

ALL IN

FATE + FICTION

is our line of original and classic short stories. Situations, characters, and other elements from the story are expressed as Fate RPG Aspects. Read and enjoy the stories on their own, then mix the Aspects you like into your own Fate Core or Fate Accelerated game!

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Fate Core System
Fate Accelerated Edition
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Fate was originally
created by Rob Donoghue
and Fred Hicks

By Gary E. Weller

The felt lining on the poker table brought Jack an easy feeling. The fuzziness was comforting as he passed his fingers over it. The slick cards slid on the felt perfectly. It was synchronicity in action. It was beautiful. Jack's deft hands dealt the cards around the table. Soon two cards were in front of him and each of the four others had two cards in the hole.

Jack was more at home at the table than he was in the RV that was parked out in the lot. Like the RV though, the tables he had seen across the country did eat up hundreds upon hundreds of dollars if he wasn't careful. Jack had learned long ago to respect the table and the cards. He'd done battle with them for too long not to be respectful of the tools he used to wage battle. The poker table was his arena.

The stone faces around the table revealed nothing about the cards that they held in front of them. It was as Jack expected. He had respect for the four others around the table. They were some of the best card players in the world, but more than that, the four other men and women around the table were the best paranormal investigators that Jack had ever had the honor of working with.

They were gathered for more than the game. The murmurings in the shadows were starting to get serious. More and more people were starting to turn up missing. Local law enforcement as well as FBI trackers couldn't find the bodies. Jack and the others knew that the law would never find the bodies. They had already been drained and cremated. It was necessary for the ritual to bring *It* to our dimension.

Cigar smoke filtered up to ceiling and through the vents from the five of them gathered around the green felt-lined table. Jack peeled back the corner of his cards. The Jack of Hearts and the Queen of Clubs peeked back at him.

"You know they've already started the sacrifices." Vijay's mellow voice brought Jack's attention up from his own cards. Her pink sunglasses clashed with her mocha colored skin. Jack laid his cards flat on the table.

"Three girls on the east coast alone." Charles took a long pull on his cigar and let the smoke filter out on its own. His porkpie hat was tilted to the left. Jack could see the bags under his eyes. Charles didn't like it when it was school kids that were abducted. "Fuckers are really playin' hardball with us."

"I burned out a nest in Iowa." Roland added right before he drained another bottle of beer. Roland let out a belch and placed the empty bottle next to the other three he had already guzzled down. "Sombitches are puttin' in the work all right."

"Bet or fold." Furlong was the only one of the five who seemed to take the game a little more seriously than the cult. Jack figured that Furlong was so serious because he had to pay for the suits that he was always wearing.

Instinctively, Jack reached for the pile of clay chips at his hand and threw out two black chips into the center of the table. One by one, the rest followed suit. A thousand dollars in chips contrasted against the green felt.

Jack burned the top card and laid out three more for the flop. The Jack of Spades, Ace of Diamonds and the Six of Clubs almost glowed under the smoke-

Situation Aspects

Bring It to our dimension

There's a cult trying to raise something nasty, and their abducting people and sacrificing them to make it (or *It*) happen.

The Feds don't even want a part of this, they're gettin' in the way more and more.

Our intrepid hunters have more than one problem to deal with.

Character Aspects

Jack was more at home at the table than he was in the RV that was parked out in the lot.

That's a long and very specific way to say that Jack is a gambler and no so much of a vacation traveler.

filtered lamplight. Jack looked over to Vijay and nodded.

"Check," her silky voice almost resonated in the room. "We can't let them keep winning. We have to keep on taking them out, no matter what the cost." Jack knew she was right. He looked around the table and saw the others could offer no arguments.

"It's getting worse!" Roland slammed another empty bottle down on the table. "The Feds don't even want a part of this, they're getting' in the way more and more."

"And they're not playing nicely, either," Furlong nodded in agreement. "Their bureaucratic bullshit is hindering my operation in Nevada." The large man frowned as he locked eyes with Jack. "They think I'm running drugs. The DEA has been trailing me for weeks. I can't get anything done."

Jack smiled at Furlong. His heart was in the right place after all.

"It could be worse, brother." Jack waited for the rest of them to either check or raise the pot. No more chips came in. Jack put out the turn. Queen of Hearts lit up the table. Jack could feel his heart want to race. Two pair could easily win the pot.

"Another two bills," Charles sounded tired as he flung two more black chips in. Finding those girls really took the wind from his sails. Jack felt for him. It's never easy reliving a tragedy. Charles' own girls were killed by the cult no more than seven years ago. Jack knew the man was only fighting on to honor their memory.

Vijay nodded and slid another two hundred into the pot. Furlong followed. With practiced ease, Jack flipped his own chips into the pot.

"Too rich for me brother." Roland let out another belch as he folded. Jack saw the glassy-eyed stare all over Roland's face. He was worn out from the road and taking out the cultists in Iowa. Roland didn't hide the stress as well as Charles did.

Jack flipped out the river. The Jack of Clubs stared out from the green felt. Jack knew he had the hand. Charles eyed the community cards and tossed in another two hundred.

"Fold." Vijay slid her cards away. "If the Feds aren't going to acknowledge what's going on, what choice do we have?" She pulled off the pink sunglasses and sighed. "We're all we've got."

"So," Jack looked over to Charles and Furlong "how we going to do it then?"

"We go all in." Furlong smiled.

About *All In*

by Berin Kinsman

I hope you enjoyed Gary's story. That would make me happy, and I know it would make Gary happy. Yet even if you didn't, I hope you can see how even a piece of fiction you don't like can be mined for ideas, and ways that those ideas can be remixed and reimaged and used as material for your own Fate RPG game.

Now let's deconstruct the story, pick out some of the elements that are present, and discuss ways that you might use those as possible Aspects in your own Fate RPG game. Understand that the following interpretations are only *my* interpretations, and not the only possible interpretations. The object of Fate+Fiction is to help you learn how to mine stories for pieces and parts that you can adapt for your own purposes.

Let's begin by trying to summarize the story. It's more of a brief character study, and a promise of things to come. It details a meeting of monster hunters over a game of poker, who seem to be trying to formulate a strategy for balancing what they do with avoiding problems with the law. In the end the proposal is to approach fighting monsters like playing poker, going "all in", no holding back, no regard for consequences. The stakes are simply too high to play it safe.

The Situations

There are as few Situation Aspects that we can pull out of this story. These Aspects, or something like them, can then be adapted to your own Fate game. Let's take a look.

Bring It to our dimension.

There is a cult out there trying to raise *something*. To do so, they've been kidnapping and sacrificing people, including kids. This not only establishes fact, it's obviously been used to Compel the monster hunters to action. Consider that – the setup for the campaign, the basis of the setting, is a Compel to get the player characters together and acting. From the cultists' point of view, it's their mission, their goal, something they can Invoke for actions in service to that goal.

The Feds don't even want a part of this, they're gettin' in our way more and more.

Official law enforcement is presumably aware of the kidnapping and cultist situation, but isn't doing anything about it. Perhaps it's because they don't believe the hunters. Maybe the hunters are all delusional, and there is no cult. Maybe they're right, but someone is diverting official resources away from the problem, implying that someone high up in government is probably in or affiliated with the cult, even leading it. It's possible that the cult has infiltrated law enforcement on several levels, acting to hinder any official or unofficial investigations.

The Characters

Now let's examine the characters in the story. For your own Fate game you don't need to use these exact characters. Look at existing player characters and supporting characters, and see who might fill the same roles in relation to the Situation Aspects. Who might the relevant Character Aspects, or something similar, be appended to?

Jack seems to be our viewpoint character, as much as any of the hunters are. What we know is that *Jack was more at home at the table than he was in the RV that was parked out in the lot*. It's a long way to go to say "gambler", but it's more than that. He spends a lot of time gambling, probably literally and metaphorically (with his life, fighting cultists). It also shows disdain for the travel he does, a discomfort with his

Character Aspects

Charles' own girls were killed by the cult no more than seven years ago

We not only know why Charles fights, but how long he's been doing it. This implies experience and expertise, as he's managed to survive.

Sombitches are puttin' in the work all right

The cultists are obviously very dedicated to their cause, and seem willing to die for it.

Their bureaucratic bullshit is hindering my operation in Nevada.

This establishes the fact of both where the Feds are and what they're doing it.

Consequences

*Damned if you do,
Damned if you don't*

Any action against the cultists is going to result in a story Consequence involving law enforcement. Any Concession to law enforcement yields ground to the cultists.

They think I'm running drugs

An example of a specific Consequence of crossing the Feds.

role as a cult-hunter.

Vijay, Charles, Roland and Furlong are there to establish that other hunters exist, and to establish the scope of the cult problem. To me, that's what gives this story legs as a possible RPG setting. There's plenty of room for a variety of player characters and supporting characters. They have other hooks regarding attitudes and appearances, but that's not really their role in the story. They establish facts more than exist as characters. *Their bureaucratic bullshit is hindering my operation in Nevada* can be an Aspect for either one of the hunters, reflecting an obstacle or problem, or for the Feds, showing how and where they operate.

The Fed and law enforcement are a group of characters, and again, pose a problem. As stated in the Situation Aspects, they may be in on it, or they may be honest people with bad information who think the hunters are the crazy ones.

The cultists aren't seen, and we know very little about them. The reference to *ests* can be taken a number of ways, from them being slovenly and living and run-down safe houses, to implications that they're not entirely human. *Sombitches are puttin' in the work all right* is an Aspect that reflects their dedication to the cause, the brutal way they work, and how the hunters perceive them.

Consequences

Not every action has a clear or specific consequence, and sometimes we need to dig a little bit to discover them within a story. Here's what I found.

There are two obvious Consequences in a larger sense. Not fighting the cultists means *It* comes into the world and presumably big, horrible things happen. Fighting the cultists means getting into trouble with the Feds.

They think I'm running drugs.

This is a specific Consequence of hunters crossing paths with law enforcement. Whether the Feds really thing that, or the hunter has been frames to try to get them out of the picture, is unknown. It's a great example of story Consequences being imposed upon a character. It's temporary; either the character will back off and law enforcement will forget about it, having gotten what they want, the character will clear his name, or he'll get arrested and they'll try to kill him or otherwise silence him, or they'll drop it because they don't really have any evidence.

Boosts

Boosts are another set of elements that don't always make themselves explicit within a story. It often takes some probing and a little bit of imagination to discover something that could potentially provide a Boost in a Fate game.

We go all in.

Basically, you have to give credit to the characters for doing things in spite of the inevitable consequences. They get the reward in advance for taking the risk. Give them a bonus on the roll when they know, with near absolute certainty, that there's going to be a Consequence for undertaking the action at all. Specifically, in this instance, any time a hunter knows that taking action against a cult will bring down the wrath of a law enforcement or Federal agency, but does it anyway, they should get a temporary, single-use bonus that they can use at some point during that mission. However, that also means that you have to bring down the heat on them, and hard, in return.

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