

ROCKALYPSE

ACCELERATED



FATE
ACCELERATED

ROCKALYPSE

ACCELERATED

designed and written by

Eric Simon

illustrations by

Lauren A. Brown

This work is based on Fate Core System and Fate Accelerated Edition (found at <http://www.faterpg.com/>), products of Evil Hat Productions, LLC, developed, authored, and edited by Leonard Balsera, Brian Engard, Jeremy Keller, Ryan Macklin, Mike Olson, Clark Valentine, Amanda Valentine, Fred Hicks, and Rob Donoghue, and licensed for our use under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>).

The Fate Core font is © Evil Hat Productions, LLC and is used with permission. The Four Actions icons were designed by Jeremy Keller.

The Metal Mania font is licensed under the SIL Open Font License (OFL). It was designed by Dathan Boardman of Open Window.

All other rules and setting descriptions
© 2016 by Four-in-Hand Games.



What is this?

Rockalypse Accelerated is the trimmed down version of Rockalypse, a game that was originally designed for Fate Core. This PDF contains just the Accelerated rules, and is designed to get you into the action as quickly as possible.

If you want more detailed rules, look for the full Rockalypse book, which includes both the Core and Accelerated rules, plus play examples and GM tools.

What is Fate?

Fate is a roleplaying game that you may already know from other settings that use the system, such as *The Three Rocketeers*, *Atomic Robo*, *Ehdrigohr*, or *The Secrets of Cats*. It is an extremely flexible set of rules that encourages cooperative play as well as individual creativity. This book assumes you have access to the Fate Accelerated rules and/or some experience with Fate itself. Luckily, those rules are easily available in print, digital, and even free system reference document (at fate-srd.com).

This book will be as clear as possible about the places where the Rockalypse rules vary from the Fate Accelerated rules. However, there are a few things that you will want to be sure you understand when playing this game:

Aspects

Rockalypse loves aspects, even more than you may be used to in your other Fate games. You will definitely want to understand how to create them and how to invoke them.



The Four Actions

The structure of conflicts in Rockalypse is built on distinguishing between the different types of actions. You'll want to know all the options as you get started. This also includes understanding the basic resolution mechanics, particularly dice-rolling, the Ladder, and the Four Outcomes.

Stress and Consequences

Fate handles damage resolution in unique ways, and Rockalypse takes full advantage of them. Make sure you know how they work.

If you have a handle on these essential parts of Fate, you are ready to start exploring what makes Rockalypse different. If you are new to Fate or are confused by some of them, don't worry! Roleplaying games are best learned by playing, so just try it. You might get some things wrong at first, but you'll figure it out.

What is different about Rockalypse?

Rockalypse is a post-apocalyptic game of musical conflict. Because it is a setting for Fate, you will play competent adventurers who are somehow positioned to have a great impact on the world. What is different about Rockalypse is that there is no combat, at least not in the traditional physical sense. Instead, all conflict is resolved by playing music. You will battle with rock, much like the musical fight scenes in movies like *Six String Samurai* or *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World*.

This is not realistic, not even remotely.



To enjoy Rockalypse, you will need to suspend your disbelief. Embrace the idea that electric keyboards can be heard even when not plugged into anything or that a drum kit can be set up and ready to play in an instant. Don't try to rationalize why the big bad villain wants to bass duel instead of just shooting you. It doesn't matter. What matters is that you had better have some heavy picks ready for this one (unless you're a finger picker, in which case you may break open a callous or two).

Rockalypse also contains some important mechanical differences from standard Fate Accelerated rules and play. Although these are covered in detail later in the book, some folks may appreciate a quick summary:

Settings

Rockalypse is not a single setting but a buffet of post-apocalyptic ideas. Pick what you want and leave what you don't. Check out the Setting section for more information.

Extras

For the most part, you won't track gear in Rockalypse. But you will have a band, and that band is an extra with its own set of aspects. That's covered in the Character section.

Approaches

There are some significant changes to the approach list. The Character section covers Rockalypse Accelerated's unique approaches, as well as suggestions on how to create appropriate stunts.

Conflicts/Contests

Every conflict or contest is run as a song with a very organized structure. Many of the changes in Rockalypse are designed around highlighting that experience. All of the



details are explained in the Conflict section, but here's a quick rundown of some of the important points:

- Initiative is divided into different segments based on the four types of actions, and you get one non-defense action per round. (Defense is unlimited.)
- Attacks are always directed at mental defenses and mental stress. (Physical stress is only used to fuel certain stunts.)
- Attacks and Defends are rolled separately, so the defender knows how big the attack will be before starting the roll.

How should Rockalypse feel to run and play?

You know how in a lot of adventure RPGs there are the talky bits and then the punchy/shooty bits? Well Rockalypse feels kind of like that except you replace the punchy/shooty bits with ROCKING. Depending on your group's play style, you should spend on average about half your time exploring, investigating, surviving...doing your normal, day-to-day, post-apocalyptic routine. This is where a lot of the story happens, so you should definitely experience it. But when the talking is over and it comes time to throw down against that giant demon or that wasteland biker gang, combat doesn't start with the sound of swords being drawn and guns being cocked, it starts with a four-count from the drummer.

Also, you may find that the heroes are incredibly effective in these conflicts. If you're familiar with Fate, you know that it's dangerous to hand players a whole table full of aspects



with free invokes on them. I'm going to tell you right now – Rockalypse expects that to happen pretty much every time. If your campaign has two or three players, the challenge will be about what you're used to, or possibly a little more difficult if the characters are not tweaked for musical conflict. But if you have five or six, you can expect the band to steamroll most opponents whenever the instruments come out. That's not necessarily bad; it just means you're going to have to challenge them with story (unless steamrolling things musically is why you're playing this game, which is just fine).

If you do find yourself wanting more ways to handle this, pick up the full Rockalypse book for additional tools and ideas.



The Settings of Rockalypse

Rockalypse is not a single setting. It is an entire genre of post-apocalyptic musical adventure. There are quite a few apocalypses to choose from, and they can be mashed and mixed together to create even more variety. The setting modules listed below are your starting points.

When creating your Rockalypse game, your group may choose two or three of these modules and then select (or develop for yourself) one or two aspects from each. If you want a more focused experience, you can also just select or write all of the aspects from one module. You should end up with no more than three or four setting aspects in total. (Note that these are not the same as issues, which are more specific to your game's story and should always be written from scratch.)

The Wasteland

The apocalypse that results in the Wasteland is often (though not always) some form of nuclear devastation. This may have been accidental or intentional, but either way it has had long-lasting global effects. Movies and other media from which this setting draws its inspiration are often products of the cold war era and its related nuclear fear, although some movies that highlight the Wasteland – like *Tank Girl* and *Solarbabies* – focus on a lack of water as the cause of the apocalypse.

However the Wasteland comes about in your game, the most important thematic element it portrays is scarcity. Everything is scarce in the Wasteland: water, food, clothes, shelter, transportation, fun...everything. The possibility of



running out of something critical for survival looms over the characters constantly. The other themes and their associated setting aspects are optional, but if you're running a game in the Wasteland, this one is essential.

Other common themes revolve around the types of social structures and interactions the Wasteland tends to create. Because survival is a constant struggle, the people who do survive tend to be very tough. Life in the Wasteland is often presented as a classic Hobbesian state of nature:

"...solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." (You may now use this book as a reference in your Intro to Sociology essay.) Residents of the Wasteland are typically violent towards each other and fearful of outsiders. They may be portrayed as animalistic, transformed by their harsh environment into something less than human. Sometimes this transformation is even physical – it shows up as mutation, radiation sickness, or genetic manipulation. The resulting mutants can be both victim and perpetrator of the Wasteland's violence; their plight is terrible, but they may also lash out at others in frustration.

Possible Aspects for the Wasteland:

Everything is scarce. In this apocalypse, much of your time is spent on basic survival. Keeping your guitar in good shape will be a serious challenge. Oh, and you might need to think about water too.

We don't need another hero. The inhabitants of the wasteland are tough folks who have managed to make a life in a tough world. How can you prove that you're more than just another mouth to feed?



We'll see you on the road, skag! For a barren wasteland, there sure seems to be an awful lot of stuff waiting to jump out at you. Animals, people, heavily modified trucks – you name it.

Some of my best friends are mutants. In this apocalypse, mutants are quite common and take many forms (maybe even uplifted soldier-kangaroos). They may be irradiated, genetically-modified, or uniquely adapted to the lack of resources, but they're everywhere. One or more of the band members may be mutants themselves.

The Streets of Cyber City

While it may seem odd to include a cyberpunk dystopia as an apocalypse, the two are frequently intertwined. In some cases, the city may be considered the last bastion of civilization in an otherwise wrecked world. It may have been built by and for a class of corporate elites that thrive on the exploitation of resource-poor working class (as in the *Hunger Games*). Or it may be that the apocalypse is more insidious, that the world as we know it has ended but life and technology manage to move on regardless. Humans may do terrible things to themselves and each other to sustain the human race, but they do sustain it.

In all of these examples, the cost of keeping human society running is submission to a corporate/fascist regime that controls most if not all aspects of human life. The most successful such regimes tend to offer some form of “bread and circuses” – providing both basic needs and distracting entertainment to the masses. Those who want to revolt against the regime often attack the entertainment itself,



and in Rockalypse the heroes have a specific opportunity to replace it with their own.

One of strongest themes in Cyber City is its intense social stratification. At the top, you have a small group of elites who live in the shiniest parts of the city and have everything they need. Then you have the “proles” – the subjugated workers and wage-slaves – who make up the largest part of the population. But even among the proles there are those who fall through the cracks – the rebellious underclass trying to fight the system. Whether they sell illegal items on the black market, vandalize corporate property, or just say the wrong things at the wrong time, they are often considered criminals by the elites and whatever enforcement system is in place. Band members in Rockalypse typically come from this group.

Possible Aspects for the Streets of Cyber City:

Sealed away behind their money. In this apocalypse, all the power is in the hands of a few giant corporations. They control all aspects of daily life, at least as far as regular people are concerned, and they are well-protected from any retaliation.

What’s your ‘ware? Most people tend to be modified in some way, whether by genetic enhancements or cybernetic implants or both. For some, these are done for practical reasons. For others, it’s just part of their personal identity.

Ragtag bunch of street toughs. Some people manage to slip through the cracks even in a tightly controlled society like Cybercity. They can get you access

to all kinds of fun toys, but you may need to do a favor for them in return.

Smash the state, before it smashes you. Justice in Cyber City serves the privileged, and you definitely do not qualify. You'll always need to be on the lookout for the police, or whoever it is that enforces the law for the fascist megacorps.

Aliens from Dimension X

While many movies tend to present alien invasions as military conquests, there is a long tradition of more subtle, insidious takeovers. From the original *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* to the 80s television series, *V*, there are aliens that disguise themselves as humans and gradually infiltrate society or otherwise place themselves as overlords of Earth. Their human appearance is critical to their success, as it offers a reason why the entire world doesn't turn against them. In many of these stories, resistance efforts focus on revealing the truth of the aliens to everyone.

Depending on the type of invasion, this apocalypse can resemble a vast secret conspiracy (as in *They Live*) or a more overt alien fascist regime. In either case, the plucky local resistance must remain vigilant against both discovery and infiltration. Their efforts must constantly walk the careful line between the need for secrecy and the desire to go public. It may be safer to recruit one person at a time, but they'll never save the world that way.

A possible additional theme for alien invasions is the helpful alien faction. After all, these aliens came from somewhere else, and there may be folks fighting them there too. These helpers can be a faction within the invading species or another species entirely, and they are likely to be

mistrusted by at least some of the resistance. Or the entire scenario may be turned on its head with the creation of heroes who are aliens themselves and are oppressed and hunted by humans (like in *District 9*).

Possible Aspects for Aliens from Dimension X:

We can crush them here on Earth. In this apocalypse, invaders from a distant world or dimension have conquered the Earth. This may have been a direct military conquest or a secret conspiracy, but they are now definitely in charge.

Wolverines! There are small but surprisingly plucky pockets of resistance to the alien authority, and they could use your help. If you want to save the world, it starts right here!

They look just like us. The aliens resemble humans at least superficially. But there must be some way to tell the difference, whether through special sunglasses or by peeling off their artificial skin...

Beyond your puny human comprehension. While the aliens may hold a lot of sway on Earth, they have their own larger issues to deal with. By fighting them, you may find yourself caught up in intergalactic or interdimensional politics. But maybe your simple approach will seem refreshing.

Pandemonium

Most stories agree that once Hell rises up, the world is pretty much over. Some of those other apocalypses offer the hope that the world can heal or that humanity can eventually win, but Pandemonium is the very final no-take-

backs apocalypse. However, that doesn't mean the heroes can't have any effect. It's just a different kind of effect.

Pandemonium is essentially a survival horror apocalypse. There may be people to be rescued, and the heroes may even manage to fight and win against individual demons, but ultimately Hell will win. The best outcome involves escape, not victory. That may just mean surviving as long as possible, or it may mean finding an actual place that is somehow protected from the Hell that has come to Earth. Whether this paradise is real or just a legend, it should be nigh-impossible to find.

Religious and quasi-religious themes abound in this setting. References to Dante and Revelations are frequent and obvious. Horns, skulls, spikes, and ripped jean jackets with painted logos are everywhere. Pandemonium should feel actively dangerous at all times, with threats of attack from demons, creatures, the environment, and even other people who have largely lost their own humanity.

Possible Aspects for Pandemonium:

It's Hell on earth, man. In this apocalypse, either the dead have risen as zombies, or demons roam freely, slaughtering or enslaving all mortals they find. It's super hardcore.

Devil went down to Georgia. There are some creatures that will grant you special immunity from their powers and their minions if you can defeat them. It's not easy, they won't like it, and they'll always try to find loopholes. But you can handle that, right?

We invented paperwork. The minions of Hell are particularly good at bureaucracy. They have a well-es-



established authority structure and chain of command that might just be something you can exploit.

Promised Land of Rock. Somewhere in the world there is a place where you can escape this cataclysm. Maybe you've even seen it yourself sometime long ago, but you are no longer sure how to get there. And you are probably not the only one trying to find it.

RagnaRöck

The world is ending, the gods are warring, and humanity huddles in fear of its inevitable destruction. But not everyone. A few brave souls know that this is no time for cowering and wasting the few moments they may have left. They will go out and seek their fate instead of waiting for it to come to them. Either these heroes will survive into the next world, or they will proudly join the ranks of the Einherjar and fight alongside Odin.

RagnaRöck is an unusual apocalypse in that it offers a hope of a new world after the end. After the Fimbulwinter, a new sun will rise to take her mother's place, and Vafthrudnir foresaw that some may indeed survive to see it. But in the meantime, the gods fight desperately against each other to decide the fate of the world.

This setting is the Norse saga of the end times, pure and simple.

Possible Aspects for RagnaRöck:

Sailing the poison sea. There is still land here and there, but the ocean has consumed much of the lower places. And Jörmungandr has spread his poison across the sea. You live on the ocean, but the very



water can be dangerous. Monsters spawn and waves of death ride on the wind.

The gods are at war. Odin fights Fenrir, Thor fights Jörmungandr, Heimdallr fights Loki. Many if not all of them will die in this conflict. Their struggles wreak destruction on all the realms, and the heroes will certainly have to deal with the wreckage they leave in their wake.

We ride with the Einherjar! Valhalla has opened and generations of the brave dead march forth to fight with Odin. The heroes may actually find themselves in the midst of these battles, fighting along with their valiant ancestors.

Yggdrasil will carry on. Deep in their hearts, the heroes and all of humanity know that someone will survive, that somehow the human race will be repopulated after this ending. But of course they don't know who that will be...

Rock and Roll High School

Not actually an apocalypse itself (although it might feel that way sometimes), high school nevertheless plays a central role in many stories about music and about heroic bands struggling against the odds. This setting assumes that there is some oasis of civilization within the apocalypse, that everyone there is trying to keep life going as normally as possible, and that somehow they think that algebra and teen drama should be part of “normal” life.

Rock and Roll High School is typically blended with other settings that describe the world outside, but the focus is definitely on the high school. Even if everywhere else is



literally Hell, high school manages to make it worse. Often the school's administration and related bureaucracy act as the agents of whatever apocalypse pervades. Maybe the principal is an alien, or the vice principal is a demon (except for real instead of just seeming that way). It may also be that the popular kids are on top because they have connections to the megacorps or to the aliens as well.

When using Rock and Roll High School as a primary setting, it is extremely important to play up the awfulness of high school itself. Detentions, hallway harassment, first period P.E., forced small-group discussions about poetry – these are the stuff of nightmares, and they should absolutely be part of the game.

Possible Aspects for Rock and Roll High School:

Even at the end of the world, we still have algebra.

In this apocalypse, the remnants of society are trying to maintain some sense of normality. You probably never knew the world as it was before, so this is as normal as it's ever going to get. Plus you're late for 5th period.

Popular kids have it easy. They just do. That's why they're popular. And you will never be one of them. You might be more talented and likeable, but that doesn't change the fact that you're struggling to get by on a scholarship and they can afford everything they need.

Have you seen a girl with hair like this? As an adolescent, your hormones are all over the place. Distractions and poor decision-making abound. You are



awkward most of the time and still finding yourself in almost every way.

This is our big break! Underlying all the trials of high school is the hope that one day you'll be able to escape it. That chance may come even sooner if you can somehow become famous or successful right now...

Issues

Rockalypse allows for many of the conventional story tropes and formats that you know from other roleplaying settings. Careful writing of issues can help guide your group toward the play experiences you want to see. If your game is set in Pandemonium and you want an exploratory feel, write issues that build slowly, like “Demonic infighting” (suggesting that there may be some political games the heroes could play to gain favor or advantage). This is a world state that the players may see and engage with, but it won't necessarily drive their decisions at every step. On the other hand, if you want more of a classic linear adventure in Pandemonium, you could write the issue “The world is collapsing.” This heightens the urgency in the story and also offers a reason to channel the heroes through a set of challenges to reach a particular destination.



Characters

In Rockalypse, you will create your individual character and also your band. You may start with either one or the other, or build both simultaneously. However, it is essential that character creation be a collaborative process involving all of the players.

The Five Aspects

As with most Fate Accelerated games, you will begin creating your individual character with the High Concept and Trouble aspects. In Rockalypse, your High Concept should include some mention of your primary instrument or your role in terms of the band, though that should not be the extent of the aspect. Make sure to include some other personal identifier, like “mutant-slaying lead guitar,” “roadie with a secret past,” or “excitable accordion player.”

Your Trouble aspect should be mostly external – what are you fighting against or running from? You might have a more internal Trouble if your setting includes aspects from Rock and Roll High School, but for the most part Rockalypse characters should be heroic.

Once you have these, you should work with the other players to develop your two Group Concept aspects. These will build your character’s connection to the band by answering the following questions:

- Group Concept 1 – How or why did you join the band? Your reason could be a relationship, desire, or some other reason, but this is where that goes.



- Group Concept 2 – What is something you have done to support the band, either in terms of the individual members or the success of the group as a whole?

Finally, you will have an opportunity to write a Free Choice aspect that helps flesh out your character in some way, through identity, ability, or relationship. You might have a strong idea right now, or you might leave this aspect blank until later.

Approaches

Approaches in Rockalypse Accelerated do not describe how you do something, but rather what your role is when doing it. When describing your action, use the following phrasing:

I [**action**] as the [**approach**].

So, for instance

I attack the demon with a screaming guitar lick as the lead.

The five approaches in Rockalypse are

Lead: Acting as the Lead includes taking charge, going on the attack, and being the focus of the situation, both onstage and off.

Backup: Acting as the Backup is supportive, helpful, sometimes even healing. You keep everyone together and protect them from distress.

Hype: Acting Hype is all about raising energy, for yourself or for others.



Chill: Acting Chill is about keeping things calm and sustained. It is often used to defend.

Roadie: Acting as the Roadie is about using gear and equipment to solve your problems. It can also cover stealth and heavy lifting.

When creating your character, choose one at Great (+4), one at Good (+3), one at Fair (+2), one at Average (+1), and one at Mediocre (+0).



Stunts

As in all Fate Accelerated games, you will create one to three stunts for your character rather than selecting from a list of possible stunts. If you are only taking one stunt, consider carefully the kind of effect you would like to have. Do you just want to be very good at something? Do you want to have a unique ability? Or are you interested in dramatically affecting the story?

For Rockalypse Accelerated, we suggest four different styles of stunts. Keep in mind that these are suggestions, not rules. Experienced players may have other ideas.

Stunt Style #1

Because I [**description**], I [**bonus effect**] with [**approach**] as long as [**condition**].

This style of stunt is best used with simple but conditional mechanical advantages. Bonuses to a roll are very common with this type of stunt, but they should usually not be more than +2. Stunts created this way are designed for relatively common use, so the conditions should not be too restrictive.

Examples:

Because I *can inspire anybody*, I get a +2 when creating advantages with Hype as long as we have an audience.

Because I *can belt like there's no tomorrow*, I get a +2 when attacking with Lead as long as I invoke an aspect created by another band member.



Stunt Style #2

Because I [**description**], once per phrase/scene/song I [**rules-changing action**] with [**approach**].

This style of stunt is for slightly more powerful effects, particularly those effects that change how the basic rules of Fate work with respect to your approaches. Use this style of stunt to focus your band role even more and give your game a distinct musical flavor.

More powerful effects should be more limited in frequency.

Examples:

Because I *have perfect time*, once per phrase I *can defend for a bandmate* with *Backup*.

Because *very little bothers me*, once per song I *can take a free overcome action* with *Chill*.

Stunt Style #3

Because I [**description**], I can [**rules-changing action**] by spending a Fate Point.

This style of stunt is similar to the previous style in that it can be used for effects that change how the basic rules of Fate work. However, instead of limiting the stunt's use in terms of phrases or scenes, these stunts are limited by their cost. (Some effects may be so powerful that they must be limited by both time and cost, combining styles 2 and 3.)

Examples:

Because I *am incredibly flashy*, I can *force an opponent to attack me instead of a bandmate* by spending a Fate Point.

Because I *am the master of the solo*, once per song I can take a consequence to place a number of free invokes equal to that consequence's value on any aspects I choose.

Stunt Style #4

Because I [**description**], once per song/session I [**narrative effect**].

This style of stunt is almost always severely limited by time because it can drastically change the direction of the story. Use these stunts for those rare moments when a character wants to really shine.

Examples:

Because I *have a portable pyro rig*, once per song I can get the audience on our side.

Because I *always know what to say*, once per session I can convince someone of any one thing that doesn't hurt them.

If your characters do have multiple stunts, it's a good idea to mix up the styles for variety. A good rule of thumb is that any given character should have a chance to use about half of their stunts in an average game session. If they are using all of them every session or none of them in some sessions, considering tweaking them a bit.

Need some more ideas? Check out the full Rockalypse book and try converting some of the stunts from the Rockalypse Fate Core skills.



The Band Sheet

Rockalypse doesn't use a lot of extras to represent equipment. You can assume you always have the basic gear you need to play your music (although finding or earning great instruments may well happen as part of play). The most important extra is one that you will build during character creation: the band. The band is the extra that represents the whole group, and anyone may invoke its aspects whenever relevant (including compels by opponents).

The band has three aspects: a High Concept, a Trouble aspect, and a Free Choice aspect. The group should work together to write these as follows:

- Band High Concept – What kind of band are you? What kind of music do you play?
- Band Trouble – Usually related to how others see the band or its place in the world. Are you illegal in Cyber City? Are you the new kids in school? Ideally, this should be connected to at least one of your campaign's issues.
- Band Free Choice – Something else descriptive of the band's identity. This might be related to your visual image or style, or your particular performance habits.

Milestones and Progression

When your band first starts out in Rockalypse, you may have specific ideas of how you will fit into the group. But you may find that some of those ideas don't quite work out in practice. Maybe you are stuck running lights all the time, or maybe your lead ukulele player keeps getting stage fright

and you have to step up and take the melody. Whatever the issue, the reality of the band is always a little different than what each member envisioned. That's true in life, and it happens in Rockalypse too.


This is why milestones exist. Minor milestones still offer opportunities to swap stunts and ratings. Use them to readjust your character to fit your changing role in the band. Even if your approach ratings are not going up, these tweaks can make a huge difference in your band's overall effectiveness. Always take time at each milestone to check with the group and see if there is anything that needs to be adjusted.



Songs (Conflicts and Contests)


Contests and conflicts in Rockalypse work slightly differently than usual for Fate. First and most importantly, every contest or conflict is a **song**. In the case of a contest that song might be inspirational, a rallying cry to the team to do the best they can do. In the case of a conflict it becomes a musical battle with each side attempting to crush the other musically.


Songs are divided into **phrases** that define the course of the action. Each character gets to act once during a phrase, choosing an Overcome, Create Advantage, or Attack action. (Defend actions, including those added by stunts, are not limited.) However, instead of characters taking turns based on an initiative system, all actions of each type are considered simultaneous. The players always declare and roll their actions first, followed by the NPCs. The actions are organized into a four count that progresses as follows:


 **Count 1** – Overcomes. These actions typically reflect some preparation outside of the current song that are not immediately relevant but may become so. A band member who is running late to the gig may need to make a Drive overcome to get there by the next phrase. A roadie who is trying to break into the villain's trailer while she is distracted by the song might need to make a Burglary or Stealth overcome. Overcomes tend to happen more often in contests than conflicts, but not exclusively. Unlike Attacks, these resolve immediately, including any active defense.



Overcomes may also be used per the rules in Fate Accelerated to deal with some situation aspects. If the aspect was created by an opponent, that opponent gets to immediately roll an active defense against the overcome. (This is an exception to the separation of actions.) Note that it is more difficult to directly affect the aspects that make up the other band's song, but you may be able to interfere with how the crowd is reacting or remove something else from the scene that is helping them.

 **Count 2** – Advantages. These are the most common actions band members take during a song. They use this count to build up the layers of the song that will then be used to attack and defend. Roadies and techs may also use skills like Crafts and Rapport to aid the band with effective sound and light design.

 **Count 3** – Attacks. Unless prevented by stunts like Follow My Lead, attacks may be directed at any member of the opposing band. However, it is usually more effective to focus multiple advantages into a single attack rather than splitting the band's efforts, at least at first. If the song continues through several phrases, there may be enough advantages in play to apply multiple attacks. One key distinction about attacks in Rockalypse is that the attacker determines how many advantages to add to the roll before defense is declared. Therefore, it is usually in the attacker's interest to use as many advantages as possible on an attack.

 **Count 4** – Defends. In Rockalypse, defend actions are separated from attack actions. This means that each defender knows the exact number and difficulty of attacks directed at her. In addition, all effects of successful attacks

resolve simultaneously at the end of the phrase after all defense rolls have been completed. If neither side withdraws at this point, the song continues into another phrase.

Withdrawing is a decision made by an entire band at the end of a phrase. Individual members may still concede when they are the targets of an attack, but a band may also withdraw after Count 4 if they don't feel they can take another phrase. The effects of withdrawing are similar to conceding, but no Fate Points are awarded. The opposing band is considered victorious in the conflict, but the withdrawing band may narrate their withdrawal.

Boosts, Invokes, and Administrative Details

Although Rockalypse does not alter the basic rules of how Fate functions, this game can feel different from other Fate games in ways that necessitate some streamlining of certain mechanics. The following tips are suggestions rather than rules, but they really can help improve your play experience:

- Because there are going to be so many full aspects on the table, it is probably not worth your time to name boosts. Also, because of the count order of phrases, allowing other characters to use a boost can make them too strong – they become almost as good at supporting attacks as full aspects. For this reason, it's best to simply mark the one character as having a boost on her next roll and be done with it. Anything more can slow down play or unbalance the effect.
- Free invokes should be represented using some sort of token – ideally one that is different from the tokens being used for Fate points. There are a couple of reasons

for doing this. First of all, it allows for a quick and distinct visual representation of which aspects have invokes. Second, it makes it less tedious to track the invokes someone is using on a big attack or defend.

- In general, try to keep conflict scenes focused on the four-count progression. As players become used to this format, it really helps organize the chaos and focus the band on working together. Allow the players to discuss at the beginning of each phrase who will be doing what. It shouldn't take too long, and once they do then you already know how that round will go.



Inspirations

This game was born primarily out of a blending of the aesthetic sensibilities of four things:

- ▶ *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World*
- ▶ *Tank Girl*
- ▶ *Six String Samurai*
- ▶ *FLCL*

But over time the inspiration list has continued to grow, both through deliberate research and through feedback from players. Here's a sample of references that we would actively recommend, though it is far from a complete list of possible sources:

- ▶ *Beat Street*
- ▶ *Jem* (the 80s cartoon and the modern comics – NOT the unfortunate movie)
- ▶ *Brutal Legend*
- ▶ *Kubo and the Two Strings*
- ▶ *Rock and Rule*
- ▶ *Equestria Girls: Rainbow Rocks*
- ▶ *Muzzled: The Musical*
- ▶ *Mad Max* (all of them)
- ▶ *Blade Runner*
- ▶ *Ready Player One*
- ▶ *V* (that's the 80s alien TV show, not the Alan Moore comic)
- ▶ *They Live*
- ▶ *Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai Across the 8th Dimension*

- ▶ *Wild Zero*
- ▶ *Deathgasm*
- ▶ *Judge Dredd*
- ▶ *Vox: Rockbook* (art book by Matteo de Longis)
- ▶ *School of Rock*
- ▶ *The Get Down*
- ▶ *Let it Shine*
- ▶ *Bandslam*
- ▶ *Josie and the Pussycats*
- ▶ *Still Crazy*
- ▶ *Tenacious D in the Pick of Destiny*

We also have a Rockalypse inspiration playlist on Youtube. Check out the full curated list on the Four-in-Hand Games website:

<http://bit.ly/Rockalypse30>

Do you have more suggestions? Of course you do, because the power of rock is everywhere. So grab your gear and let the music take you!

