Free FATE Magic

v0.1

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Introduction

Free FATE Magic is a supplement for the Free FATE roleplaying game system, which is in turn a cut down & condensed version of the FATE System (Fantastic Adventures in Tabletop Entertainment), developed by Evil Hat Productions.

Free FATE Magic provides a simple yet powerful set of rules for introducing magic into your Free FATE games. The rules are open game content and have been derived from content in two great FATE products:

- Spirit of the Season, by Evil Hat Productions; a Christmas themed adventure for the Spirit of the Century game.
- Legends of Anglerre, by Cubicle 7; a fantasy based roleplaying game using the FATE system.

If you are looking for more in depth rules for magic using the FATE system then, as well as the aforementioned Legends of Anglerre, I also recommend:

- The Dresden Files roleplaying game, by Evil Hat Productions, which explores the urban fantasy world of Jim Butcher's Dresden Files novels.

The Types of Magic

Free FATE Magic presents two different types of magic; sorcery and summoning.

Sorcery deals with spell casting; the manipulation of magical energy to achieve numerous effects ranging from bolts of eldritch energy to throw at foes, to spells to unlock a door.

Summoning deals with the magical rites that conjure up spirits, elementals or even demons! This type of magic relies on achieving one's ends through bargaining with extra planar beings to do your will.

Power Aspects

When creating a character who will use sorcery, summoning or a little of both, the player must define the source of their magical power and frame that in the form of one of their character's Aspects.

As with all Aspects it is always a good idea to make this Power Aspect colourful in its description; rather than simply "Wizard", a Power Aspect could be "Wizard of the Red Cabal", "Apprentice to Kryanin, Sorcerer of Shadow" or even "Modern day Merlin wannabe"!

The Mysteries Skill

The most important skill of a magic using character is likely going to be the Mysteries skill. As stated in Free FATE, the Mysteries skill provides knowledge of the supernatural, the occult and psychic phenomena.

This skill, along with an appropriate Power Aspect, is enough to provide minor magical abilities such as aura reading (using Mysteries to make Assessments) and a sixth sense (allowing a magician to use Mysteries instead of Alertness to notice magical items, effects or beings).

Mysteries can also be used to enchant magical items in the same manner the Engineering skill can create and repair mundane items. A selection of magical items are described in Magic Items on page 7.

Finally, for those magicians who choose the path of sorcery, the Mysteries skill is the key measure of their magical power, and the skill used to cast spells.

Other Skills

In addition to the Mysteries skill several other skills may prove useful to a magic using character:

- **Academics:** For the magic user whose source of power is thaumaturgical equations and formulae, this skill may complement attempts to research new spells or identify magical items or effects.
- **Art:** If a character practises sympathetic magic; the ability to influence something based on its relationship or resemblance to another thing, then the ability to create paintings or dolls may be useful.
- **Empathy:** Knowledge is power, and so the ability to uncover hidden Aspects of a person using Empathy can be very useful to a magician.
- **Intimidation:** For a summoner, a good Intimidation skill can be useful as a fall back plan should a bargain with a summoned spirit go awry.
- **Resolve:** A strong willpower can sometimes be the best defence when a character is on the receiving end of some unpleasant magic.
- **Survival:** For the more primal magic users, such as shamen and druids, a good Survival skill can potentially complement attempts to get nature to aid you.

Sorcery

A character with an appropriate Power Aspect and the Mysteries skill can gain access to the power of spell casting by taking the Sorcery stunt detailed below. In addition, other new stunts can provide extra abilities in the use of Sorcery.

Sorcery Stunts

Sorcery

Requires an appropriate Power Aspect

This stunt allows a character to use the Mysteries skill in place of any other skill on a single roll, even if the usual tools and equipment for the skill being replaced are not available. However there is a cost.

The price to pay for using Sorcery is either a Fate Point or taking two time increments longer to perform the task; effects that would normally take *A few minutes* take *Half an hour*, while tasks that would only take *An afternoon* take *A few days*.

If the extra time cost is chosen rather than spending a Fate Point and the test is successful, regardless of how many shifts are assigned to reducing the base time of the action, the actual duration cannot be reduced below *A minute* (two steps above the default time period of *A few moments*).

In addition to the Fate Point or time cost, the magic user must also perform an act that focuses and channels the magical energies; such channelling acts have both a verbal component (incantations, chanting, singing) and a physical component (gesturing, dancing, performing a martial kata and so forth).

These acts of focusing make it fairly clear that the character is performing an act of magic; the use of Sorcery will be recognised with a successful Alertness or Mysteries test with a Difficulty of Mediocre (+0) plus 1 per zone the observer is away from the magic user; any Barrier ratings also add to this Difficulty.

The Sorcery stunt also allows a character to use their own Mysteries skill to resist, or even perform a block against, uses of Sorcery performed by other characters.

Sorcery Example 1

Susan is playing in a fantasy game as a Sorcery using character called Bronwyn, who has the power aspect of "Made an infernal pact for eldritch power". Bronwyn is adventuring with a thief called Sullar and a warrior named Hadrak when the party is ambushed by vile serpent cultists.

During the battle Susan wants to use Sorcery to conjure bolts of shrieking ghost energy to strike at a group of cultists (three Average (+1) minions). Susan elects to use Mysteries to replace the Guns skill to make a ranged attack (assuming a range of two zones), even though she has no ranged weapon.

Normally firing a ranged weapon takes "A few moments" to draw a bead on the target and fire, however using sorcery Bronwyn would require "A minute" – Susan cannot afford to take that amount of time in the heat of battle and thus elects to spend a Fate Point so the attack takes the normal amount of time.

Susan rolls the dice and adds the result of +1 to her Mysteries Skill of Great (+4) getting a Superb (+5) Effort. This beats the Fair (+2) Difficulty (Average minions with a +1 Quantity bonus) by 3 shifts meaning 3 points of Stress (without a weapon there is no Stress Bonus) taking out all three cultists!

Sorcery Example 2

Later in the adventure Bronwyn and Hadrak find themselves locked in a cell by the city militia at the behest of a corrupted temple priest. Without their companion Sullar to pick the lock of the cell door Susan turns to Sorcery to help, having Mysteries replace Burglary.

The GM states that picking the lock has a Good (+3) Difficulty and would normally have a base time of "A few minutes", alas as Susan has no Fate Points to spend her attempt has a base time of "Half an hour".

Bronwyn begins her incantations and gestures and Susan rolls the dice, amazingly she achieves a dice result of +3, which added to her Mysteries skill gives an Effort of Epic (+7) and an Effect of 4 shifts!

Although 4 shifts would normally be enough to reduce a base time of "Half an hour" down to "Half a minute" the restrictions of Sorcery state the minimum actual time is "A minute".

With a guard just down the corridor within earshot of Bronwyn's incantations, Hadrak's player begins thinking of how his character can best grab the guard and incapacitate him so Bronwyn can finish her spell.

Sorcery Example 3

At the climax of the adventure the party confronts the high priest of the serpent cult, himself a sorcerer. The high priest attempts to use Sorcery to instil fear in Bronwyn replacing Intimidation with Mysteries.

As this is a use of Sorcery the GM allows Susan to resist the manoeuvre with Bronwyn's Mysteries skill instead of her inferior Resolve skill – something Susan would not be allowed to do against a mundane use of the Intimidation skill.

Empowered Casting

Requires the Sorcery stunt

This stunt allows a sorcerer to spend a Fate Point to select and gain the temporary use of a Benefit stunt to enhance the casting of a spell. Any prerequisites for the Benefit stunt must be met.

This stunt may be taken multiple times, allowing multiple Benefit stunts to be applied to a single use of Sorcery (spending a Fate Point for each).

Bronwyn, Hadrak and Sullar have just released the village mayor and his wife who were being held for ransom by a horde of goblin bandits. Now wishing to sneak out of the goblin camp Alison wants to use Bronwyn's Mysteries skill in place of Stealth to help everyone move unseen.

Sarah, the GM, agrees stating that a single roll will be enough to see the party get clear of the camp, but anything more will require further Stealth tests and thus further spells.

Bronwyn has the Empowered Casting stunt and so pays a Fate Point to use Sorcery and another Fate Point to gain the temporary use of the Hush benefit stunt (see Appendix A of Free FATE).

Rolling a -1 on the dice, Alison spends another two Fate Points to invoke her "Made an infernal pact for eldritch power" and tag Sullar's "Never seen, never heard" Aspect for a total +3 bonus. With her Great (+4) Mysteries skill she achieves an Effort of Epic (+7).

Bronwyn and her four companions seem to fade from view becoming almost invisible and they move unseen through the camp even as several goblins alerted by Bronwyn's chanting begin searching for intruders.

Inscribe Glyph

Requires the Sorcery stunt

The character may inscribe an arcane glyph onto an item – it must be large enough to be reasonably visible and legible – and imbue it with the power of a spell, allowing it to operate at a later time even in the character's absence.

The nature of the spell; the skill being replaced and the manner in which it must be used must be defined at the time the glyph is inscribed. Additional capabilities –such as communicating a small piece of information across a distance – are entirely in keeping with a scribed glyph. Fate Points or extra time are also spent at this time.

In addition, the activation trigger must be specified. By default the trigger is a creature touching the glyph, however it can be the detection of a specific event occurring within the vicinity of the glyph – use the character's Mysteries skill in place of any Alertness or other skill that would be used to detect such an event.

Once activated the glyph is only effective for a single significant roll of the dice, however at the GM's option, the glyph might continue to operate if its first roll is a failure; but on a success, it is always used up and must be reset.

Rite of ...

Requires the Sorcery stunt

The character has practiced a particular use of Sorcery to the point where it is second nature. No Fate Point or additional time increments are necessary in order to perform this spell. The nature of the rite, the skill being replaced by it, and the manner in which the skill must be used must be defined at the time this stunt is taken.

For example, the Rite of the Open Door allows Mysteries to replace Burglary for purposes of unlocking (and locking) doors, chests, cupboards etc with mechanical locks. It would not allow Mysteries to be used in place of Burglary to disable alarms or to assess the security measures of a location or object.

This stunt may be taken multiple times, each stunt relating to a different spell.

Silent Casting

Requires the Sorcery stunt

A character with this stunt has learnt to channel magical energies without the need for the verbal acts that aid their focus.

This allows the character to use Sorcery even if they are gagged or otherwise unable to speak. It also means that the act of Sorcery may not be noticeable to anyone without line of sight to the sorcerer.

If the character has both this stunt and the Still Casting stunt then the Mysteries or Alertness test for observers to recognise a spell casting attempt has a base Difficulty of the sorcerer's Mysteries skill (rather than Mediocre (+0)).

Still Casting

Requires the Sorcery stunt

A character with this stunt has learnt to channel magical energies without the need for the physical acts that aid their focus.

This allows the character to use Sorcery even if they are bound or otherwise unable to move. It also means that the act of Sorcery may not be noticeable to anyone out of earshot of the sorcerer.

If the character has both this stunt and the Silent Casting stunt then the Mysteries or Alertness test for observers to recognise a spell casting attempt has a base Difficulty of the sorcerer's Mysteries skill (rather than Mediocre (+0)).

Summoning

As stated previously, the magical art of Summoning involves occult rites that conjure up spirits, elementals or other supernatural entities.

In a Free FATE game, in order to be a summoner, a character should have a Power Aspect and take one or more Ally stunts with the Summonable and Variable Summons advances.

When the character attempts to summon an entity the player can allocate the other advances appropriately, allowing for anything ranging from an intellectual imp to a horde of ravening zombies.

All such summoned entities should be given two aspects to reflect the manner in which they were conjured and their supernatural form. For example, *"Mindless skeletons raised by necromantic energy"* and *"Brittle husks immune to pain"*.

Summoning Stunts

Summon Greater Entity

Requires at least two combined Ally stunts with the Summonable advance.

For a Fate point, you can summon creatures with a Quality equal to or greater than your peak skill, and potentially with three or more stunts (two being the normal limit).

Such creatures will however try to break free of your control. When first summoned and when the summoning character suffers a Severe or Extreme consequence the summoner must succeed on a Mysteries or Resolve skill check with a Difficulty of the entity's Quality or lose control of the entity.

If control is lost the spirit will normally vanish back to the plane from which it came, however if it achieves spin on the control check, or if the GM wishes to compel the summoner's Power Aspect, the entity remains in the world for a brief time (a scene) and causes chaos, often trying to destroy the one who summoned it!

Binding

Requires at least one Ally stunt with the summonable advance.

You can bind one or more creatures conjured in a single summoning, into an object, place, or to yourself, enabling them to last for more than one scene. Make a Mysteries check with a Mediocre (+0) Difficulty. Success means the spirit remains for *An afternoon*, with each shift of effect increasing the time by one step on the Time Increments table.

You can take multiple Binding stunts, each relating to a separate Ally stunt (or combined Ally stunts) with the Summonable advance.

Summoning Examples

Bronwyn has branched out into the dark arts of summoning and has gained two Ally stunts, which Susan has combined together and labeled "Summoned Entities of the Netherworld". With the Summonable and Variable Summons advances as a given Susan has five advances to allocate each time Bronwyn conjures up a spirit (taking one minute of time to do so).

Kagravak, Spawn of the Plane of Fire

Scope:	Physical
Quality:	Good (+3)
Aspects:	Bound by infernal powers
	A being of fire and smoke
Skills:	Good (+3) Endurance, Fair (+2) Intimidation, Average (+1) Deceit
Stunts:	Specialisation "Fiery Embrace": +2 bonus to attacks if Kagravak can place a "Grabbed" Aspect on a foe.
	Brawler
Stress:	☐☐☐☐☐
	(2 extra boxes for Endurance Skill)
Advances:	Summonable, Variable Summons, Consequence , Quality x 2, Stunt x 2

Selessiana, Succubus of the Fiend Pits

Scope:	Social
Quality:	Great (+4)
Aspects:	Seductress for the infernal lords
	Devilishly attractive
Skills:	Great (+4) Deceit, Good (+3) Stealth, Fair (+2) Sleight of Hand, Average (+1) Fists
Stress:	☐☐☐☐☐
Advances:	Summonable, Variable Summons, Communication, Independent, Quality x3

Horde of Gremlins

Scope:	Physical
Quality:	Average (+1)
Quantity:	5 groups of 3 (+1 bonus per group)
Aspects:	Small and nimble entities of chaos
	The bane of technology
Stress:	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
	☐ ☐ ☐ (1 box per Minion)
Advances:	Summonable, Variable Summons, Keeping Up, Strength in Numbers x4

Magic Items

Magic items in a Free FATE game are created using the Gadget stunt (see Appendix A of Free FATE) describing the abilities of the Gadget as a result of magic rather than technology.

The Magic Tech advance is only required for capabilities that are truly not able to be performed by even advanced technology for the day, for example teleportation. Anything less and the magical nature of the item is purely descriptive rather than an advance.

If a player wishes their character to be able to craft magical items they may wish to take the Universal Gadget stunt a number of times, allowing them to create new items each session.

Gadget Improvements

The following Gadget Improvements are only for use with magical items.

Empowered Spell Casting

This improvement allows the magical gadget's wielder to gain the use of a single predefined Benefit stunt to use in conjunction with the casting of a spell, either a spell the wielder can cast or one the gadget allows to be cast via the Spell Casting improvement (see below).

There is no Fate Point cost to gain the use of the Benefit Stunt (unlike with the use of the Empowered Casting stunt), however the choice of Benefit stunt must be predefined and cannot be altered. Any prerequisites for the Benefit stunt must be met by the wielder of the magical gadget, or the gadget itself if possible.

Empowered Spell Casting may be taken a second time for a gadget but this costs an additional two improvements, rather than just one.

Spell Casting

This ability costs 2 improvements.

The item allows the wielder to cast a single specific type of spell as if they had the Sorcery and Rite of ... Sorcery Stunts. The wielder uses their own Mysteries skill for the dice roll, but may default to Mediocre (+0) if necessary.

The casting of this spell is considered a specific enough use that an Upgrade improvement can be used to provide a +2 bonus to the Mysteries skill test.

Store of Energy

The magical item contains a charge of energy that can be used in place of a Fate Point for purposes of using the Sorcery stunt without taking extra time, or when using the Empowered Casting stunt (a charge can also be used in place of any Fate Point that the chosen Benefit Stunt may require). This improvement can be taken up to three times. These charges refresh when the character's Fate Points refresh.

Example Magic Items

Magical Wand

A general purposes magical aid, this provides a +1 to use of the Mysteries skill, and provides two charges of magical energy for using Sorcery.

Improvements: Craftsmanship, Store of Energy x2

Orcs Bane Sword

A magically forged sword with a keen edge that is particularly effective against orc foes. This is a sword with the Stress Bonus increased to +3 and able to take 2 points of stress before suffering a consequence. Using the sword against orcs provides a +2 bonus to the Weapons skill.

Improvements: Armed, Rugged, Upgrade

Cloak of Protection and Healing

This item requires 2 Gadget stunts to purchase

This cloak magically shields the wearer from harm absorbing 2 stress per attack. When placed over an injured ally it can heal them; the wielder makes a Mysteries test with a +2 bonus against a Difficulty of Mediocre (+0), every shift of Effect removes a point of stress from the subject.

Improvements: Armoured x2, Empowered Spell Casting (Medic Stunt, the Upgrade is considered sufficient to meet the Medicine Specialisation requirement), Spell Casting, Upgrade.

Gloves of the Spider

With these gloves the wearer can climb surfaces he may not normally be able to, using Mysteries with a +2 bonus instead of Athletics. In addition, by spending a Fate point, he may eliminate the effects of all Difficulty modifiers for the climb resulting from the environment

Improvements: Spell Casting, Empowered Spell Casting (Human Spider).

Hat of Disguise

This item requires 2 Gadget stunts to purchase

By donning this hat and concentrating for *A few minutes* the wearer can change their physical appearance using Mysteries with a +2 bonus instead of Deceit. The character acts as if he had the Clever Disguise & Mimicry stunts.

Improvements: Spell Casting, Empowered Spell Casting x2 (Clever Disguise, Mimicry), Upgrade.

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What's Changed?

- Nothing, this is the first version!