEMEN

appears as Don in dreams and approaches characters when they're alone, offering promises of comfort and rest.

Opening Aspects: *Blood, Glass, and Police Tape; Only the Beginning; Unanswered Questions*

Wikvaya Porter

Urban farmer, local block watch organizer. He's a strong-willed man whose wife and son are his entire world. He's organizing a search party to find the missing gang member.

ASPECTS

TRADITIONAL HUSBAND AND FATHER

IF NOT US, WHO?

APPROACHES

CAREFUL:	Average (+1)
CLEVER:	Average (+1)
FLASHY:	Fair (+2)
FORCEFUL:	Fair (+2)
QUICK:	Good (+3)
SNEAKY:	Mediocre (+0)

Catherine Stephenson

Police Lt. Stephenson coordinates the activities of patrol officers and local authorized block watch groups. She's torn between ideals of justice and the violence of a collapsing social order.

ASPECTS

TO PROTECT AND SERVE

HONOR THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW

APPROACHES

CAREFUL:	Good (+3)
CLEVER:	Fair (+2)
FLASHY:	Mediocre (+0)
FORCEFUL:	Fair (+2)
QUICK:	Average (+1)
SNEAKY:	Average (+1)

Middle Scene: Manhunt

The police, local watch, and gangs are searching for the missing person. The PCs may be involved with one or more of the factions or be searching on their own. Police informers and gang members suggest searching the Tower, a place to go when you need to disappear. A Watcher could send a symbolic dream to a PC.

The Tower is an old brownstone hotel that was nearly gutted by fire years ago. Its ruined interior is now inhabited by junkies and derelicts under the control of the Pale Rider. The fugitive is trying to hide here, but his fear and hopelessness have attracted one of the Pale Rider's Hollow Men.

The Pale Rider's Hollow Men are not like the other Emissaries. They seek a personal level of influence without the need for public acclaim or power. They have no names, but the community where they do their work usually gives them a simple title like "The Old Man" or "The Cat Lady." The Hollow Man who haunts the Tower is called "The Caretaker." If possible, the fugitive should be known personally to a PC. If not, the fugitive can be influenced by a Watcher to trust one of the PCs. He claims he's not a gang member, he's a witness to what really happened.

It quickly becomes evident that the Riders know where he is too. This is an opportunity for the Riders to use waking nightmares against the PCs. Of the four Riders, Red and Black have the most to gain from an overt attack; should characters become isolated, the Pale Rider takes advantage.

Opening Aspects: *Urban Desolation; Hunters and the Hunted; Presumed Guilty*

End Scene: Siege

The PCs will fight or flee to a refuge. They may need a hospital or clinic, they might find themselves allied with the police, or they may go to ground in one of their own homes. Now, instead of the danger of a ruined building on broken ground, the PCs have intact walls and possible allies. Capt. duRance and Mrs. Albright must maintain their public image, but Adin Joz can use his supernaturally stealthy Operators. The captain and Mrs. Albright will try to force some sort of public resolution they can use to support their agendas. Adin wants to create ambiguity and suspicion he can use to undermine the others. The Pale Rider seeks despair and a high body count.

THE OPERATORS

Emissaries of the Black Rider have at their disposal a team of emotionless, tight lipped men and women to do their dirty work. The Operators

dress in black and arrive unexpectedly in sinister black vehicles. Impassive, authoritative Officials take control while a van of black body armor clad Operators with strangely high tech firearms infiltrate to capture or eliminate their target. Should the Emissary have high amounts of resources and influence, there might even be weirdly silent black helicopters observing the scene. Sufficiently stylish Emissaries might even employ ninja. The Operators will neither confirm nor deny anything, and they leave as swiftly and mysteriously as they arrived.

The Operators are Forceful and Sneaky with stunts focused on combat, intimidation, and stealth.

Opening Aspects: *Beyond Negotiation; Guilt by Association; Allies and Bystanders*

Plot Hooks and Adventures

The struggle goes on as the Riders play their sadistic games with human pawns. People work to rebuild community and the Watchers seek to redeem themselves.

CIVIL WAR

The Red Rider puts Capt. duRance to the test by allowing a rival to rise to power. Wikvaya Porter challenges the captain's authority and effectiveness. The community is undecided, and even the police force—a link to the world before the Riders—is divided. Capt. duRance is a practiced campaigner while Wikvaya is a plain spoken, sincere, and highly respected community leader. Will business as usual win out over grassroots? Does either faction have the community's best interests at heart?

NEW WORLD ORDER

Grace Allbright announces she's been contacted by an assessment committee, and agents of the new federal government, federal aid, and troops will be arriving soon. All she has to back up her claim is the word of four recently arrived strangers, supposedly sent by the government. This could finally be the light at the end of the tunnel, a return to lost stability. Who are these strangers and what are their plans?

HOUSE OF MIRACLES

A miracle healer with a small army of devoted followers has set up shop. The healing is real and the followers are sincere. This could change everything for the community, creating a center of hope for the entire city. If this isn't some plot by one of the Riders, how will Riders react to this? Has a Watcher decided to reveal themselves with uncharacteristic boldness?

Characters

The PCs on the following pages are part of the News Crew, a freelance news team distributing news and entertainment through the local internet. These sample characters do not have their full allotment of aspects to allow for personalization during play.

Jeffrey Porras

A former latch-key kid, Jeff grew up on syndicated cop shows and cheesy action movies. He dreamed of becoming a stunt driver. Now he's a motorcycle courier with all the action he can handle.

ASPECTS

DEDICATION: RELIABLE AND TRUSTED MOTORCYCLE COURIER

TROUBLE: FASTER IS BETTER

ASPECTS: MY WORD IS MY BOND

APPROACHES

CAREFUL:	Average (+1)
CLEVER:	Fair (+2)
FLASHY:	Good (+3)
FORCEFUL:	Mediocre (+0)
QUICK:	Fair (+2)
SNEAKY:	Average (+1)

STUNTS

Danger Sense. (Dedication Stunt) Jeff's dedication to reliability has given him an uncanny instinct for danger. He may Quickly roll to defend against traps, ambushes, and other dangers that he would otherwise not be aware of while driving.

30 Minutes or Less. Because of his knowledge of the area and driving skill, Jeff has a +2 to overcome road obstacles with a Flashy maneuver while driving.

Cressida

Cressida made a name for herself in daytime soaps a decade ago. Now she's re-invented her boutique advertising agency into a freelance news gathering team and guerrilla soap opera production studio.

ASPECTS

DEDICATION: VOICE OF INSPIRATION

TROUBLE: AGE IS JUST A NUMBER

ASPECTS: WE ARE ALL OUR STORIES

APPROACHES

CAREFUL: Fair (+2)

CLEVER: Average (+1)

FLASHY: Good (+3)

FORCEFUL: Fair (+2)

QUICK: Mediocre (+0)

SNEAKY: Average (+1)

STUNTS

Consistent Inspiration. (Dedication Stunt) Because Cressida is dedicated to broadcasting inspirational, uplifting stories, once per session she may Flashily defend vs. an attack against morale. She may defend any ally even if she is not in the scene.

Aseema Khanna

Attentive, detail-oriented production assistant. Aseema has become Den Mother to her co-workers. She organizes the office supplies and does fact-checking.

ASPECTS

DEDICATION: OFFICE DEN MOTHER

TROUBLE: GOSSIP

ASPECTS: I KNOW A GUY..

APPROACHES

CAREFUL: Fair (+2)

CLEVER: Good (+3)

FLASHY: Average (+1)

FORCEFUL: Mediocre (+0)

QUICK: Average (+1)

SNEAKY: Fair (+2)

STUNTS

A Mother Knows. (Dedication Stunt) Because of Aseema's deep empathy, once per scene she can automatically discover an aspect defining a character's fears or desires.

The Grapevine. Because of Aseema's vast social network, she has a +2 to Cleverly create advantages when searching for information.

Jeremy Reilly

Talent coordinator gifted in the art of handling volatile personalities. Jeremy is a people person, absolutely confident in his ability to find the right words for any situation through careful and clever conversation.

ASPECTS

DEDICATION: DIPLOMATIC FACILITATOR

TROUBLE: LET ME HANDLE THIS

ASPECTS: KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

APPROACHES

CAREFUL:	Good (+3)
CLEVER:	Fair (+2)
FLASHY:	Mediocre (+0)
FORCEFUL:	Average (+1)
QUICK:	Fair (+2)
SNEAKY:	Average (+1)

STUNTS

Trust the Process. (Dedication Stunt) Thanks to his dedication to peaceful solutions, once per scene Jeremy can create an advantage, *Temporary Truce* between two or more conflicting parties that requires a Good (+3) roll to remove.

Would I Lie to You? With his talent for conversation, Jeremy has a +2 to Cleverly overcome social obstacles from distrust to outright paranoia.



CREDITS

When not writing or editing, **SALLY CHRISTENSEN** crochets unspeakable evil. She lives in the wilds of north Toronto, along with two cats, a Portuguese viking, and her tiny overlord.

BRENDAN CONWAY is a co-owner of Magpie Games, and has worked on the *Firefly RPG* from Margaret Weis Productions, *Bulldogs!* (Fate Core edition) from Galileo Games, and numerous Magpie Games projects including *Urban Shadows* and *The Fate Codex*. His solo projects include three Chaos World settings for *Dungeon World*—*The Last Days of Anglekite*, *The Cold Ruins of Lastlife*, and *The Green Law of Varkith*. His most recent work, *Masks: A New Generation*, is a Powered by the Apocalypse game about young superheroes.

ROBERT CRUM is a freelance illustrator based in Kenosha, Wisconsin. He is a fan of all art fantastic or strange (and hopefully a mixture of both). He works in both traditional and digital media and has a deep respect for contemporary art as well as the rich heritage of artists through the ages. Find his work and in-process images online at brayv.co or on instagram [@bobcrum](https://www.instagram.com/bobcrum).

THOMAS DEENY is a graphic designer who specializes in book layout and game design. His layout and design work can be found in about half of things in Brendan's bio above, but the two have never actually met. Strange. Additional work of his can be found in Atlas Games' *Unknown Armies*, John Wick Presents' *7th Sea*, and Growling Door Games' *Chill*. You can review his published works at denaghdesign.com and follow him on Twitter at [@denaghdesign](https://twitter.com/denaghdesign).

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ANDRÉ LA ROCHE is a gamer and an attorney. Despite this otherwise deadly combination of character flaws, he's pretty relaxed at the gaming table. He previously worked on Margaret Weis Productions' *Dragonlance* game line. André aspires to be a warrior-poet, and spends his free time randomly spouting existential platitudes.

MIKE MUMAH has worked for the better part of a decade as a roleplaying game illustrator. His work has appeared in such games as *Shadowrun*, *Rifts*, *Dead Reign*, *Part-Time Gods*, *Babylon 5*, and several others. The Michigan-based artist is currently at large from the Briarsbrook Institute for the Criminally Insane and considered extremely dangerous. If sighted, do not approach him! He may seem very affable and friendly but don't be fooled! Please call the authorities and delay him with free coffee, bourbon, and/or hot wings. He will take the time to enjoy this bait until he can be apprehended. This is for the public's best interest.

JUAN OCHOA: Gumshoe whistleblower reporter hero? A narcissistic antagonist out for blood? Fall-guy for a horrifying nanite invasion? Sleeper agent for extraplanar feline intelligence? The FACTS on El Mucho Colombianísimo: he is a straight-dealing, smooth-lined, grit-toothed artist, twainsplit mirror-master-magician-carouser-cavorter, and noted wizard, with knowledge bilingual, exotic, and esoteric, who theoretically does most of his thinking in Español.

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JUNE SHORES has only been in the roleplaying game hobby for a few years now. Her first experience with a tabletop RPG was with Fate, back when the *Dresden Files RPG* came out, and she has been in love with the system ever since. With this new hobby came an all-consuming urge to hack and drift games to suit her needs. From pastel-colored magic ponies to anime-flavored fantasy, June has produced many solo projects that are scattered across the internet today. She attends The University of Maine at Farmington to pursue a degree in new media and blogs at her web site, Headpigeons.

MANUELA SORIANI lives in the same small town in northern Italy where she was born in 1979; she studied to become an accountant, but Art asked to be part of her life. After six years in comic books for the Italian market (including Jonathan Steele for Star Comics), Manuela began creating both traditional paper books and animated apps for electronic devices. Around 2013, she added back comic book projects in her daily job, alongside children books and cover art. In early 2016, she was successfully backed for her first illustration book “Butterflies” and is currently working on the comic series *TIN* (by Ilya Dvilyanski), *BoyLord* (by Nathan Peabody), and *Girls Heist Out* (by Rob Wieland).

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ANDREW TUTTLE is a long-time gamer, first-time contributor, and a Fudge fan from the '80s. By day he promotes various businesses and charities through search marketing. By night he dons his metaphorical mask and cowl and fights entropic decay with roleplaying games. His current Fate project is a Weird West setting featuring the Secret History of the Luchador, Ancient Aliens, and the Seven Lost Cities of Gold.

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TARA ZUBER grew up on fairy tales and remains mildly obsessed with stories to this day. She looks forward to exploring the Fate system further and discovering new stories to tell and share. Tara can be found in Chicago or online on Google Plus at [+TaraZuber](https://plus.google.com/+TaraZuber).



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