

Castle Falkenstein



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FATE

HIGH ADVENTURE IN THE STEAM AGE®

Fate of Falkenstein

A Fate Core Hack for Castle Falkenstein, using the Deck of Fate.

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Setting

Setting is as per *Castle Falkenstein* (R. Talsorian Games, 1994) and any related supplements the GM approves.

Character Creation

Character creation looks like *Fate Core* (Evil Hat Productions, 2013) with the following changes:

- The high concept aspect should include a Dramatic Character role such as the ones suggested in *Castle Falkenstein* pp. 145-153 or, with the Host's agreement, in one of the CF supplements. For example: *Russian Anarchist*, *Young Dragon Lord*, *French Soldier of Fortune*, etc.
- The trouble aspect is generally your dramatic hook. Use it well.
- The Phase Trio can draw inspiration from the diary questions in *Castle Falkenstein* pp. 155-158.
- **The ladder descriptors are renamed** to match *Castle Falkenstein* better, in order to be able to use difficulty and ability ratings provided in the sourcebooks.

Bonus	Fate of Bayern	Fate Core
+8	Legendary	Legendary
+7	Epic	Epic
+6	Extraordinary	Fantastic
+5	Exceptional	Superb
+4	Great	Great
+3	Good	Good
+2	Fair	Fair
+1	Average	Average
+0	Mediocre	Mediocre
-1	Poor	Poor
-2	Terrible	Terrible

- Mundane skills are changed to match those in *Castle Falkenstein*. For several, the correspondance with *Fate Core* is quite good; for a few, we need new definitions; stunts are modified to match.

- Arcane skills are new (Extras) and based on those in *Castle Falkenstein*. They all cost Refresh.
- Skill bonuses are per *Fate Core* default: one at Great [+4], two at Good [+3], three at Fair [+2], and four at Average [+1].
- Physical stress box bonus based on Physique, social stress boxes based on Courage.
- Refresh starts at 6. PCs are not allowed to let their refresh level drop below one.
- Mundane stunts cost 1 point of refresh each; magic, non-human templates, and associated stunts have a specific Refresh cost.

Mundane Skills

In <i>Castle Falkenstein</i>	In <i>Fate of Bayern</i>	O	C	A	D
Athletics	Same as in <i>Fate Core</i> .	X	X		X
Charisma	Rapport from <i>Fate Core</i> , renamed	X	X		X
Comeliness	No skill, handled through aspects.	-	-	-	-
Connections	Contacts from <i>Fate Core</i> , renamed.	X	X		X
Courage	Will from <i>Fate Core</i> , renamed.	X	X		X
Education	Lore from <i>Fate Core</i> , renamed.	X	X		
Exchequer	Resources from <i>Fate Core</i> , renamed.	X	X		
Fencing	New skill based on Fight: Swords from <i>Fate Core</i> .	X	X	X	X
Fisticuffs	New skill based on Fight: Unarmed from <i>Fate Core</i> .	X	X	X	X
Marksmanship	Shoot from <i>Fate Core</i> , renamed.	X	X	X	
Motoring and Helmsmanship	Drive from <i>Fate Core</i> , renamed.	X	X		X
Perception	Notice from <i>Fate Core</i> , renamed.	X	X		X
Performance	New skill. Based partly on Deceive from <i>Fate Core</i> .	X	X		
Physician	New skill. Based partly on Lore: Physician from <i>Fate Core</i> .	X	X		X
Physique	Same as in <i>Fate Core</i> .	X	X		X
Social Graces	Empathy from <i>Fate Core</i> , renamed.	X	X		X
Stealth	Same as in <i>Fate Core</i> .	X	X		X
Tinkering	Crafts from <i>Fate Core</i> , renamed.	X	X		

O = Overcome, C = Create and Advantage, A = Attack, D = Defend.

The *Fate Core* skills Burglary, Investigation, and Provoke do not have direct counterparts in *Castle Falkenstein*.

Athletics

The Athletics skill represents your character's general level of physical fitness, whether through training, natural gifts, or arcane means (like magic or Faerie heritage). It's how good you are at moving your body. As such, it is a popular choice for nearly any action-y character.

Athletics is all but ubiquitous among every genre appropriate for Fate—it would only be unnecessary in a game that focused exclusively on interpersonal interaction and had no physical conflict.

Overcome: Athletics allows you to overcome any obstacle that requires physical movement—jumping, running, climbing, swimming, etc. If it resembles something you'd do in the decathlon, you use Athletics. You use overcome actions with Athletics to move between zones in a conflict if there's a situation aspect or other obstacle in your way. You also use Athletics to chase or race in any contests or challenges that rely on these types of activities.

Create an Advantage: When you're creating an advantage with Athletics, you're jumping to high ground, running faster than the opponent can keep up with, or performing dazzling acrobatic maneuvers in order to confound your foes.

Attack: Athletics is not meant as an attack skill.

Defend: Athletics is a catch-all skill to use for defense in a physical conflict, against close-quarters and ranged attacks. You can also use it to defend against characters trying to move past you, if you're in a position to physically interfere with whoever's making the attempt.

Athletics Stunts

- Sprinter.** You move two zones for free in a conflict without making a test, instead of one, provided there are no situation aspects restricting movement.
- Cat-Like Balance.** +2 to overcome actions with Athletics if you are in a chase across rooftops or a similarly precarious environment.
- Dazing Counter.** When you succeed with style on a defend action against an opponent's Fisticuffs attack, you automatically counter with some sort of nerve punch or stunning blow. You get to attach the **Dazed** situation aspect to your opponent with a free invoke, instead of just a boost.

Charisma

The Charisma skill is all about making positive connections to people and eliciting positive emotion. It's the skill of being liked and trusted.

Overcome: Use Charisma to charm or inspire people to do what you want, or to establish a good connection with them. Charm your way past the guard, convince someone to take you into their confidence, or become the man of the hour at the local tavern. For nameless NPCs, this is just an overcome action, but you may have to enter a contest to sufficiently ingratiate yourself to a named NPC or PC.

Create an Advantage: Use Charisma to establish a positive mood on a target or in a scene or to get someone to confide in you out of a genuine sense of trust. You could pep talk someone into having *Elevated Confidence*, or stir a crowd into a *Joyful Fervor*, or simply make someone *Talkative* or *Helpful*.

Attack: Charisma doesn't cause harm, so you don't use it for attacks.

Defend: Charisma defends against any skill used to damage your reputation, sour a mood you've created, or make you look bad in front of other people. It does not, however, defend against mental attacks. That requires Courage.

Charisma Stunts

- Best Foot Forward.** Twice per session, you may upgrade a boost you receive with Charisma into a full situation aspect with a free invocation.
- Demagogue.** +2 to Charisma when you're delivering an inspiring speech in front of a crowd. (If there are named NPCs or PCs in the scene, you may target them all simultaneously with one test rather than dividing up your shifts.)
- Popular.** If you're in an area where you're popular and well-liked, you can use Charisma in place of Connections. You may be able to establish your popularity by spending a fate point to declare a story detail, or because of prior justification.

Connections

Connections is the skill of knowing and making contacts with people. It presumes proficiency with all means of networking available in the setting.

Overcome: You use Connections to overcome any obstacle related to finding someone you need to find. Whether that's old-fashioned "man on the street" type of work, polling your contact network, or searching newspaper archives, you're able to hunt down people or somehow get access to them.

Create an Advantage: Connections allows you to know who the perfect person to talk to is for anything you might need, or to decide that you know the perfect person already. It's likely that you'll create story details with this skill, represented by aspects. ("My connections tell me that Joe Steel is the *Best Mechanic For A Thousand Miles*—we should talk to him.")

You can also create an advantage that represents what the word on the street is about a particular individual, object, or location, based on what your contacts tell you. These aspects almost always deal with reputation more than fact, such as *Known as a Mean Guy* or *Notorious Swindler*. Whether that person lives up to their reputation is anybody's guess, though that doesn't invalidate the aspect—people often have misleading reputations that complicate their lives.

Connections could also be used to create aspects that represent using your information network to plant or acquire information.

Attack: Connections isn't used for attacks; it's hard to harm someone simply by knowing people.

Defend: Connections can be used to defend against people creating social advantages against you, provided your information network can be brought to bear in the situation. You might also use it to keep someone from using Connections to go "off the grid", or to interfere with attempts to find you.

Connections Stunts

- Ear to the Ground.** Whenever someone initiates a conflict against you in an area where you've built a network of contacts, you use Connections instead of Perception to determine turn order, because you got tipped off in time.

- Rumormonger.** +2 to create an advantage when you plant vicious rumors about someone else.
- The Weight of Reputation.** You can use Connections to create advantages based on the fear generated by the sinister reputation you've cultivated for yourself and all the shady associates you have. You should have an appropriate aspect to pair with this stunt.

Courage

The Courage skill represents your character's general level of mental fortitude, the same way that Physique represents your physical fortitude.

Overcome: You can use Courage to pit yourself against obstacles that require mental effort. Puzzles and riddles can fall under this category, as well as any mentally absorbing task, like deciphering a code. Use Courage when it's only a matter of time before you overcome the mental challenge, and Education if it takes something more than brute mental force to get past it. Many of the obstacles that you go up against with Will might be made part of challenges, to reflect the effort involved.

Contests of Courage might reflect particularly challenging games, like chess, or competing in a hard set of exams. In settings where magic or psychic abilities are common, contests of Courage are popular occurrences.

Create an Advantage: You can use Courage to place aspects on yourself, representing a state of deep concentration or focus.

Attack: Courage isn't really used for attacks. That said, in settings where you allow psychic abilities, full-on psychic conflict might be something you can do with this skill. That's the sort of thing that would be added to Courage by taking a stunt or extra.

Defend: Courage is the main skill you use to defend against mental attacks, representing your control over your reactions.

Special: The Courage skill gives you additional mental stress boxes or consequence slots. Average (+1) or Fair (+2) gives you a 3-point stress box. Good (+3) or Great (+4) gives you a 3-point and a 4-point stress box. Exceptional (+5) and above give you an additional mild consequence slot along with the additional stress boxes. This slot can only be used for mental harm.

Courage Stunts

- Strength From Determination.** Use Courage instead of Physique on any overcome tests representing feats of strength.
- Hard-Boiled.** You can choose to ignore a mild or moderate consequence for the duration of the scene. It can't be compelled against you or invoked by your enemies. At the end of the scene it comes back worse, though; if it was a mild consequence it becomes a moderate consequence, and if it was already moderate, it becomes severe.
- Indomitable.** +2 to defend against attacks specifically related to creating intimidation and fear.

Education

The Education skill is about knowledge and lore.

Overcome: You can use Lore to overcome any obstacle that requires applying your character's knowledge to

achieve a goal. For example, you might use Education to decipher some ancient language on a tomb wall, under the presumption that your character might have researched it at some point.

Frankly, you can use Education as a go-to skill any time you need to know if your character can answer a difficult question, where some tension exists in not knowing the answer.

Create an Advantage: Education provides a lot of very flexible opportunities to create advantages, provided you can research the subject in question. More often than not, you'll be using Education to get a story detail, some obscure bit of information that you uncover or know already, but if that information gives you an edge in a future scene, it might take the form of an aspect. Likewise, you can use Education to create advantages based on any subject matter your character might have studied, which gives you a fun way to add details to the setting.

Attack: Education isn't used in conflicts.

Defend: Education isn't used to defend.

Education Stunts

- **I've Read about That!** You've read hundreds—if not thousands—of books on a wide variety of topics. You can spend a fate point to use Education in place of any other skill for one test or exchange, provided you can justify having read about the action you're attempting.
- **Shield of Reason.** You can use Education as a defense against mental attempts, provided you can justify your ability to overcome your fear through rational thought and reason.
- **Specialist.** Choose a field of specialization, such as herbology, criminology, or zoology. You get a +2 to all Education tests relating to that field of specialization.

Exchequer

Exchequer describes your character's general level of material wealth in the game world and ability to apply it. This might not always reflect cash on hand, given the different ways you can represent wealth in a particular setting—in a medieval game, it might be tied to land or vassals as much as gold; in the modern day, it might mean a number of good lines of credit.

This skill is in the default list to give you a basic, easy way to handle wealth as an abstraction without getting into minutiae or bookkeeping. Some people might consider it odd to give a static skill rating for something that we're used to seeing as a finite resource.

Overcome: You can use Exchequer to get yourself out of or past any situation where throwing money at the problem will help, such as committing bribery or acquiring rare and expensive things. Challenges or contests might involve auctions or bidding wars.

Create an Advantage: You might use Exchequer to grease the wheels and make people more friendly, whether that represents an actual bribe (*I Scratch Your Back...*) or simply buying drinks for people (*In Vino Veritas*). You can also use Exchequer to declare that you have something you need on hand, or can quickly acquire it, which could give you an aspect representing the object.

Attack: Exchequer isn't used for attacks.

Defend: Exchequer isn't used to defend.

Exchequer Stunts

- Money Talks.** You can use Exchequer instead of Charisma in any situation where ostentatious displays of material wealth might aid your cause.
- Savvy Investor.** You get an additional free invoke when you create advantages with Exchequer, provided that they describe a monetary return on an investment you made in a previous session. (In other words, you can't retroactively declare that you did it, but if it happened in the course of play, you get higher returns.)
- Born to Riches.** Twice per session, you may take a boost representing a windfall or influx of cash.

Fencing

The Fencing skill covers the genteel art of close-quarters combat (in other words, within the same zone) using a sword.

Overcome: Since you don't really use Fencing outside of a conflict, it's not often used to overcome obstacles. You might use it to display your knowledge of the rules, history, and etiquette of the art.

Create an Advantage: You'll probably use Fencing for most of the advantages you create in a physical conflict. Any number of special moves can be covered with advantages: a targeted strike, disarming, riposte, and so on. You could even use Fencing to assess another fighter's style, spotting weaknesses in his or her form that you can exploit.

Attack: This is self-explanatory. You make physical attacks with Fencing. Remember, this is for close-in work, so you have to be in the same zone as your opponent

Defend: You use Fencing to defend against any other attack or create an advantage attempt made with Fencing or possibly Fisticuffs.

Fight Stunts

- Unerring Strike.** When you succeed with style on a Fencing attack and choose to reduce the result by one to gain a boost, you gain a full situation aspect with a free invocation instead.
- Backup Weapon.** Whenever someone's about to hit you with a *Disarmed* situation aspect or something similar, spend a fate point to declare you have a backup weapon, such as a hidden dagger. Instead of a situation aspect, your opponent gets a boost, representing the momentary distraction you suffer having to switch. Note that this may be considered dishonourable.
- Killing Stroke.** Once per scene, when you force an opponent to take a consequence, you can spend a fate point to increase the consequence's severity (so mild becomes moderate, moderate becomes severe). If your opponent was already going to take a severe consequence, he must either take a severe consequence *and* a second consequence or be taken out.

Fisticuffs

The Fisticuffs skill covers unarmed close-quarters combat (in other words, within the same zone).

Overcome: Since you don't really use Fisticuffs outside of a conflict, it's not often used to overcome obstacles. You might use it to demonstrate your knowledge of the Noble Art, to display your fighting prowess in a demonstration, or to participate in some kind of regulated bout or sport fighting, which would allow you to use this skill in a contest.

Create an Advantage: You'll probably use Fisticuffs for most of the advantages you create in a physical conflict. Any number of special moves can be covered with advantages: a targeted strike to stun, a "dirty move," and so on. You could even use Fisticuffs to assess another fighter's style, spotting weaknesses in his or her form that you can exploit.

Attack: This is self-explanatory. You make physical attacks with Fisticuffs. Remember, this is for close-in work, so you have to be in the same zone as your opponent

Defend: You use Fisticuffs to defend against any other attack or create an advantage attempt made with Fisticuffs or Fencing, as well as pretty much any action where violently interposing yourself could prevent it from happening.

Fight Stunts

- Heavy Hitter.** When you succeed with style on a Fisticuffs attack and choose to reduce the result by one to gain a boost, you gain a full situation aspect with a free invocation instead.

- Killing Blow.** Once per scene, when you force an opponent to take a consequence, you can spend a fate point to increase the consequence's severity (so mild becomes moderate, moderate becomes severe). If your opponent was already going to take a severe consequence, he must either take a severe consequence *and* a second consequence or be taken out.

Marksmanship

Marksmanship is the skill of using ranged weaponry, either in a conflict or on targets that don't actively resist your attempts to shoot them (like a bull's-eye or the broad side of a barn).

Overcome: Unless, for some reason, you need to demonstrate your Marksmanship ability in a non-conflict situation or your knowledge of firearms, you probably won't be using this skill for normal obstacles much.

Create an Advantage: In physical conflicts, Marksmanship can be used to perform a wide variety of moves, like trick shots, keeping someone under heavy fire, and the like. You might even be able to disarm people and pin their sleeves to walls—pretty much anything you've seen in an action movie. You could also make the argument for creating aspects based on your knowledge of guns (like placing a *Prone to Jams* aspect on an opponent's gun).

Attack: This skill makes physical attacks. You can make them from up to two zones away. (Sometimes the range will change with the weapon.)

Defend: Marksmanship is unique in that it doesn't really have a defense component to it—you'd use Athletics for that. You *could* use it to lay down some covering fire—which might act as a defense for your allies or provide opposition to someone else's movement—though it could just as easily be represented by creating an advantage (*Covering Fire* or *Hail of Bullets*, for example).

Marksmanship Stunts

- Called Shot.** During a Marksmanship attack, spend a fate point and declare a specific condition you want to inflict on a target, like *Shot in the Hand*. If you succeed, you place that as a situation aspect on them in addition to hitting them for stress.
- Quick on the Draw.** You can use Marksmanship instead of Perception to determine turn order in any physical conflict where shooting quickly would be useful.
- Uncanny Accuracy.** Once per conflict, stack an additional free invoke on an advantage you've created to represent the time you take to aim or line up a shot (like *In My Sights*).

Motoring/Helmsmanship

The Motoring skill is all about operating vehicles and things that go fast. If you want to use it for things that fly instead, call it Helmsmanship; it works pretty much the same but with airships.

Overcome: Motoring is the equivalent of Athletics when you're in a vehicle—you use it to successfully accomplish movement in the face of difficult circumstances, like rough terrain, small amounts of clearance, or stunt driving. Obviously, Motoring is also ripe for contests, especially chases and races.

Create an Advantage: You can use Motoring to determine the best way to get somewhere in a vehicle, and a good enough test result might allow you to learn features of the route that get expressed as aspects, or declare that you know a *Convenient Shortcut* or something similar.

You can also just read the Athletics description, and then make it about a vehicle. Advantages created using Motoring often revolve around getting good positioning, doing a fancy maneuver (*Did a Barrel Roll*, anyone?), or putting your opponent in a bad spot.

Attack: Motoring isn't usually used as an attack skill (though stunts can certainly alter this). If you want to ram a vehicle, you can attack with Motoring, but you take the same shifts of harm you inflict.

Defend: Avoiding damage to a vehicle in a physical conflict is one of the most common uses of Motoring. You can also use it to defend against advantages being created against you or overcome actions of someone trying to move past you in a vehicle.

Motoring Stunts

- Hard to Shake.** +2 to Motoring whenever you're pursuing another vehicle in a chase scene.
- Pedal to the Metal.** You can coax more speed out of your vehicle than seems possible. Whenever you're engaged in any contest where speed is the primary factor (such as a chase or race of some kind) and you tie with your Motoring test, it's considered a success.
- Ramming Speed!** When ramming another vehicle, you ignore two shifts of damage. So if you ram and hit for four shifts, you only take two yourself.

Perception

The Perception skill involves just that—noticing things, representing a character's overall perception, ability to pick out details at a glance, and other powers of observation.

Overcome: You don't really use Perception to overcome obstacles too often but when you do it's used in a reactive way: noticing something in a scene, hearing a faint sound, spotting the concealed gun in that guy's waistband.

Note that this isn't license for GMs to call for Perception tests left and right to see how generally observant the players' characters are; that's boring. Instead, call for Perception tests when succeeding would result in something interesting happening and failing would result in something just as interesting.

Create an Advantage: You use Perception to create aspects based on direct observation—looking over a room for details that stand out, finding an escape route in a debris-filled building, noticing someone sticking out in a crowd, etc. When you're watching people, Perception can tell you what's going on with them *externally*; for internal changes, see Empathy. You might also use Perception to declare that your character spots something you can use to your advantage in a situation, such as a convenient **Escape Route** when you're trying to get out of a building, or a **Subtle Weakness** in the enemy's line of defense. For example, if you're in a barroom brawl you could make a Perception test to say that you spot a puddle on the floor, right next to your opponent's feet that could cause him to slip.

Attack: Perception isn't really used for attacks.

Defend: You can use Perception to defend against any uses of Stealth to get the drop on you or ambush you, or to discover that you're being observed.

Perception Stunts

- Danger Sense.** You have an almost preternatural capacity for detecting danger. Your Perception skill works unimpeded by conditions like total concealment, darkness, or other sensory impairments in situations where someone or something intends to harm you.

- Body Language Reader.** You can use Perception in place of Social Graces to learn the aspects of a target through observation.

- Reactive Shot.** You can use Perception instead of Marksmanship to make quick, reactive shots that don't involve a lot of aiming. However, because you're having a knee-jerk reaction, you're not allowed to concretely identify your target before using this stunt. So, for example, you might be able to shoot at someone you see moving in the bushes with this stunt, but you won't be able to tell if it's friend or foe before you pull the trigger. Choose carefully!

Performance

Performance covers skill at singing, dancing, or acting creditably, playing an instrument, etc. One or more of your aspects should indicate what kind of performance you specialise in.

Overcome: You can use Performance to impress an audience with your mastery of your art.

Create an Advantage: You use Performance to create aspects based on your reputation, talent, skill, and training as a musical, athletic, or stage performer, from making an audience cry to securing an invitation to a fashionable event.

Attack: Performance isn't used for direct attacks.

Defend: You can't really use Performance to defend.

Performance Stunts

- **Making an Entrance.** +2 on Performance tests made to create an advantage whenever you're trying to attract a crowd's attention with your entrance.
- **My Many Admirers.** Whenever you meet someone new, you can spend a fate point to declare that you've met that person before, and use Performance instead of Charisma when interacting with them.
- **Talk the Talk.** You can use Performance in place of Connections whenever you're dealing specifically with other performers or with aficionados of your art.

Physician

Physician covers the ability to diagnose illness, administer medication, perform surgery (at higher levels of skill), deliver babies, and bandage wounds.

Overcome: You can use Physician to diagnose a medical condition, administer medication to recalcitrant patients, deliver babies, etc.

A use of particular interest to adventuring characters is the ability to provide medical assistance for physical consequences; the difficulty for this obstacle is based on the shift value of the consequence. Mild is Fair (+2), moderate is Great (+4), and severe is Extraordinary (+6). If you are trying to perform the recovery action on yourself, increase the difficulty by two steps on the ladder. Note that the circumstances have to be appropriately free of distraction and tension for you to make this test in the first place. If you succeed at the recovery action, you get to rename the consequence aspect to show that it's in recovery. So, for example, *Broken Leg* could become *Stuck in a Cast*, and so on. This doesn't free up the consequence slot, but it serves as an indicator that the target is recovering, and it changes the ways the aspect's going to be used while it remains.

Create an Advantage: You can use Physician to create an advantage by identifying a course of treatment, bandaging injuries, etc.

Attack: Physician can't be used for direct attacks.

Defend: You can use Physician as a defense action against uses of Fisticuffs to take the blow while avoiding harm to your most vulnerable points.

Physician Stunts

- **Medic.** Once per session you can reduce someone else's consequence by one level of severity (severe to moderate, moderate to mild, mild to nothing at all) by succeeding on any Physician test with a difficulty of Fair (+2) for a mild consequence, Good (+3) for moderate, or Great (+4) for severe. You need to attend to the person you're treating for at least half an hour in order for them to receive the benefits of this stunt, and you can't use it on yourself. (Normally, this test would only start the recovery process, instead of changing the consequence level.)
- **Forensic Medicine.** Your skill with Physician gives you a distinct insight into certain kinds of investigations. When appropriate, you may use your Physician skill instead of Perception or

Education, particularly when the subject involves medical evidence. If you would normally use Physician for such an effort anyway (such as performing an autopsy) then you receive a +2 bonus.

- **Medical Authority.** You're not only a doctor, you're at the forefront of medical science in action; your character is a respected authority in a specific field of surgical or therapeutic medicine (define in your aspects). You can use Physician in place of Connections whenever you're dealing with people who might have heard of your reputation.

Physique

The Physique skill is a counterpart to Athletics, representing the character's natural physical aptitudes, such as raw strength and endurance. We have this skill broken out as something separate in order to create two distinct types of physical characters—the nimble guy (represented by Athletics) and the strongman (represented by Physique).

Overcome: You can use Physique to overcome any obstacles that require the application of brute force—most often to overcome a situation aspect on a zone—or any other physical impedance, like prison bars or locked gates. Of course, Physique is the classic skill for arm-wrestling matches and other contests of applied strength, as well as marathons or other endurance-based challenges.

Create an Advantage: Physique has a lot of potential for advantages in physical conflict, usually related to grappling and holding someone in place, making them *Pinned* or *Locked Down*. You might also use it as a way of discovering physical impairments possessed by the target—grappling the old mercenary tells you that he has a *Bum Leg* or somesuch.

Attack: Physique is not used to harm people directly—see the Fisticuffs skill for that.

Defend: Though you don't generally use Physique to defend against attacks, you can use it to provide active opposition to someone else's movement, provided you're in a small enough space that you can effectively use your body to block access. You might also interpose something heavy and brace it to stop someone from getting through.

Special: The Physique skill gives you additional physical stress or consequence slots. Average (+1) or Fair (+2) gives you a 3-point stress box. Good (+3) or Great (+4) gives you a 3-point and a 4-point stress box. Exceptional (+5) and above give you an additional mild consequence slot along with the additional stress boxes. This slot can only be used for physical harm.

Physique Stunts

- **Grappler.** +2 to Physique tests made to create advantages on an enemy by wrestling or grappling with them.
- **Take the Blow.** You can use Physique to defend against attacks made with Fisticuffs or blunt instruments, though you always take 1 shift of stress on a tie.
- **Tough as Nails.** Once per session, at the cost of a fate point, you can reduce the severity of a moderate consequence that's physical in nature to a mild consequence (if your mild consequence slot is free), or erase a mild consequence altogether.

Social Graces

Social Graces involves knowing and being able to spot changes in a person's mood or bearing. It's basically the emotional Perception skill.

Overcome: You use Social Graces to fit into social situation, know what to do when confronted with an unfamiliar table setting, or an unexpected social encounter. In certain circumstances, you might use Social Graces like you would Perception, to see if you catch a change in someone's attitude or intent.

Create an Advantage: You can use Social Graces to read a person's emotional state and get a general sense of who they are, presuming you have some kind of interpersonal contact with them. Most often, you'll use this to assess the aspects on another character's sheet, but sometimes you'll also be able to create new aspects, especially on NPCs. If the target has some reason to be aware that you're trying to read them, they can defend with Social Graces or Charisma.

A use of particular interest to adventuring characters is the ability to provide assistance for mental consequences; the difficulty for this obstacle is based on the shift value of the consequence. Mild is Fair (+2), moderate is Great (+4), and severe is Extraordinary (+6). If you are trying to perform the recovery action on yourself, increase the difficulty by two steps on the ladder. Note that the circumstances have to be appropriately free of distraction and tension for you to make this test in the first place. If you succeed at the recovery action, you get to rename the consequence aspect to show that it's in recovery. So, for example, *Scandalized* could become *Damage Control*, and so on. This doesn't free up the consequence slot, but it serves as an indicator that the target is recovering, and it changes the ways the aspect's going to be used while it remains.

You can also use Social Graces to discover what circumstances will allow you to make mental attacks on someone, figuring out their breaking points. Finally, you can use Social Graces to create support and a favourable social environment.

Attack: Social Graces can't really be used for direct attacks.

Defend: This is the skill to go to in order to defend against Social Graces actions, allowing you to pierce through lies and see through to someone's true intent. You can also use it to defend against those creating social advantages against you in general.

Special: Social Graces is the main skill you use to help others recover from consequences that are mental in nature.

Social Graces Stunts

- Lie Whisperer.** +2 to all Social Graces tests made to, create, discern, or discover lies, whether they're directed at you or someone else.
- Nose for Trouble.** You can use Social Graces instead of Perception to determine your turn order in a conflict, provided you've gotten a chance to observe or speak to those involved for at least a few minutes beforehand during this scene.
- Psychologist.** Once per session you can reduce someone else's consequence by one level of severity (severe to moderate, moderate to mild, mild to nothing at all) by succeeding on any Social Graces test with a difficulty of Fair (+2) for a mild consequence, Good (+3) for moderate, or Great (+4) for severe. You need to talk with the person you're treating for at least half an hour in order for them to receive the benefits of this stunt, and you can't use it on yourself. (Normally, this test would only start the recovery process, instead of changing the consequence level.)

Stealth

The Stealth skill allows you to avoid detection, both when hiding in place and trying to move about unseen.

Overcome: You can use Stealth to get past any situation that primarily depends on you not being seen. Sneaking past sentries and security, hiding from a pursuer, avoiding leaving evidence as you pass through a place, and any other such uses all fall under the purview of Stealth.

Create an Advantage: You'll mainly use Stealth to create aspects on yourself, setting yourself in an ideal position for an attack or ambush in a conflict. That way, you can be **Well-Hidden** when the guards pass by and take advantage of that, or **Hard to Pin Down** if you're fighting in the dark.

Attack: Stealth isn't used to make attacks.

Defend: You can use this to foil Perception attempts to pinpoint you or seek you out, as well as to try to throw off the scent of an Investigate attempt from someone trying to track you.

Stealth Stunts

- Face in the Crowd.** +2 to any Stealth test to blend into a crowd. What a "crowd" means will depend on the environment—a subway station requires more people to be crowded than a small bar.

- Houdini Vanish.** Once per scene, you can vanish while in plain sight by spending a fate point, using a smoke pellet or other mysterious technique. This places the *Vanished* boost on you. While you're vanished, no one can attack or create an advantage on you until after they've succeeded at an overcome test with Notice to suss out where you went (basically meaning they have to give up an exchange to try). This aspect goes away as soon as you invoke it, or someone makes that overcome test.

- Slippery Target.** Provided you're in darkness or shadow, you can use Stealth to defend against Marksmanship attacks from enemies that are at least one zone away.

Tinkering

Tinkering is the skill of working with machinery, for good or ill.

Overcome: Tinkering allows you to build, break, or fix machinery, presuming you have the time and tools you need. Often, actions with Tinkering happen as one component of a more complex situation, making it a popular skill for challenges. For example, if you're just fixing a broken door, neither success nor failure is interesting; you should just succeed and move on. Now, if you're trying to get your car to start while a pack of werewolves is hunting you...

Create an Advantage: You can use Tinkering to create aspects representing features of a piece of machinery, pointing out useful features or strengths you can use to your advantage (*Armour-Plated*, *Rugged Construction*) or a vulnerability for you to exploit (*Flaw in the Cross-Beam*, *Hasty Work*).

Creating Tinkering advantages can also take the form of quick and dirty sabotage or jury-rigging on mechanical objects in the scene. For example, you might create a *Makeshift Pulley* to help you get to the platform above you, or throw something into the ballista that's firing on you to give it a *Jammed Pivoting Joint* and make it harder to hit you.

Attack: You probably won't use Tinkering to attack in a conflict, unless the conflict is specifically about using machinery, like with siege weaponry. GMs and players, talk over the likelihood of this happening in your game if you have someone who is really interested in taking this skill. Usually, weapons you craft are likely to be used with other skills to attack—a guy who makes a sword still needs Fencing to wield it well!

Defend: As with attacking, Tinkering doesn't defend, unless you're somehow using it as the skill to control a piece of machinery that you block with.

Tinkering Stunts

- **Always Making Useful Things.** You don't ever have to spend a fate point to declare that you have the proper tools for a particular job using Tinkering, even in extreme situations (like being imprisoned and separated from all your stuff). This source of opposition is just off the table.
- **Better than New!** Whenever you succeed with style on an overcome action to repair a piece of machinery, you can immediately give it a new situation aspect (with a free invoke) reflecting the improvements you've made, instead of just a boost.
- **Surgical Strikes.** When using Tinkering in a conflict involving machinery, you can filter out unwanted targets from whole-zone attacks without having to divide up your shifts (normally, you'd need to divide your test between your targets).

Arcane Skills

Ability	Overcome	Create an Advantage	Attack	Defend
Etherealness	x	x		x
Glamour	x	x		
Kindred Power	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies
Sorcery	x	x	x	x

Etherealness

Can only be taken by faerie characters. The Faerie power of malleability; the ability to turn to mists, pass through walls, and otherwise transcend material reality. It also covers the ability to actually take another shape, rather than using a glamour to appear in an other shape. When changing shape, you must return to your normal form in-between transformations.

Overcome: Use Etherealness to get through solid objects or turn to mist. Etherealness tests use the following difficulties (slightly changed from *Castle Falkenstein* p. 168):

	Difficulty	Material
+8	Legendary	Take any size or form, no matter what shape or size, indefinitely; become totally immaterial; fly at incredible speeds (if you have the power of flight); pass through anything but Cold Iron.
+7	Epic	Take any size or form, no matter what shape or size, for up to one year and one day; pass through steel walls slowly and with discomfort.
+6	Extraordinary	Take any size or form, no matter what shape or size, for up to one day; ooze slowly and painfully through steel walls.
+5	Exceptional	Take the form of any creature of your size indefinitely; pass through all but steel

	Difficulty	Material
		walls; become nearly immaterial.
+4	Great	Take the form of any creature your size up to one day; pass through stone or brick walls; become a thin mist; fly at bird speeds (if you have the power of flight).
+3	Good	Pass through wooden walls; turn into a thick fog; fly slowly (if you have the power of flight); shapechange to any form of similar size and shape for up to an hour.
+2	Fair	Reach through wooden walls but not pass; become liquid; float in the air.

Create an Advantage: When you're creating an advantage with Etherealness, it's probably based on movement, manoeuvre, or confusing or deluding the opposition.

Attack: You can't attack with Etherealness.

Defend: You can use Etherealness to Defend against physical attacks by becoming insubstantial.

Etherealness Stunts

- **Favoured Form** [-2]: When using Etherealness to change your shape, you can take one form you know particularly well as if your skill was two levels higher. For example, if your favoured form is that of a black wolf, you get +2 to your Overcome test to turn into that shape .
- **Protean** [-2]: You can change from one shape to another without need to return to your base shape in between.
- **Mist Form** [-2]: You get +2 when using Etherealness to Defend against physical attacks.

Glamour

Can only be taken by faerie characters. The Faerie power to create illusions, to bend the minds of mortals. These illusions affect sight and hearing, and even touch in the case of the more skilled faeries, but not smell or taste. [Note: The description of Glamour effects provided in *Comme Il Faut* pp. 98-99 is somewhat more useful than the one in the main rule book.]

Overcome: Use Glamour with Overcome actions to disguise the appearance of a person or scene.

Create an Advantage: Glamour is very flexible and can be used to create a variety of advantages based on misdirection and misinformation.

Attack: You can't attack with Glamour.

Defend: You can't defend with Glamour.

Glamour Stunts

- **Miniature Artist** [-2]: When using Glamour to create something small, no more than a few inches to a

few feet across, you get +2 to your Overcome test to convince viewers of its reality.

Kindred Power

Must be taken by faerie characters. Kindred Powers and their effects vary by Faerie type; see specific Faerie types for descriptions. Stunts can be created at the Host's discretion, typically at a cost of 2 Refresh point each.

Sorcery

Can only be taken by human and dragon characters.

Overcome: The Sorcery skill is primarily used with Overcome actions to cast spells and rituals.

Create an Advantage: The Sorcery skill can be used in place of Education to Create an Advantage by researching a spell prior to casting. Can also be used in situations where arcane knowledge would allow you create aspects based on your status, knowledge, reputation, talent, skill, or training as a practitioner of the Sorcerous Arts.

Attack: Sorcery can't be used to attack directly, except through spells.

Defend: Sorcery can't be used to defend directly, except through spells.

Sorcery Stunts

- **Affinity with [Type] Magic [-1]:** +1 to Sorcery when casting spells of this type. Pick one type: Mental & Emotional (Hearts / Cups), Spiritual and Dimensional (Spades / Swords), Material (Diamonds / Coins), or Elemental (Clubs / Staves). Can only be taken for one type.
- **Speciality with [Category] Magic [-1]:** +2 to Sorcery when casting spells of this category. The category must be sufficiently narrow, such as a single element (air, earth, fire, or water), love spells, spells affecting plants, etc. Can only be taken for one speciality.
- **Forensic Sorcerer [-1]:** Your skill with Forensic Sorcery gives you a distinct insight into certain kinds of investigations. When appropriate, you may use your Sorcery skill instead of Perception or Education, particularly when the subject involves trace evidence. If you would normally use Sorcery for such an effort anyway (such as investigating residual Thaumic resonance at a crime scene) then you receive a +2 bonus.
- **Healer [-1]:** You can use Sorcery instead of Physician to provide medical assistance for physical consequences; the difficulty for this obstacle is based on the shift value of the consequence. Mild is Fair (+2), moderate is Great (+4), and severe is Extraordinary (+6). If you are trying to perform the recovery action on yourself, increase the difficulty by two steps on the ladder.

Character “Races”/Species: Templates

Humans

Pure Mortals

Pure mortals are ordinary (or mundanely extraordinary!) people who don't have anything supernatural going on—save perhaps for the company they keep or the things they've seen.

Sorcerers

Musts:

- Only humans and dragons can learn sorcery.
- A sorcerer must have a high concept that indicates his arcane pursuit, e.g., Scotland Yard Forensic Sorcerer, Initiate of the London Freemason Lodge, Journeyman of the Order of the Golden Mean.
- One of the character's aspects must indicate affiliation to a Sorcerous Order; this may be the high concept or another aspect.
- The character must take the arcane skill Sorcery.

Options:

- **Lorebook** [-1]. Allows access to all the rituals contained in the Lorebook (see *Castle Falkenstein* pp. 199-203 and *The Book of Sigils*). This can be taken multiple times for each of the Lorebooks available to the Order, as long as the Sorcerer is in good with their Order. Additional Lorebooks may become available in play without costing Refresh.

Final Refresh Cost: -1 per Lorebook.

Important Skills: Sorcery, Education, Courage.

Dwarfs

Quiet and somber, Dwarfs have traded Faerie power for the ability to work metal in their underground citadels. Note: I'm dumping the requirement to have only male Dwarf characters.

Musts:

- The high aspect must reflect the character's nature.
- Dwarfs normally have one name, and must earn a new one related to their skills. Players must always begin with Nameless characters.

Package:

- **Immune to Fire** [-1]. Allows the Dwarf character to ignore 2 points of harm from fire. Optional: Can be taken up to three times.

- **Resistant to Magick** [-1]. Magick effects are always at -2, even if the Dwarf character is a willing subject.
- **Love of Metal** [-1]. Dwarves get a +2 Tinkering bonus when working with metal.
- **Night Vision** [-1]. No penalty for seeing in darkness.
- **Obsession with the Masterwork** [+1]. Once per session, the Host can compel for free the aspect *Obsessed with the Masterwork* that characterizes the Dwarf character.
- **Laconic** [+1]. Dwarfs suffer a penalty of -1 in Social Graces and in making first impressions.

Final Refresh Cost: -2 (more if Immunity to Fire was taken multiple times.)

Important Skills: Tinkering, Physique, Fisticuffs.

Dragons

Musts:

- The high aspect must reflect the character's nature.
- The character must take the arcane skill Sorcery.

Package:

- **Human Form** [-1]. You can take human form at will but are unable to fly or use firecasting in this guise.
- **Flight** [-2]. In dragon form, your wings can carry you aloft as an Overcome action using Physique (for distance) ou Athletics (for aerial manoeuvring).
- **Firecasting** [-2]. In dragon form, you can spew jets of flames as an attack using Marksmanship to hit and Physique to determine the harm inflicted.
- **Large** (-1). In dragon form, you are enormous; you gain the following benefits: +2 Physical Stress boxes, +2 to Physique to carry a load, +2 to intimidate targets using a Create an Advantage action.
- **Immortal** [0]. Your years are long compared to humans' but you can still be harmed and killed.
- **Feared** [+1]. Even in human form, others feel your might. -1 to make friends or allies using any skill but Charisma.

Final Refresh Cost: -5

Important Skills: Marksmanship, Physique, Sorcery.

Faeries

Brownies

A Brownie's life is spent doing great labours, playing great jokes. and setting things right about the house or farm. In thanks, mortals leave a bit of cheese and a bowl of milk before going to bed.

Musts:

- The high aspect must reflect the character's nature.
- The character must take the arcane skill Kindred Power.

Options:

- The character may take the arcane skills Glamour and Etherealness.

Package:

- **Small** [-1]. +2 to Stealth for hiding, +2 to Perception to spot tiny details.
- **Perform A Great Work** [-2]. Between sundown and sunup and as long as no one is watching you work, you can accomplish the labour of many mortals, based your rating: PR=2, AV=5, FR=7, GD=10, GR=20, EXC=30, EXT=40.
- **Elf Shot** [-2]. With your slingshot, you can shoot projectiles that bury themselves deeply in the target and cause sharp sudden pain like rheumatism; unlike ordinary bullets and projectiles, they can only be removed by Faerie or Sorcerous healing. Physical harm caused by elfshot can only be absorbed through consequences, not stress boxes.
- **Pierce the Faerie Veil** [-1]. You can locate Gates that lead through the Faerie Veil, and even take mortals with you.
- **Faerie Geas** [+1]. Repulsed by gifts and clothes worn inside out. Cost of 2 fate points to refuse a compel on this aspect.
- **Vulnerability to Iron** [+2]. +1 harm from steel, +2 harm from iron, +4 harm from cold iron.

Final Refresh Cost: -3**Important Skills:** Marksmanship, Perception, Stealth.***Pixies***

These tiny fae sleep in a rosebud with a petal for a blanket, and are deeply interested in mortals' affairs of the heart.

Musts:

- The high aspect must reflect the character's nature.
- The character must take the arcane skill Kindred Power.

Options:

- The character may take the arcane skills Glamour and Etherealness.

Package:

- **Very Small** [-2]. +4 to Stealth for hiding, +4 to Perception to spot tiny details.
- **Flight** [-2]. Your butterfly-like wings can carry you aloft as an Overcome action using Physique (for

distance) ou Athletics (for aerial manoeuvring). Speed is based on Etherealness.

- **Love Charm** [-1]. Cost of one fate point to create the aspect “*In Love*” on a target, using the skill Kindred Power. The affected target need not do anything contrary to their nature (for example, but unfaithful to a spouse), but they do feel emotional inclination for for the first person they see after being hit by the Love Charm. Player characters can choose to resist using Courage versus the pixie's Kindred Power. The fate point is only spent if the Love Charm is successful, and goes to whoever controls the target character: a player for PCs, the GM for NPCs. The charm lasts until the pixie dispels it or until it is magically removed.
- **Pierce the Faerie Veil** [-1]. You can locate Gates that lead through the Faerie Veil, and even take mortals with you.
- **Faerie Geas** [+1]. Repulsed by iron, holy symbols and prayer. Cost of 2 fate points to refuse a compel on this aspect.
- **Vulnerability to Iron** [+2]. +1 harm from steel, +2 harm from iron, +4 harm from cold iron.

Final Refresh Cost: -3

Important Skills: Stealth, Glamour, Etherealness.

Daoine Sidhe (Faerie Lords/Ladies)

Musts:

- The high aspect must reflect the character's nature.
- The character must take the arcane skill Kindred Power.

Options:

- The character may take the arcane skills Glamour and Etherealness.

Package:

- **Enchantment** [-2]. For one fate point and a successful Overcome action using Charisma, the Daoine Sidhe can bend the will of a mortal to his or her will for one scene, charming and enchanting them, or making them fall in love. The target will not put their own life in danger but will otherwise do anything they can to please the Faerie Lord. Player characters can choose to resist using Courage versus the Daoine Sidhe's Kindred Power. The fate point is only spent if the Enchantment is successful, and goes to whoever controls the target character: a player for PCs, the GM for NPCs.
- **Faerie Beauty** [-1]. Gain +1 to Social Graces with all actions versus those who are normally affected by the Fae's charm.
- **Faerie Grace** [-1]. Gain +1 to all actions where physical grace matters, such as balance, dancing, etc.
- **High Faerie** [-1]. Gain +2 to all social actions when against Lesser Faerie characters, and +1 versus Greater Faeries.

- **Pierce the Faerie Veil** [-1]. You can locate Gates that lead through the Faerie Veil, and even take mortals with you.
- **Immortal** [0]. Your years are long compared to humans' but you can still be harmed and killed.
- **Faerie Geas** [+1]. Repulsed by iron objects, holy symbols, prayers, and marriage prohibition such as seeing a bride in her furthershift, etc..
- **Vulnerability to Iron** [+2]. +1 harm from steel, +2 harm from iron, +4 harm from cold iron.

Final Refresh Cost: -3

Important Skills: Connections, Glamour, Perception.

Playing *Fate of Falkenstein*

Use the *Castle Falkenstein* difficulties and skills with the *Fate Core* resolution mechanics, except as noted below.

Deck of Fate: Actions are resolved by adding a card from the Deck of Fate, which the Host deals from the deck. All cards are returned to the Host and shuffled into the deck immediately upon use (otherwise the probabilities are no longer those on which *Fate Core* is built.)

Determining Initiative: In a physical conflict, rank characters by Perception. If tied, then use Athletics, then Physique. In a mental conflict, rank characters by Social Graces. If tied, then use Charisma, then Courage. **For dramatic conflicts**, we recommend making a **skill test**; ordinary conflict can use static turn order.

Equipment, Weapons, and Armour

Basic gear in *Fate of Falkenstein* is implied by your hero's skills and aspects: having the Marksmanship skill makes it reasonable that you'd own some firearms, and having the *Dashing Hussar* aspect implies that you have a sabre and a pistol.

Sometimes you want something that is more influential on the story. Key equipment can be represented by character aspects of their own, such as *My Father's Sword*. Or perhaps you want to indicate your character's preparedness: **I Always Bring a Backup Weapon**. It doesn't have to be just about weapons either: maybe your hero the Calculating Engineer places great stock in **My Well-Thumbled Copy of Lady Ada's Theorems and Practices of Calculation**, or your Secret Agent may have *Well-Disguised Gadgets*.

Regardless of whether they are character aspects or equipment picked up in a sop or from an incapacitated opponent, and therefore gear or scene aspects, items that have story power can be invoked and compelled. Character aspects always return to you in one form or another (even if it's after being temporarily lost, or a replacement for something destroyed in play); while gear (or scene) aspects can be taken away permanently as a compel whenever it's dramatically appropriate.

Weapons

Although *Castle Falkenstein* has different wound ratings for various weapons and types of physical harm, the range of values represented does not square well with the *Fate Core* stress tracks and consequences. Instead, we use an adaptation of the *Fate System Toolkit*'s "[Armor and Weapon Aspects](#)" section:

Weapons are divided into harm categories (see table below). When you successfully attack with a weapon, you may make a **special invocation** with it. It costs a fate point as usual, but provides neither a +2 nor a reroll. Instead, you can **force your opponent to take a consequence** instead of stress (again, see the table). If you succeed with style, move the consequence up by one level of severity—minor to moderate, moderate to severe, severe to either taken out or an extreme consequence (defender's choice). If the appropriate consequence slot is already in use, move the new consequence up by one level of severity.

This special invocation also acts a little bit like a compel. When you invoke a weapon aspect in this way, you

offer the fate point to your target. If he takes the fate point, you deal the consequence. He can *refuse* the fate point and pay you one of his own to not take the consequence, but then he takes the stress he would have taken normally anyway. I like this because it makes the difference between weapon types one of dramatic quality, not numbers.

Harm Rank	Typical Attacks	Special Invocation
A	Small hatpins, needles, darts, stumbles, most animal bites, blows, clubs, life preservers.	None
B	Daggers, large hatpins, knives, bayonets, arrows, falls>10 ft, large bites, EXC/EXT blows, trampled.	For one fate point, force your opponent to take a mild consequence instead of stress.
C	Small swords, small pistols, large arrows, fire, acid, electric shock, falls>20 ft, being hit by automotive.	For one fate point, force your opponent to take a moderate consequence instead of stress.
D	Heavy swords, sabres, light rifles, heavy pistols, spears, PR/AV Dragon breath, very large bites, reciprocators, falls>35 ft, crash damage.	For one fate point, force your opponent to take a severe consequence instead of stress.
E	Heavy rifles, shotguns, GD/GR Dragon breath, falls>50 ft	For one fate point, force your opponent to be taken out or take an extreme consequence instead of stress (their choice).
F	Artillery, shrapnel, bombs, being crushed, falls>100 ft, EXC/EXT Dragon breath.	Force your opponent to be taken out or take an extreme consequence instead of stress (their choice) without needing to spend a fate point.

The harm ranks in this table are those used in *Comme Il Faut*, pp. 78-81, matched to the aspect-based option from the *Fate System Toolkit*.

Armour

Armour works in a similar way. However, there is little in terms of functional armour in New Europa, as described in *Castle Falkenstein* p. 187. *Comme Il Faut* expands choices a little so we'll use this for our table:

Harm Rank	Typical Armour	Special Invocation
Light	Leather, wood, small Dragon's scales	For one fate point, absorb a single mild consequence; you don't take the stress it would have absorbed, and you don't fill the consequence slot.

KEY: P=Pushed Back, S=# stress points, MI=Mild Consequence, MO=Moderate Consequence, SE=Severe Consequence, EX=Extreme Consequence or Taken Out (Defender's choice)

Stress is physical for Fencing or Fisticuffs duels, and mental for Sorcery duels, etc.

Option 2: Fate Core-Style

This option is based on the [“Swashbuckling Duels”](#) extra described in the *Fate System Toolkit*, pp. 168-169, and require players to rely on skills other than Fencing (or Fisticuffs, etc.) in a conflict, with colorful results.

These one-on-one dueling rules introduce something called the **upper hand**. Only the duelist with the upper hand can actually use a skill with the attack action to inflict harm. The other duelist can take any *other* action, but cannot attack—until *they* get the upper hand, of course.

How does one get the upper hand? By succeeding with style with a skill *other* than the one that deals harm in duel-style physical conflicts (e.g., Fencing, Fisticuffs, or Marksmanship duels.) As soon as one combatant succeeds with style with one of these other skills, they get the upper hand. This *replaces* the action's usual reward for succeeding with style, such as getting a boost or an extra free invocation. You get either the upper hand *or* the usual reward, but not both.

Use a token of some kind to represent the upper hand. Whatever it is, it should be something that can easily be handed back and forth, like a coin, a little plastic cocktail sword, an index card with a hand drawn on it, a fencing glove—whatever works for your group.

At the beginning of a physical conflict between two (and only two) participants, determine the turn order, as usual. If this involves a skill test—and it probably should, duels are pretty dramatic—and one of the two succeeds with style, they start the conflict with the upper hand—they got the jump on the opponent.

After that, the combatants can do any of the following every turn:

- Attack with the duelling skill, if they have the upper hand
- Try to get the upper hand, if they don't, by succeeding with style on another skill
- Do something else—put down situation aspects, try to escape the conflict, etc.

This option works well in with the use of weapon aspects or when the opponents have already taken some stress; otherwise, it can stretch on for too long.

Other Skills: These duelling rules can be used for mental conflicts using Sorcery or Social Graces; or for vehicle conflicts such as Motoring duels using automobiles, Helmsmanship duels using aircrafts, etc. Vehicles' stress tracks take the damage in vehicle duels.

Arranging Formal Duels: In formal duels when one party demands satisfaction from an offender, each party names a trusted representative (a "second") who will between them, determine a suitable "field of honour". Naturally, player characters' seconds should be some of the other PCs. It is also the duty of the seconds to check that the weapons are equal and that the duel was fair, and to agree on the conditions under which the duel will conclude. Conditions can include single shot (when using pistols), first blood (first minor consequence), until one is incapacitated (conceding), to the death, or anything the opponents' seconds will

work out among themselves and the duellists will agree to.

Example

It's Ludwig II's Coronation Ball and Countess Marianne Thérèse de Désirée is facing off with her old enemy, Count von Erich. The Count was a supporter of the Regent and is taking the coronation—and Marianne's part in helping the King secure his crown—rather poorly. He insults her honour and Marianne is quite capable of defending it herself. He scoffs that she is unarmed and wearing a ballgown when she demands reparation, while he is in full uniform; but Marianne turns to her friend Tom Olam and borrows his sword. Drawing the blade with a flourish, she gives von Erich a mock curtsey. He answers with a toothy grin and draws his own sabre, as the guests clear the space around the duellists. It's time for deeds to replace words.

Marianne, Comtesse de Désirée (Note: Not a starting character)

Aspects: *Accomplished French Adventuress, Countess on the Lam, Distractingly Beautiful, Bag of Tricks*

Skills: Excellent [+5] Fencing, Marksmanship; Great [+4] Charisma, Fisticuffs; Good [+3] Courage, Perception, Physique, Social Graces; Average [+1] Athletics, Stealth.

Stress: Physical = 4 boxes, mental = 4 boxes

3 fate points

Count von Erich (Note: Not a starting character)

Aspects: *Dashing Hussar, Scheming Bastard, A Squad of Men at a Snap of My Fingers, It's Not Worth My Life*

Skills: Excellent [+5] Marksmanship; Great [+4] Athletics, Fencing, Fisticuffs, Physique; Good [+3] Perception, Charisma; Average [+1] Courage, Social Graces, Stealth.

Stress: Physical = 4 boxes, mental = 3 boxes

3 fate points

It's a dramatic combat if there ever was one, so they each draw a card from the Deck of Fate to determine turn order. Both have Good [+3] Perception; Marianne draws +1 for a total of +4, and von Erich gets +2 for a total of +5, a normal success. No one has the upper hand yet.

Turn 1: Von Erich decides to manoeuvre to back Marianne in a corner using his Great [+4] Athletics, and draws a +0 for a total of +4. Marianne draws a +4 for a total of +5, deftly avoiding the trap. But she dislikes the way the clutter of the ballroom and her swishing dress restrict her mobility; she decides to create an advantage by improving the situation—she raises her borrowed sword and hacks off the hem of her gorgeous House of Worth gown with one fluid slice! She's using her Excellent [+5] Fencing against a Good [+3] difficulty—it's tricky to do in one swing—and draws a -1 for a total of +1, a normal

success; she create **Now I Can Move Around!** and will have one free invocation.

Turn 2: Von Erich decides a little psychological advantage wouldn't hurt; he will try to create an advantage by displaying his superior Physique. He takes a step towards Marianne, his eyes fixed on her; without even a side glance, he slices a chair in half with a blow of his heavy sabre, letting the sound of the impact do the talking. His Great [+4] Physique and a draw of -2 versus a Mediocre [+0] difficulty give him a simple success, but he really wants that upper hand before Marianne seizes it so he throws in a fate point and **Dashing Hussar** to generate a +2 for a success with style. The chair makes a satisfying *crack!* as it turns to splinter, underlying the brutal strength behind the blow. Von Erich creates the aspect **Much Bigger Than You** with one free invocation, and chooses to gain the upper hand instead of taking the extra free invocation.

Marianne jumps back and narrows her eyes; this will not do. She hops onto a table, ostensibly to get to a better fighting position, but really to display her shapely legs; she wants to create an advantage using her Great [+4] Charisma. She draws a -1, while von Erich defends with his Average [+1] Social Graces and a +1, so Marianne gets another simple success and generates **Damn, Those Are Fine Legs** with one free invocation, but does not gain the upper hand.

Turn 3: Von Erich attacks! He delivers a blow of his Sabre using his Great [+5] Fencing and draws a +3; in ungentlemanly fashion, he chooses to add his free invocation of **Much Bigger Than You** for a total of +10. Ouch! Marianne chooses to use Full Defense (see *Fate Core*, p. 159), foregoing her action to get a +2 to defense. She has Excellent [+5] Fencing, +2 for the full defense, and draws... a -4. She uses a fate point to draw again, getting -1, still bad—a total of +6. She adds her free invocation of **Now I Can Move Around!** and uses a fate point to invoke von Erich's own **Much Bigger Than You** aspect as she rolls off the table and under it where von Erich will have a slightly harder time reaching her. That makes the attack a tie; von Erich is left with a boost against Marianne, **On the Defensive**.

Turn 4: Von Erich presses his advantage while he still has the upper hand, attacking again with a +0 and his boost for a total of +6. Marianne decides to risk a normal defense, draws a +1 for a total of +6. That's a tie, which will give von Erich another boost on her, **Poor Footing**. Marianne really wants to turn the tables, so to speak, so she pops up on the far side of the table and reaches over with the point of her sword to slice off a string of crystals from the chandelier right above von Erich's head. Excellent [+5] Fencing and a +1 card over a difficulty of Average [+1] give her that coveted success with style! She creates the advantage **Tangled in the Chandelier** on von Erich with one free invocation, and foregoes the second free invocation to gain the upper hand.

Turn 4: Von Erich must regain the upper hand! He uses his Great [+4] Athletics to vault over the table and corner Marianne, drawing a -1 versus a difficulty of +1. He generates the aspect **Closing In** with one free invocation, but no upper hand. Marianne, instead of moving away, decides to risk everything: she moves to close in as well! She draws a +2, adds her free invocation of **Tangled in the Chandelier**, and for a fate point invokes her aspect **Bag of Tricks**, for a total of +11. Von Erich defends with Great [+4] Fencing, draws a +1, add his free invocation of **Poor Footing** and **Closing In**, and for a fate point invokes **Much Bigger Than You** to generate a tie. Marianne gets a boost on von Erich, **Touché**.

Turn 5: Since they are so close, von Erich wants to use his Great [+4] Physique to create an advantage by pushing Marianne off balance, with a draw of -1; but with her Excellent [+5] Fencing and a -1, she uses her footwork to step away. Marianne strikes for the heart with Excellent [+5] Fencing, a +2 card, and the *Touché* boost for +9.

Von Erich defends with Great [+4] Fencing, and realises that he can't possibly draw well enough to counter this; even with a good draw of +1 or +2, he's facing a success with style from Marianne.

Von Erich would then have a choice: he might be able to spend his last fate point to invoke *Dashing Hussar* and reduce the attack to a normal success, but Marianne could still spend a fate point to offer a severe consequence thanks to the harm rank of D on her heavy sword, and he would have no fate point left to refuse with. Or he could take the blow, in which case on a success with style Marianne can spend a fate point to force him to be taken out or take an extreme consequence.

One of von Erich's aspects is *It's Not Worth My Life*; he decides to remember this and concede the fight rather than draw a card. He drops his sabre with a snarl of impotent rage, and Marianne stays her hand at the last possible instant.

Sorcery

Sorcery in *Castle Falkenstein* is a learned skill, also it also requires talent. Any sorcerer can attempt to cast any spell they have access to from Lorebooks. The sorcerer studies the spell, then starts gathering power (thaumic energy) from the site; some sites are more favourable than others. Each spell is of a particular type or “aspect”: Emotional/Mental ♥, Spiritual/(Inter-)Dimensional ♠, Material ♦, or Elemental ♣. Using thaumic power of a different flavour causes harmonics, unwanted side effects.

The sorcerer can opt to release the thaumic power already gathered rather than cast the spell. In theory, anyone can cast any spell if they have the training, the Lorebook, and access to the thaumic energy; the limitations on casting come from time because of the thaumic energy requirements, and from harmonics.

We're going to use the Fate Fractal to model this. Spells have aspects, including the CF “aspect” or type, and the Lorebook they belong to. They have a “skill” associated with their base thaumic cost, which represent their difficulty level; they have a stress track which represent the calculated thaumic energy requirement, which represent how much power needs to be gathered to cast them. Harmonics represent consequences taken by the Sorcerer in order to cast.

Finally, in *Fate Core* terms (as described in the *Fate System Toolkit*, page 143), the CF spells have fiat effects, so we're not going to spend too much time drawing up lists of specific bonuses.

I'd like to use the *Castle Falkenstein* information as much as possible to limit conversion complications. We'll use the values given in the supplement *Comme Il Faut*, as it provided some corrections to errors in the main rule book. As a first approach, we'll use half the value of the base thaumic requirements as our spell's skill or difficulty.

Harmonics: The Deck of Fate cards' moon and sun symbols indicate which type of thaumic energy is in play. One sun = Material; one moon = Spiritual/Dimensional; multiple suns = Elemental; multiple moons = Emotional/Mental; one sun, one moon = as deemed appropriate to the fiction by the Host; eclipse = wild spell. Effects of harmonics and wild spells are per *Castle Falkenstein*, pp. 203-204.

The dominant energy type in the Harmonics is determined based on which unaligned type showed most frequently in the cards drawn when the spell is cast, based on the final total.

With a Twist? But I want to make it even more interesting, and I have the lovely Deck of Fate in hand... I can shuffle all the arcana from both the Core and Accelerated versions, and draw one at random to give specific flavour to the harmonics.

This full-scale spellcasting is to be used when the spellcasting is dramatically important, not when it's a matter of drudgery. If the spellcasting is not a dramatic moment but just a means to an end, the Host and player can resolve it as a simple Overcome action.

Example

Let's work through an example, with Sister Althea von Katz, a Good [+3] Templar Sorceress casting a flight spell on herself:

Spell Name: **Knowledge of Flight**

Aspects: **Material; Osman's Tome of Physical Movement.**

Difficulty: +4 (half of the base thaumic energy requirement of 8).

Thaumic energy requirement, based on spell definitions: base of 8, duration: 1 day (4), involves one element (1), range: self (1), involves one person (1), subject is human (1), subject is self (1), spell does not do damage (0); minus the Sorcerer's skill (3), for a total requirement of 14. When I turn this into stress boxes, it will become five boxes of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 each.

First, Sister Althea studies the ritual; she creates an advantage using the Education skill, which she also has at Good [+3]. The spell is not particularly obscure so the difficulty is Average [+1]. She draws a -1 for a total +2, a simple success. She will get one free invocation of the aspect **Well-Researched Spell**.

Next, she starts drawing thaumic energy from the site. Let's assume it's a reasonable location but not particularly attuned to any type of thaumic energy. Each round, the Host draws a card from the Deck of Fate for Althea's casting, jots down its value and the moon (C) and sun (O) symbols, then shuffles the card back in the deck so as not to alter the probabilities on each draw. There is no active resistance in this location, so we'll just compare Althea's result to the spell's difficulty value to determine whether she draws thaumic energy point (on a success) or "pays" by taking stress mental herself (on a failure).

- **Turn 1:** Althea draws -1, O (Material)—properly aligned, for a total of +2 versus the spell's defense of +4, so she fails to draw any thaumic power, and takes a 2-point hit. Bad start, and Althea checks her #2 stress box (she has Great [+4] Courage so she has a total of 4 boxes).
- **Turn 2:** Althea draws a +1, C (Spiritual/Dimensional), for a total of +4. It's a tie, she will get a boost next round; let's call it *Feeling the Energy Flow*.
- **Turn 3:** Althea draws a +0, O (Material)—properly aligned, for a total of +1 with the boost so she marks the first stress box for the spell.
- **Turn 4:** Althea draws +2, C C O (Emotional/Mental), for a total of +1 again. The spell's #2 stress box gets checked.
- **Turn 5:** Althea draws +2, C O O (Elemental), another total of +1. The spell's #3 box is checked off, things are looking good for Althea.
- **Turn 6:** Althea draws -3, O O O (Elemental): a very bad result. She decides to use a fate point and her aspect *Initiate of the Order of the Temple of Jerusalem* to draw again (she could use her free invocation of *Well-Researched Spell*, but she thinks she's may need to stack it later), and gets +3, C C O (Emotional/Mental) instead, a well-spent invocation. Her total is now +2, forcing checkbox #4 to be checked off.
- **Turn 7:** Althea draws a -1, O (Material)—properly aligned, for a total of +2 versus the spell's +4, so she takes another 2-point hit. She can cross off her #3 box or she can decide to take a 2-point consequence which must be *Harmonics*. She doesn't like the idea of side-effects when flying—the ground is a little too far!—so she decides to take the stress.
- **Turn 8:** Althea draws a -1, C (Spiritual/Dimensional) again. She can check her #4 box or risks the harmonics; she decides to be daring and check box #4. She only has her #1 stress box left, now, and Harmonics...
- **Turn 9:** Althea draws +0, O (Material)—properly aligned, for a total of +3 and one point of stress. She decides to spend a fate point and invoke her aspect *Stubborn as a Mule* to turn this into a total of +5, which would beat the spell's defense and cause its #1 box to be checked off. The Host grins and consider adding a fate point to the spell's side, but there's really no reason in the fiction to justify it and forcing Althea to accept harmonics is not that interesting for the story. So it comes down now to Althea with a 1-point mental stress box and the spell with one #5 thaumic cost box.
- **Turn 10:** Ow! Another -1, C (Spiritual/Dimensional) for Althea, which means 2 points of stress when she only has her 1-pt box left open. She coughs up another fate point to invoke *Initiate of the Order of the Temple of Jerusalem* again and stacks her free invocation of *Well-Researched Spell* to bring her total to +6 versus the spell's +4, finally checking off that #5 box.

That was ten turns and 3 fate points, steep but now Althea can fly all day at bird speed. What if she had decided to take the *Harmonics* consequence instead? Let's look at the cards' sun and moon values:

Sister Althea drew a total of 4 cards properly aligned with Material energy, 3 aligned with Spiritual/Dimensional, 2 with Emotional/Mental, and 2 with Elemental. The most frequent unaligned type of thaumic energy is Spiritual/Dimensional, so this would dominate in the harmonics.

As a result, Sister Althea's flight could be accompanied by ghosts, or other-worldly nefarious entities; or she could move through a door to another dimension (as in CF, p. 204.) I draw from the arcana deck and I get "Sneaky." I'm thinking—hey, a Templar, some spiritual harmonics, and the Sneaky arcana... A minor demon latches onto Sister Althea and will follow her around in her flight, spying on her.

Mad Science, Gadgets, and Anachrotech

Castle Falkenstein pp. 190-191 and 208-215 covered engines of war, gadgets, anachrotech, inventions, mad science, Engine Magick, and vehicles. In addition, the supplements *Steam Age* and *The Lost Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci* expanded considerably on this. These rules are actually quite simple and can be used without much change; however, they are not very "realistic." Do we care? That depends on the group.

Simple Gadgets

If you want simple plug-and-play gadgets that have limited use in the story and are just the means to an end, you can get them off the rack, or just about, by using the rules from *Castle Falkenstein* p. 209: pick a common gadget container from the left-hand column, and pick one or more off-the-rack gadgets from the right-hand column to fill the available spaces; pay the required price.

If you want to be fancy about it—usually when a player character is making the gadget—have the maker test Tinkering to overcome a Fair [+2] difficulty; rushing the work raises the difficulty to Good [+1]. Succeeding at a cost means the gadget will have a special flaw. Succeeding with style means the gadget will have the aspect ***Fine Workmanship***.

Example

Doña Ana is planning to visit the nefarious Count Vassili but suspects he will try to hold her prisoner. She goes into a specialized gadget shop, selects a brooch, and asks to have a lockpick set inserted in the secret compartment. The cost is 3c for the brooch, 2c for the lockpick set, and another 1c (20%) for the workmanship for a total of 6c, and will take a day to complete. Doña Ana is rather in a hurry since her train leaves tonight, so she pays a surcharge of 50% (3c) to have it made in half the time; she pays 9c (an Exchequer test) and the work will be done in half a day. Since this is a shop, the Host simply declares that the item will be of normal quality. Doña Ana now feels ready to visit Count Vassili in his lair...

Personal Gadgets

Items that are particularly useful, recurring, or important to the story, like personal gadgets and inventions,

can be upgraded to **personal gadgets**, handled like in the *Fate System Toolkit* "[Gadgets and Gear](#)" pp. 154-155:

Equipment in *Fate Core* can be as simple as an aspect, like *Magnetic Grapnel Gun*, or a stunt, like "**Magnetic Grapnel Gun**: +2 to overcome with Athletics by climbing or swinging when there's a metal anchor around." But for a little more depth, you can combine those into a single extra as a **personal gadget**.

Functions and Flaws

Personal gadgets come with two aspects for free—a **function aspect** and a **flaw aspect**. The function tells you the gadget's purpose, and the flaw tells you what's wrong with it. You can think of its function as its high concept and its flaw as its trouble or a consequence that never goes away. These do not take up any of your character's personal aspects; they are gear aspects.

Example

Magnetic Grapnel Gun

Function: High-Powered Electromagnetic Swingline

Flaw: Still Working Out the Kinks

Stunts

Give the gadget one or more stunts to reflect the reliable mechanical advantages it confers on its user. These stunts cost one refresh apiece.

Example

Magnetic Grapnel Gun

Aspects

Function: *High-Powered Electromagnetic Swingline*

Flaw: *Still Working Out the Kinks*

Stunts

CLANG! Spend a fate point to secure the magnetic grapnel to a metallic object in a dramatic way, grabbing a swiftly moving vehicle, a falling pulse rifle, or the wall on the other side of a yawning chasm in an oddly built space station.

Trick Shots: +2 to create an advantage with Shoot when you use the grapnel gun to swing around, disarm an opponent, or create a barrier.

Cost: 2 refresh

Additional Flaws

You can take additional flaws to reduce a gadget's refresh cost, at a rate of one refresh per additional flaw. The

minimum cost for a gadget with any stunts is 1 refresh, regardless of how many flaws it has.

It can't be some pseudo-flaw, either, like *Glitchy on the Ocean Floor*. And if you do let something like that slip by, make sure the player knows they can expect to spend a surprising amount of time underwater. Deep, deep underwater.

Example

An additional flaw for the Magnetic Grapnel Gun might be *Heavy and Unwieldy*.

Building Gadgets

If you want more substantive rules attached to the construction and improvement of new gadgets and inventions in play, you can use these optional ones, which are based on *Spirit of the Century* Chapter 7 “Gadget and Gizmos,” [Sections 7.7 and 7.8](#):

Making Things

Building something from scratch is based off a difficulty equal to the cost of the item in question. It also requires appropriate tools, supplies and time. For example, building a pepperbox revolver from scratch is a Average difficulty, due to the gun's Average cost (20c). It also requires appropriate tools, supplies and time. Tools and supplies are measured by the quality of the engineer's workshop, which must be at least as high as the item quality (which is equal to the cost). To build our pepperbox revolver (Average cost and, thus, Average item quality), the character must have an Average or better workshop.

Building something is time-consuming, taking at least a day per level of item quality over Mediocre (minimum of one day), so it's assumed that characters will only be building things that they can't buy or acquire otherwise. More often, it's assumed they will skip the time to build the base item, and instead start with something that already exists and then improve it.

Cost Increments

Price	Amount
Terrible [-2]	Under 1c
Poor [-1]	Under 5c
Mediocre [+0]	Under 20c
Average [+1]	Under 50c
Fair [+2]	Under 100c
Good [+3]	Under 500c
Great [+4]	Under 1000c
Excellent [+5]	Under 10,000c

Price	Amount
Extraordinary [+6]	Under 100,000c
Epic [+7]	Under 1,000,000c
Legendary [+8]	Money is no object

Castle Falkenstein offers a price list for common items on p. 166, as well as a list of common gadget components and their costs on p. 209.

Improving Things

Engineers can tinker to improve or change the workings of any device. There is an array of possible improvements, which include:

Additional Capability

The device can now do something else of roughly the same scope. An automobile might also be able to be a boat, for example, or a gun might be able to shoot a grappling hook. Alternately, it may be able to do something normal but do it exceptionally well (so that a technology works like it does in the movies rather than real life).

Alternate Usage

The device allows skills to be used differently. For example, a Hemato-Detector Device might allow an investigator to use Education rather than Perception to examine a crime scene for traces of blood.

Anachrotech [2]

The device can include a technological advance we already know about but which hasn't happened yet. However, this is roughly limited to technologies that existed before the beginning of World War II.

Armed

Adds guns or blades to a device that would not normally have them, allowing its use with the Marksmanship or Fencing skill.

Armoured

A device may be given armour, meaning that when the user spends one fate point, the device absorbs a single consequence; you don't take the stress it would have absorbed, and you don't fill the consequence slot.

Light Armour: Absorb a single mild consequence; you don't take the stress it would have absorbed, and you don't fill the consequence slot.

Medium Armour [2]: Absorb a single moderate consequence; you don't take the stress it would have absorbed, and you don't fill the consequence slot.

Heavy Armour [3]: For one fate point, absorb a single severe consequence, or two mild or moderate consequences in any combination; you don't take the stress it would have absorbed, and you don't fill the consequence slot.

Independent

The device has some manner of autopilot and is able to act independently in a very limited fashion.

Conscious

Like independent, but the device is capable of basic reasoning, and can interpret simple commands.

Hair Trigger

This is mostly only applicable to explosives. A bomb with a hair trigger has no delay – it blows up as soon as it's thrown. The bad news is that Hair Triggers can be a bit tricky, and there's a chance of it blowing up in your hand. Failing the throw means that it explodes at the thrower's feet! Also, if a character carrying a hair trigger device takes any physical stress or consequences, he must roll a die, and on a -, it explodes.

Miniaturization

Something that's not normally portable can now fit in a large set of luggage, while something merely large can now fit in a wristwatch.

Maximization

The inverse of miniaturization: Sometimes you just need something to be BIG! This improvement is used to alter an item for circumstances when size will truly matter, such as a weapon that can't possibly damage its intended mega-monster target without being very large, or a car that's actually house-sized and able to transport a huge number of passengers.

Craftsmanship

The device gives a +1 bonus to any effort using it (usually only to one skill, if the device supports the use of multiple skills). This improvement may not be taken more than once per affected skill.

Rugged

The device has 2 extra boxes of stress capacity over the default, which is usually 3. May be taken multiple times.

Special Effect [2]

A device may now operate on different principles, like a car that runs on water or a gun which can shoot ghosts. The game benefit of this will depend highly on the specifics.

Upgrade

A specific improvement, granting a +2 bonus to some fairly specific use for the thing. An automobile, for example, might get a +2 in a swamp or a +2 on the straightaway.

To improve an item (rather than create it from scratch), start with the base difficulty to create the device based on the item quality, as before.

Next, determine how many improvements you want to make. Each improvement increases the difficulty (and required workshop quality) by one except as noted in brackets. Each improvement takes approximately 8 hours to implement.

If the player is willing to increase total time to improve the item by one increment on the time table, he gains a +1 bonus to the roll; increasing it again results in a +2 bonus, and so forth. This bonus doesn't reduce the requirements for the workshop, however; that's still based on the quality of the item (and thus the difficulty target). The player may also reduce the time spent; if less total time is spent improving the item, each step faster on the time table imposes a -1 penalty to the roll.

Succeeding at a cost means the gadget will have a special flaw. Succeeding with style means the gadget will have the aspect *Fine Workmanship*.

Time Increments

Instant
A few moments
Half a minute
A minute
A few minutes
15 minutes
Half an hour
An hour
A few hours
An afternoon
A day
A few days
A week
A few weeks
A month
A few months
A season
Half a year
A year
A few years
A decade
A lifetime

Equipment that characters make can be expected to last for the duration of a single adventure, but is assumed to be lost, deconstructed, or otherwise removed from play between adventures.

Example

Jasper, a Dwarf Inventor, undertakes the construction of an Instantaneous Facsimile Transmission Device that will allow him to send a photograph of the *real* Count Vassili from his location in Vienna to Doña Ana in Strasbourg via telegraph. This means giving a telegraph station an additional capability;

he would also like to add miniaturization so that he can make it portable in a suitcase, because he foresees using this a few more times on his trip as he races to join his ally in Constantinople.

The base difficulty starts at Mediocre [+0] and Jasper wants to add two improvements to a normal telegraph emitter, raising the difficulty to Good [+2], and it will take two days. Jasper has Great [+4] Tinkering and a workshop to match; since time is of the essence, he decides to try to reduce the time require by two increments (from “a few days” to “an afternoon”) so the difficulty is raised to Great [+4]. Jasper makes an overcome test on Tinkering and draws a +3, a success with style! Not only does he have his portable Instantaneous Facsimile Transmission Device later the same day, it shows ***Fine Workmanship***.

Amazing Vehicles and Infernal Weapons

If you want to use the rules from *Castle Falkenstein* pp. 190-191 and 208-215, the main change to make is to replace the damage system. In CF, the damage caused by infernal weapons and the number of “wound” points equipment receives is based on size and on building materials, as shown in the tables found on p. 191 of *Castle Falkenstein*.

Instead, I suggest using the advice sketched under the “Extras” section [in Fate Core](#) and under “Subsystems” in the [Fate System Toolkit](#). In short, it means applying the [Fate Fractal](#) to these contraptions and treating them like characters by giving them aspects, skills, stunts, and even consequences.

Here I'm going to leave things sketchy because, to be honest, I'm not interested in writing a series of rules for how many aspects vehicles should have based on size, or how many consequences they should be able to take based on construction materials. In truth, this is all irrelevant; what matters is how important the vehicle or weapon is important to the story—or even how important a particular characteristic of the vehicle or weapon is to the story. For example, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* features numerous ships, even war vessels, but it really doesn't matter how big they are; what matters is that they are sunk by the *Nautilus*.

When you think in these terms, there is no point in trying to anticipate everything that will be created in a game with lists and tables. As an alternative, I offer you the following rules of thumb:

- Assign two to five **aspects** to vehicles and infernal weapons that are important to the story, starting with a **High Concept** and a **Trouble**. The *Castle Falkenstein* pp. 210-215 vehicle and weapons creation rules are well-suited to suggesting some aspects.
- An oft-used vehicle with story value that can act independently might be assigned appropriate **skills** such as Motoring or Helmsmanship, Marksmanship, Stealth, or Perception.
- If there is going to be combat with other vehicle or weapons in the same general class size, give one or more **consequence slots**. I recommend using the advice in the *Toolkit*: an average vehicle—3 or fewer aspects—can take one mild consequence; an exceptional vehicle—4 or 5 aspects—can take one mild and one moderate consequence; and a vehicle with an aspect like ***Rugged*** or ***Military Grade*** may be able to take one severe consequence.

- If the vehicle is going to be the player characters' mobile base or one of their important advantages, for example if the heroes are going to be ruling the skies on their own airship and fighting Robur the Conqueror and his air pirates, the skill ranks, stunts, refresh, and aspect slots can be **invested** by invested by several characters.

Size as described in *Castle Falkenstein* can be ranked on the Fate ladder. The numerical modifier may not be used depending on the way the vehicle is treated in the story, but at least it provides a relative comparison between different vehicles.

- Tiny = Poor [-1]
 - Small = Mediocre [+0]
 - Medium = Average [+1]
 - Large = Fair [+2]
 - Huge = Good [+3]
 - Immense = Great [+4]
 - Gigantic = Excellent [+5]
 - Titanic = Extraordinary [+6]
-

Example

The group wants to play the crew and passengers of an airship from the Free State of Orleans. The airship is going to be important to the story and PCs so she gets a good deal of attention.

The private merchant airship *Nuage d'Or* is the pride and joy of her captain, Jean-Michel du Pont-de-la-Vierge. She's one of about 30-40 merchant class ships built by the North during the American Civil War. Some of them were captured by the South and after the war a few were bought by folks in the South. Number 24 of the series, the *Pride of Akron*, was confiscated when her owner neglected to pay certain "taxes, fees, and considerations" (read "bribes"). Jean-Michel paid what was necessary and renamed her *Nuage d'Or*.

After purchasing her, Jean-Michel brought a few modifications to the *Nuage d'Or*: three Gatling guns (one forward starboard, one forward port, one aft centre), and light armouring overall (including some on the external gasbag envelope). "Light armouring" would normally stop smaller calibre bullets, probably Gatling gun bullets as well, but definitely not an artillery shell. The armouring is concealed and the guns are kept very low profile.

A modification added a bit later was to section off part of the cargo area into rooms which could serve as either smaller, securable cargo areas or else as very modest passenger quarters. The *Nuage* also has more winches and secondary mooring points than would be found on most merchant ships; since she frequently goes to primitive areas where there are no mooring towers, Jean-Michel has had to tie off onto whatever's in the area. This includes: trees, large trees, very large trees, cliff faces, a sunken riverboat, houses, large boulders and combinations of the above. Passengers and light cargo can be lowered in a basket or, for the truly adventurous, a harness rig where a person can slide down an

inclined rope (very much like what you see in an Army obstacle course). It can be done solo, in which case the traveler had best be aiming for loose sand or something to cushion their landing, or else someone on the *Nuage* can control the descent by paying out a line attached to the harness. For something to really write home about it can be done between two airships at several thousand feet. Not recommended for the faint of heart...

The *Nuage d'Or* is sketched using the method for Amazing Vehicles in *Castle Falkenstein*, p. 210:

- Function: A hydrogen-filled airship with the ability of controlled flight that can be used to explore distant regions safely and swiftly.
- Looks: Metallized fabric stretched over thin metal and wooden ribs; hissing steam vents and huffing pistons; ornate gilded scrollwork and glossy hand-rubbed paint; lots of shiny brass knobs and fittings; large brass dials and gauges.
- Powered by: Boiler powering a Steam Engine.
- Controlled by: A complex arrangement of Levers, Cables and a Captain's Wheel.
- Moves with: Shiny Propellers on Intricate Shafts.
- Armed with: Three Gatling guns (one forward starboard, one forward port, one aft center.)
- Size: Large (crew of 21), a.k.a. Fair [+2].

Based on this thumbnail and the background description, the GM and players agree on the following stats:

The *Nuage d'Or*

Permissions: None; understood as part of the game's premise.

Costs: Skill ranks, refresh, and aspect slots, invested by several characters.

Aspects: High Concept: *Private Orleanese Merchant Airship*; Trouble: *Her Previous Owner Wants Her Back*; other aspects: *Gatlings Guns*; and *Extra Compartments and Passenger Quarters*.

Skills: Good [+3] Flight (equivalent to Helmsmanship); Fair [+2] Marksmanship.

Stunts: **Park on a Dime**. The *Nuage d'Or* gives +2 to Flight or Helmsmanship tests to access and moor in difficult locations.

Stress: Two minor consequences (thanks to the armouring), one moderate consequence.

Finally, if you want more detailed rules for large vehicle combat, I recommend you read Rob Wieland's rules for mech armour in "CAMELOT Trigger," one of the settings offered in *Fate Worlds Vol. 2: Worlds in Shadow* (Evil Hat Productions).