After the Collapse

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History

Twenty-first century civilization did not go out with a bang, as so many predicted, but with a whimper. It started when Andrew Mark Jackson was elected President in the United States. In sharp contrast to his namesake, he was an extreme pacifist, promising to get American troops home regardless of the ramifications. When he pulled all American troops out of the Middle East, violence immediately escalated. The extremists gained control in several countries, and they foolishly attacked Israel, imagining that they had a mandate from Allah.

Without American support, Israel was unable to fight the combined military of the wealthy oil countries. Once they found themselves backed into a corner, looking at certain defeat, they struck out with nuclear weapons. Thanks to the last-minute negotiations within the U.N. Security Council, the nuclear war stayed confined to the area, with only some fallout problems in India and Pakistan. The rest of the world recovered within a decade, at least with respect to radioactivity. However, the radiation near the locations of the blasts meant that it would be centuries before anything more complex than a cockroach could even enter the area.

With 70% of the world's oil supply now inaccessible, the cost of fuel shot up, increasing tenfold in a week. Ecuador, Venezuela, Russia, and the U.S. now held the largest available sources, but it was not nearly enough to feed the world's petroleum addiction. Countries with relatively small reserves, like Viet Nam, suddenly rose in stature, and countries with no oil, Germany, for instance, teetered on the brink of collapse, or, like Greece, simply folded.

For nearly eight years, the world governments held the world together, more or less intact, by conserving, tapping every source, and slowly depleting the reserves. However, one by one the sources dried up. The price rose again, and soon there was little available at any price.

With transportation costs skyrocketing, the urbanization of the world was reversed. People had to live closer to where food was grown if they wanted to eat. Huge industrial farms found more profit in selling off the land in family-sized plots, since they could no longer afford the fertilizer, pesticides, and machinery on which they depended. People starved by the hundreds of millions and governments broke down as the fabric of society unraveled. Communities hunkered down, isolated and paranoid; cannibalism became rampant, leading to a number of new pandemic diseases; a host of xenophobic, brutal religions cropped up, leading to wholesale slaughter of their perceived enemies. The human population of Earth dropped from a peak of 9.6 billion down to less than half a billion in under a decade.

It is now 2089, 28 years after the bombs first fell. While there are still pockets of high technology and impressive creature comforts, those heavily guarded areas are the sanctum of only a few powerful groups. The vast majority of the world has returned to a culture based around farming, fishing, and physical labor. Communities range from kibbutzes which have formed for protection and cooperation of their members to villages ruled by warlords who keep an iron hand around the throats of their minions. Roving groups include missionaries on peaceful pilgrimages and cutthroat bands of outlaws who kill for sport and often eat their human prey.

Introduction to the World

After the Collapse is a role-playing game based on the FATE role-playing game system. It is based in our own world, not quite a century ahead of the current day. Because of a limited nuclear war in the Middle East, petroleum products have become nearly unavailable, leading to a complete collapse of modern civilization. Transportation, heating, industrial fertilizer, lubricants – all the items derived from petroleum and all have become scarce or non-existent in most of the world, and those areas that still have access to oil are keeping it for themselves.

Most of civilization has returned to an agrarian life, but the presence of high tech tools and weapons make for a completely different, often more brutal, twist on that society from what existed in the past. This is the world much like those in the movies *Mad Max* or *The Book of Eli*, David Brin's *The Postman* (and the movie made from it), and similar works. It is about the gritty survival of normal humans in a darker and more dangerous version of our world.

The setting is meant to be hard science fiction, which is to say that the people who populate the world are the same sorts of people that populate ours, with the same sets of abilities. They have just found themselves in a much harsher world with few of the amenities that we depend on. The system does not allow for zombies, mutants with super powers, extra-terrestrials, or any other paranormal creatures or abilities. There are excellent and fun games out there which support such things — this is not one of them. The technology available is a logical extension of what is likely to be invented in the next 50 years, and assumes some fairly predictable advances in electronics, communications, pharmaceuticals, medicine, transportation, robotics, energy weapons.

The technology improvements do NOT include significant advances in what are called today alternative power sources like solar and wind power. This lack can be rationalized a number of ways, but it is fundamental to the game world that society has collapsed due to the scarcity of power. While there might be small groups within the world that are thriving due to their improvements in solar power, for instance, they are jealously guarding their secrets, and the rest of the world is struggling without the energy sources that we take for granted today.

The part of the world that has been most thoroughly described is North America – specifically the former United States. The U.S. has split into six different regions, with diverse governments and social structures. The included scenarios are all in these regions, but the rules will work in any parts of the world, if the GM wants to make the effort to flesh out the economics and politics.

Timeline

2056   President Andrew Mark Jackson is elected for his first term, promising to "bring the troops home."

2057   All U.S. troops are out of the EU except for one base in Germany.

2058   All U.S. troops are out of Germany, Japan, Phillipines, Viet Nam, Taiwan, Australia, Mexico, most of Africa, most of South America, and reduced throughout the Middle East. A more conservative government elected in Pakistan. U.S. troops are given 30 days to leave the country, but it turns out that 27 days was enough.

2059   The only U.S. Troops in any numbers more than an honor guard outside the country are in Israel, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Afghanistan.

2060   President Jackson is re-elected in a landslide, promising to complete the process. All troops come home. Other than small forces protecting embassies, there are no American soldiers on duty outside U.S. Soil. Muslim extremists topple the House of

Saud and rename Saudi Arabia to be Allabalad, or "Country of Allah." The Taliban, long held in check as a fringe group, once again takes control of Afghanistan.

2061   The infighting within Iraq ends abruptly when a charismatic young Imam persuades the country that unifying against Israel is their only hope for long-term survival. Soon Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, and Allabalad join Iraq, declaring war against Israel. There is widespread joy in the Muslim world that Sunnis and Sikhs have finally found a cause that brings them together, at least temporarily.

Israel drops a a 100 kiloton fusion bomb, annihilating the city of Rutba, Iraq, in a desperate attempt to convince the united Arab countries to back off. As the tanks roll into Tel Aviv, Haifa, Holon, and Netanya, the hawks within the Israeli government hole up in Be'er Sheva. As this city also starts to fall, they release their entire nuclear arsenal, leaving every country that touches the Red Sea or the Persian Gulf destroyed, along with most of Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Turkmenistan, and as far north as Turkey and Azerbaijan. It is predicted to be over a thousand years before humans can safely enter the zone again. Worldwide oil prices triple overnight, and reach 20-fold before the year is out.

2062   Al Qaeda, an extremist Islamic organization thought eliminated in the 2040's, makes a resurgence. Suicide bombers destroy 83 of the 211 nuclear power plants in the United States. Rolling brown-outs become the norm. As the security on power plants becomes impenetrable, the focus of the attacks moves to the Alaska oil pipeline, which is breached in over a hundred locations. Every one of the huge Agri-business farms in the Midwest fail. The few that managed to raise their feeble, under-fertilized crops end up leaving them rotting in the field.

California suffers a massive earthquake, completely destroying Los Angeles and changing the coastline from San Jose past San Diego into Mexico. What used to be Los Angeles is now an archipelago. Baja California is now an island.

The Christian Party, once considered a fringe party, starts to gain supporters who have listened to their message that the disasters are God's punishment for the sinful state of American society. The California earthquake becomes fodder for the cause.

2064   The first food riots in New York City are in January, then Washington D.C, Boston, Philadelphia, Albany, Los Angeles, Chicago, Memphis, Denver, Atlanta, and Raleigh follow suit over the next two months. Estimates of dead exceed 80 million, and people already start referring to the winter as "The First Wave." Unfortunately, the cynics who invented this name had underestimated. Late in the year, John Philip Granger is elected President on an "Alternative Energy" platform. Ed Zimbernest is elected governor of Texas.

2065   Better planning and the government releasing more of its strategic fuel reserves makes the winter of 2065 less of a disaster than the previous year. There are a few small riots, and an attitude of lethargy seems dominant compared to the anger of the previous year. At the behest of governor Zimbernest, Texas begins reducing exports of petroleum. Near the end of the winter the first great pandemic, popularly called Sudden Onset Brain Fever, shortened to 'Sob-F,' sweeps through the country. It decimates the east coast, but no part of the country is left unaffected. Its spread is linked to cannibalism.

2066   Texas further reduces petroleum exports. Other states express their outrage in public protests. When the Texas Rangers win the World Series, they are boo'ed.

2067   It becomes public that all the money that was earmarked for alternative energy has been embezzled by Granger's Energy Czar, Suzanne Karzchev, and her cronies. Granger resigns in disgrace. An angry public destroys hundreds of buildings belonging to

"green energy" providers, including many companies that were never involved in the scandal.

2068   The mid-term elections bring into office a wave of senators who ran on the "Everybody Contributes" platform. The primary position of this platform is that Texas and Alaska must release the oil they have been holding back. When the filibuster by the senators from Texas is outvoted, the two senators and all the congressmen from the Lone Star State return to Austin in a chartered jet.

2069   On January first, Ed Zimbernest announces Texas' secession from the United States. They are joined by Arizona and New Mexico, forming the Republic of Texas. By March, the United States army is soundly defeated outside Shreveport Louisiana, long before they reached Dallas. The troops moving south from Oklahoma City suddenly discover that their fuel and ammunition has all been fouled, as most of Oklahoma also joins the Texas Republic. The new government invites the troops to stay, if they want to join the Republic, and they promise supplies and free passage back to the United States for any who leave without causing trouble. Without firing a bullet, the Texans doubles their supply of heavy equipment, planes, tanks, and vehicles. When Alaska announces it is joining the Republic, the will of the former United States is broken. They can not afford to fuel the vehicles they have, so a peace agreement is quickly forged.

Within the year Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee, and South Carolina secede, forming the Confederate States of America. They are joined by significant parts of the neighboring states. As predicted by many, the entire industrialized east coast falls completely into ruin as the last of the oil disappears. Though it never forms any unified identity, the rest of the continent calls it just The Badlands.

Saint Louis declares itself the new capital of the United States. President James Smith invites all God-fearing lands to join them, and the country soon is re-formed. Its southern border is composed of Kentucky, Arkansas, Kansas, and the remains of Oklahoma (which still called itself Oklahoma, as does the bulk of the former state within the Texas Republic). The west coast states continue to consider themselves part of the U.S., and they acknowledge the new capital in St. Louis, though they generally oppose the bulk of the changes made.

Although they keep the name The United States of America, they immediately rewrite the constitution to build it around the Bible. Citizens are free to choose whatever Christian church they like, though some that they consider unusual, such at the Latter-Day Saints, are strongly discouraged. Non-Christians are politely asked to convert or leave, and many do. They are generously given until the end of 2072 to find a new home. The west coast states all resist these extreme measures, but are consistently out voted. They threaten to secede if the government goes through with forming a theocracy, a threat that is met with a thunderous yawn of apathy, often accompanied by a dismissive hand-wave.

It is not clear where the trend started, but it seems universal: When anyone says "USA" they are referring to the old, 50-state country. When referring to the modern United States of America, they will shorten it to "the U S of A."

2073   The First Cleansing. The non-Christians who had not yet left the United States are rounded up and given one last chance to convert. Most Muslims are killed, Jews are merely sent out, driven east to the Badlands or the lucky ones escape north into Canada.

As they had promised, the west coast states secede from the United States, to cries of "Good riddance." The southern half of California plus the southeast portion of

Nevada and much of Arizona finally compromise on the name New Ellay, a memorial to the many lives lost in the earthquake. Washington state, Oregon, and the northern half of California form the United Northwest.

2077   The Second Cleansing. Within the U S of A, the non-Christians who escaped the First Cleansing are hunted down, and most are killed. Many claim to have been good Christians all along, but the lynch mobs rarely listen to such lies. Owning a *Torah*, *Qur'an*, or a *Book of Shadows* is grounds for a state execution.

Welcome to the world. Are you from the deeply religious United States of America? The Republic of Texas, run by the oil barons and their sycophants? New Ellay, where water is almost as hard to find as gasoline? The tech-savvy lands of the United Northwest? Or simply from The Badlands, where life is cheap and only the strong, the fast, or the very, very clever survive?

Introduction to FATE

This document assumes that the reader is already somewhat familiar with the FATE 3.0 role-playing system. If you are not familiar with FATE, start here: [Fate in a Nutshell](http://evilhat.wikidot.com/fate-csrd:nutshell) (http://evilhat.wikidot.com/fate-csrd:nutshell). This document presents a complete game, including enough of the core FATE rules to get started. However, you might find clarification and more examples if you peruse the Evil Hat site.

FATE is unlike other role-playing games in that it is more about the story, jointly told by the players and the GM, than it is about defeating monsters and collecting treasure. Usually the actions and rolls are resolved between the player and the GM, and then the player takes the results and describes the final result. See the example, "Protecting the Pres" in the Using Skills section.

In addition to writing the final copy, so to speak, the players should be freer than in other role-playing games to invent some of the scenery, especially mundane items that make sense in the area and are only for color. If a player wants to invent something that is "significant" to the action – for instance his character makes use of the item or the terrain in some way – this still can be done by spending a FATE point. For example, if your character is in a forest in Massachusetts, feel free to describe the pine tree you climb into to stay out of sight. But if you want to claim that the maple tree next to it has a dead branch you can snap off that is the perfect size for a club, spend a FATE point to make it so.

The basic mechanics around which a FATE character is built are Skills, Stunts, and Aspects. The mechanics by which these are applied are FATE dice rolls and FATE points. Each of these are described in more detail on the following pages, but here is a quick overview of the concepts.

Skills: There are only 26 skills which categorize all of human activity – from Driving to Diplomacy, Combat to Computer Software. Players will choose 15 skills at which their characters their characters have better-than-average ability (from barely better than average up to world-class talent). These define the raw abilities of a character.

FATE Dice Rolls: When the character attempts to do something more difficult than an everyday task, the GM may ask him to make a roll, using one of his skills. Sometimes the roll will be against an opponent making the same roll (melee combat vs. melee combat); sometimes it will be against an opponent making a different roll (Deception vs. Investigation); and sometimes it will be against a fixed number that the GM has already decided (Picking Locks). The mechanics of a FATE roll is described in the section with that name.

FATE points: Each player will start each adventure with some number of FATE points decided by the GM (typically 5). During the game, the player can spend FATE points to improve skill rolls (usually by applying an Aspect), to power stunts, and even to change the world around them. Characters can earn more FATE points during the game, via Aspects, and their bank of points is generally reset each adventure.

Stunts: Stunts are special actions or characteristics that give a character an extra option that normally would not be available. There is a stunt to declare that the character is a contortionist, for example, which enables him to fit into tight places that otherwise he would not even be allowed to try. Other stunts recognize a character's focus on integration of skills, giving one skill a bonus based on the value of another or allowing him to replace one skill for another in certain circumstances.

Aspects: Aspects are the trickiest but most important part of the FATE mechanic. Rather than being chosen from a list of available choices (as Skills and Stunts are chosen), the Aspects are always invented by the Player, and they should be based on some part of the character's background. Every Aspect has a positive portion, which can be "invoked" by the Player to boost a FATE roll, and a negative portion which can be "compelled" by the GM to add drama to the story.

In most uses of the FATE system, the player characters start out as heroic, larger-than-life characters. They are the best humanity has to offer at the skills in which they specialize. This game supports such an approach, using the standard FATE rules, but it also adds an optional set of rules for groups that wish to have

characters progress from promising youths through to heroic veterans, as is more common in role-playing games. See the Optional Rule "Starting Out Small" for more information on this approach.

Players Create the World

More than in most role-playing games, the players are expected to participate in filling out the details of the world around them. The flavor of the game is much more shared story-telling than GM vs. players, and players who are always trying to maximize their character are missing out on a lot of what FATE has to offer. With this attitude in mind, the GM should be more flexible, more willing to roll with the players' ideas, and be ready to change direction, to use and incorporate things and people that the players invent, but often to give them a little twist that the players did not expect.

If you do not have this kind of interaction in your game, you're missing out on a lot of the fun of FATE. It takes a while to get players to open up their own imaginations in this way, especially those who are used to more traditional RPG's where they only react to the world that the GM (or the scenario package that he has purchased) has created. These concepts are best described by example.

Example: Tracy meets with Mabel Rissetti

*Background: Mabel Rissetti is already a player-invented character. The player who owns Aduz Agave invented her as part of his background, as you can see in the Sample Character, Aduz Agave. Mabel was invented as part of his coming of age book, and is mentioned in his Aspect **Biggest Bad-ass in Brownsville**. It was reasonable for him to do so, since there certainly is a racketeering kingpin in that area, so the player just saved the GM the details of making up a name and giving her a bit of context.*

Tracy Dickson is in Austin, and has already used her Diplomacy/Contacting skill to put word on the street that she would like to meet with Mabel Rissetti, hinting that she has information that can lead to Aduz. Word arrives back that she is to be at the Old Pecan Street Cafe at 8:30.

Player: I arrive at the address, impressed with the old-world charm of the place. A maître d' in a tuxedo and sporting a disdainful sneer at my plain attire asks if I have a reservation. When I inform him that I will be meeting with Ms. Rissetti he suddenly becomes obsequious, calls me Miss Dickson though I hadn't mentioned my name, and leads me to a private room.

The GM had originally imagined that the restaurant was more of a bistro than fine dining, and did not plan for a private room, but there is nothing in his plans broken by these details, so he just accepts the bit of scenery and moves on. He does cut the player off before she describes Mabel being in the room, because he has plans that Mabel will observe Tracy for some time before making an entrance.

GM: The room has a table set for six people, though no one is seated at the moment. The only occupant is a young waitress, who looks at you expectantly. Beside the archway through which you just entered, which leads back to the main dining room, there is another door on the side which probably leads to a kitchen. You notice that the archway includes a curtain that could be drawn, but no solid door.

Player: I walk slowly to take a seat, one that offers a view of both the door and the archway. As I walk I study the walls and the paintings for spyholes, traps, or any other anomalies. The waitress has dark hair but light eyes, and, when I ask, she tells me her name is Carlita. "Tell me, darling," I ask, "how long have you worked for Big Mabel?"

More details that the GM hadn't invented, but they fit so he is happy for the player to supply them. Suddenly he has a brilliant idea: the waitress is, in fact, Mabel Rissetti in disguise. He knows that Tracy has a Superb (+5) Investigation skill, which is the skill that would be used to pierce a disguise, but he decides on the spot that Mabel's Deceit skill is Great (+4) and he gives Tracy a -2 to penetrate it, for a freely-tagged Aspect of 'The character was just what she expected." Anyway, it's more fun and makes a better story if the Mabel/waitress is

trying to pump Tracy for information at the same time Tracy is trying to get the same from her, so he lets the disguise work, at least for a while.

Units of Gaming Time or of Storytelling

Three different units of time are used frequently in this description: Adventure, Session, and Scene. These become significant both in planning the game as a Game Master (GM) and in applying consequences to the characters when they are injured. As the GM, you should have a pretty good idea of what the characters are expected to accomplish over these time periods, even though you may have little idea of how they will accomplish it.

Adventure

An adventure is an entire story, the equivalent of a complete novel. This doesn't mean that the characters won't go on another adventure later – after all, many of our favorite books have sequels or even become series. But the entire story arc should be complete, the main bad guy defeated, and significant loose ends tied up. One adventure should last over several, even up to a dozen or more, sessions.

If a player receives a consequence of "done" (which essentially means "dead" except that people rarely die in our pulp fiction universe), he typically will have some drawback that will last for the rest of the adventure, or even through the following one. See the chapter on Consequences for some examples.

Session

A session is usually a single gaming session, typically 2 to 8 hours of play if you are playing face to face. It should encompass a significant complete event, and end with a substantial breather for the characters. If you are running an online game or your group likes playing for 12 hours straight, the term may not exactly apply, but you should still think of the adventure as broken up in this way. (Try to plan your pizza break for the end of one Session, and then start another one after.)

As the GM, you do most of your work planning for a Session. You will have an idea of the goal that you expect the players to accomplish by the end, such as "discover the location of Ned Sneet's hideout" which might be followed by a Session with the goal "assault Ned Sneet's hideout." You will have planned several locations that the players are likely to visit, along with one or more named characters the might meet. Remember, though, the words of Dwight Eisenhower, "In preparing for battle I have always found that plans are useless but planning is indispensable." Do not expect the characters to go from scene to scene in exactly the order and reasoning that you imagined, but be prepared for most of the directions they are likely to go. If you have a good framework, then it will be reasonably easy to add on the decorations on the fly.

If a player receives a consequence of "severe" (a bad ankle sprain, a broken finger, or a public insult that is gossiped and laughed about for days), he typically will have some drawback that will last for the rest of the session, and often through the following one. See the chapter on Consequences for some examples.

Scene

A scene is the smallest unit of time that you really think about when planning. Usually a scene will take place in a single location, except that a car chase, for instance, would still be considered a single scene. It is always characterized by a period of activity followed by a minor bit of down time in which characters can regroup, reload, and (usually) make some plans of what to do next.

If a player receives a consequence of "moderate" (a bad muscle cramp, a minor sprain, or an embarrassing faux pas), he typically will have some drawback that will last for the rest of the scene, or even through the following one, but no longer. See the chapter on Consequences for some examples.

Aspects

Aspects are phrases that describe the character. They are the most free-form element in the character creation, in that you are not limited to a specific set of skills or stunts from which to choose. Your character will have six aspects, and each one should have a positive and a negative interpretation, which are referred to as "Invoke" and "Compel." The player invokes the aspect to improve one of his skills – this costs the player a FATE point. The GM can also make use of the aspect to compel the player, putting him in some awkward situation. A player can buy his way out of a compel by spending a FATE point, but much of the fun is in overcoming these challenges.

Aspects tend to focus around the character's skills, especially the ones at which he excels, but they are more specific, telling more about the personality, fears, and motivations of the character. From a game-mechanic point of view, Aspects can be "invoked" in order to improve a FATE roll (costing a FATE point when you do so). They can also be "compelled" by the GM (or even another player), which puts the character in a difficult, possibly dangerous, situation. When used in this manner, the Player earns an extra FATE point to spend later. (Of course, often he needs to spend it right away, in order to get out of the difficult situation. But it's all about telling a good story.)

For example, a character whose best skills are 'resolve' and 'melee combat' might have an Aspect of "Raised in a Shoalin Temple." The player would go on to describe the Aspect, to say it can be invoked when the character needs to show mental discipline, as well as when he is fighting unarmed combat. The Player might go on to say that this Aspect would be compelled when the character is in a situation that requires knowledge of the norms of social behavior. The character, due to his isolated upbringing, would be ignorant of such things. The Player would be expected to role-play the negative as well as the positive parts of the Aspect.

Each Aspect that you create for your character should come from something specific in your invented background. If you have the time and the desire, it works well if the players coordinate their back stories. They do not have to have been integral in each others' lives, just crossed paths at important, life-altering moments. (See the Optional Rule *Character Creation: Writing Books.*)

> **Player Tip**
>
> You will generally want several of your Aspects to apply to your primary abilities. Even if you are Superb (+5) at Burglary, there will come a time when the whole team is counting on you to disarm the security system. If you fail, then dozens of well-armed, very large guys are going to show up and put a huge crimp in your plans. That's the time you will want to use a FATE point with your Aspect "Hates to be locked out" in order to add +2 to your roll.
>
> However, once you have your primary talents covered, be sure to include a couple of Aspects that are in an entirely different direction, circling around something that your character *wishes* he were skilled at, but he really isn't. It will give some depth and some humility to your character.

Invoking Aspects

> *After the Collapse* uses a non-standard FATE rule. In *After the Collapse*, only the first Aspect gives +2 to the roll, successive ones only give +1.

Each player character will have six Aspects, each of which can be 'invoked' in certain circumstances, in order to aid a skill roll. After he rolls the dice but BEFORE the results are announced, the player might decide that his total is not enough. If his character has an Aspect which applies to the skill and the situation, then he can spend a FATE point to modify the roll. At the player's choice, he can either add 2 to the result or he can roll again.

If the character has a second Aspect that can also apply to the situation, he can use a second FATE point to add an additional +1 to the roll. Only the first Aspect

applied gives +2. This is true even if the Aspect comes from some other source, such as a freely-tagged Aspect. Note that this is a variation from standard FATE rules, which allow for multiple Aspects applied to the same roll, each adding +2 to the roll. The GM might choose to go with standard FATE rules, but this approach was taken to give After the Collapse a grittier, slightly more deadly feel to the game than if the player always knows he can pump +6 into a key roll whenever he is under real pressure.

Examples

Slippery Fellow

Invoke: Tony rarely makes a sound when he walks, and he naturally sticks to the shadows.

Compel: Tony's natural stealthiness tends to put people off. Skilled security people tend to track him, at least once they spot him.

Interpretation: The player can invoke *this Aspect to add +2 to any stealth roll by spending a FATE point. The GM might* compel *this Aspect by having a security guard escort him personally through the building, foiling his original plans to slip unseen into a crucial area.*

Robin Hood Complex

Invoke: Tony enjoys relieving wealthy people of their burdens.

Compel: While Tony has no pangs of guilt over stealing from the affluent, he is likely to give his riches away to people who are struggling, especially those who have been knocked down by society.

Interpretation: The player can invoke *this Aspect to add +2 to any roll for burglary from or picking a pocket of a wealthy person, by spending a FATE point. The GM might* compel *this Aspect by introducing some bedraggled and barefoot orphans and making sure Tony spends his new-found fortune buying them some shoes.*

Stiff upper lip

Invoke: Harold Buckminster is not easily frightened or intimidated, though perhaps his stalwartness is as much from his terror at being embarrassed than true courage. He also is better able to act in spite of a wound that might otherwise be disabling.

Compel: Harold lacks empathy, and has real trouble understanding people who have different motivations or judgments than he has.

Interpretation: By spending a FATE point, the player can invoke *this Aspect to increase a Resolve roll against intimidation or to resist torture. It also would apply on an Endurance roll to carry on through pain or suffering. The GM might* compel *this Aspect when he meets, for instance, a tribe of Native Americans who offer to share their meal of grubs and meal worms; he is too fastidious to eat the strange food, and consequently not only does he suffer from hunger but also he manages to offend his kind hosts.*

Not Just a Pretty Face

Invoke: Tracy Dickson might be a doll, but she can shoot and she packs a mean right hook.

Compel: Tracy can get pretty angry when someone thinks of her as "just a girl."

Interpretation: The player can invoke *this Aspect to add +2 to a roll for Melee Combat (unarmed) or Ranged Combat (Firearms) by spending a FATE point. The GM might* compel *this Aspect by having dock worker whistle at her, and informing the player that Tracy now has to go confront the neanderthal or spend a FATE point to avoid the compel.*

Numbers Don't Matter: Once he became an adult, Aduz rarely found himself fighting only one enemy. He was so often ganged up on that he got used to it.

> Invoke: Melee Attack or Defense when Aduz is outnumbered.
> Compel: Aduz will hold back against a single opponent, ignoring the first attack if it is only 1 or 2 shifts of damage. He will not strike until a second blow or a 3-shift or higher blow lands.

Guidelines

Typically, an Aspect should be invokable for any use of a single skill, or some limited uses of two or even three skills, depending on how limited the uses are. Avoid the "superman" Aspects, that basically could apply to every roll. Players who have not got the spirit of FATE might try to use this technique to "max out" their character. But the better approach is to think about real role-playing, to imagine real quirks and vulnerabilities in the character as well as his strengths. It is the character's weaknesses more than his strengths that make for a good story. Being really great at some things is good fun, but don't make that the whole character.

Freely Tagged / Situational Aspects

Freely tagged Aspects, also called Situational Aspects, can help a player without having to spend a FATE point. Sometimes they can come from the environment, and sometimes from actions that the player specifically took to create the situation. For example, if the character is trying to sneak across a room at night when all the lights are out, he can freely tag the Aspect, 'Dark' in order to assist his stealth roll. The might be from the environment already, or perhaps he took steps to make sure that the lights are not functioning. Generally, the GM should be a little more lenient at granting the use of a Situational Aspect if the character actually spent time and energy causing the situation to exist.

There are several stunts which create freely-taggable Aspects, also. For instance, the stunt 'Take Down' has specific mechanics by which the opponent is given the Aspect 'on the ground' which can be freely tagged by anyone in melee combat with that character. Another example is the stunt 'Clever Facade' with which the player is able to glean one of the Aspects of his opponent. Often this information will present the player with an opportunity to tag this Aspect in some way. This sort of situation is more likely to come up in a Social combat than a Physical one.

The limitation on stacking Aspects – only the first one provides +2 to the roll and successive ones provide only +1. This limitation applies to freely-tagged Aspects as well as ones you spent a FATE point for. Also, you can only have one freely-tagged Aspect on any one roll, even if there are several that might apply.

A player can always suggest an Aspect that he can freely tag, but it is the GM's decision whether or not to allow it. If a player is averaging more than one or two freely tagged Aspects per scene (not counting the ones he specifically created by using a stunt) then it is being abused.

Required Aspects

In creating a campaign, the GM might have a particular type of Aspect that he requires, drawn from a specific event in the player character's backstory. This sort of Aspect is typically reason that the group of Player Characters got together.

Examples

Induction Aspect: As the game is starting, the GM informs the players that the characters will all be part of an organization called "The Umpires," a vigilante organization that is fighting to eliminate groups that abuse,

abduct, traffic in, or otherwise harm children. He declares that one of the Aspects for every PC must be related to how they learned about or joined the organization.

Arrest Aspect: The GM lets the players know that they will be starting in prison, and will break out together. Their first adventure will be escaping the horrible conditions and corrupt guards. However, before we start that adventure, part of their character backstory, including at least one Aspect, must describe how it is they were arrested and put into prison in the first place.

Skills

There are 26 skills from which to choose, many of which are broken up into sub-skills. These are intended to represent any action that a Player Character wants to do, from skydiving to fixing broken electronics to engaging in a battle of wits with a warlord. For any action, the GM should first decide if this is just a basic action that anyone could easily accomplish (in which case there is no roll for it at all) or if it is something that carries some risk of failure and requires a roll. In the latter case, he then must decide what skill or skills are relevant, and then what the target should be for success, on the FATE Ladder. The GM might decide that a certain specialized action would draw from multiple skills, or he might require two rolls. See the examples below.

Your character will have some skills at which he is really skilled, a bunch that at which he is quite good, and some at which he is only a little better than most people.

When you roll a skill, the result is evaluated on The FATE Ladder, shown below. If the roll is a skill competition, where two characters have opposing skills, then each character rolls and the difference is evaluated on The FATE Ladder.

FUDGE Dice / FATE Dice

FUDGE Dice, or FATE dice, are cubes, like normal dice. However, instead of the numbers 1-6, each die has two sides with a plus sign, two sides with a minus sign, and two sides which are blank. Whenever you roll a skill, you roll four of these FATE dice, adding +1 for every plus sign and -1 for every minus sign to your skill ability level. The random factor can affect your roll by + or − 4, though it is rare to see a delta of more than 2.

If you are using an online tool that does not support FATE dice natively, you can roll **4d3-8**, which gives the same results.

The FATE Ladder										
Adjective	Terrible	Poor	Mediocre	Average	Fair	Good	Great	Superb	Fantastic	Epic	Legendary
Number	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8

In the initial character creation, you will choose 15 of the 26 skills which you position in the Skill Pyramid to indicate where your character's aptitudes lie. When using this standard pyramid, you have one skill at which you are Superb (+5), two at which you are Great (+4), etc. down to five skills at which you are Average (+1). The remaining skills will be considered to be at Mediocre, so they have no bonus. However, see the optional rules for Starting Out Small; your GM might decide that this is the sort of game he wants to play. Using the optional technique, you will start out with a smaller skill pyramid, and it will increase as you play.

Skills Pyramid	
1 skill at Superb (+5)	❏
2 skills at Great (+4)	❏ ❏
3 skills at Good (+3)	❏ ❏ ❏
4 skills at Fair (+2)	❏ ❏ ❏ ❏
5 skills at Average (+1)	❏ ❏ ❏ ❏ ❏

Skill Categories

The skills are broken up into five categories: Social, Physical, Coordination, Knowledge, and Perception. You can choose your skills from all the groups with no restriction. The grouping is only important when assigning the effects of injuries (called 'consequences'). For example, the GM may decide that your wounded shoulder puts you at -1 for all Coordination Skills for the rest of this scene.

Sub-skills

Many of the skills are broken up into sub-skills. For any such skill, you can choose to **specialize** in one of the sub-skills, which improves that sub-skill ability by one point at the cost of dropping the ability in the other sub-skills by one point. You always have the option of not specializing, which means that the sub-skills all remain at the same level.

For example, say John puts the skill Computer software as one of the skills at which he is Great (+4). Note that this skill offers three specialties: Hacking, Robotics (programming), and Automation and general software. He can choose to say that he is great at all the sub-skills, or he can specialize in, say, Hacking, which makes him Superb (+5) at that one sub-skill and only Good (+3) at the two others.

> **Sub-skills are OPTIONAL**
>
> The use of sub-skills at all is not standard FATE, and is considered an optional rule. If the GM does not want the extra complexity, then he might ban the use of specialization. Note that even if the GM has allowed the rule, a player is not required to specialize, even with skills that offer sub-skills. The player always has the option to take the skill unspecialized.

The player can choose either of the two approaches below for a skill that has sub-skills. However, once selected, he is locked in with that choice, at least for the time being Depending on the choices the GM has made for managing the game, there are opportunities both for moving skills within the skills pyramid and for changing skills from specialized to unspecialized and back again.

Unspecialized	
Skill: Computer Software occupying a Great (+4) slot	Result
Sub-skill: Hacking	Great (+4)
Sub-skill: Robotics (programming)	Great (+4)
Sub-skill: Automation and general software	Great (+4)
Specialized	
Skill: Computer Software (Specialty Hacking) occupying a Great (+4) slot	Result
Sub-skill: Hacking	Superb (+5)
Sub-skill: Robotics (programming)	Good (+3)
Sub-skill: Automation and general software	Good (+3)

When you enter these on the character sheet, you just enter the skill name in the slot it occupies, with the specialty sub-skill in parentheses. Then just remember to add one when rolling the specialty sub-skill, and subtract one when rolling any of the other sub-skills.

Supplemental Skills

Sometimes an action will require two skills at the same time, such as shooting while driving or investigating a scene while using stealth to do it covertly. When these situations occur, the player (or perhaps the GM) should choose one of the skills that is supplemental. The supplemental skill will be at -1 or -2, at the GM's judgment of how difficult the one task makes the other. The Stunt 'Ambidextrous' will often eliminate this penalty, when the two tasks represent actions by different hands. (Example: Disarming an alarm system while hanging from a rope.)

Skills and Equipment

Many skills require that the character has the basic equipment to do it. Field surgery is hard without bandages; Fixing a car engine is impossible without at least basic tools; etc. Unless the player characters have had their possessions taken away from them, you should generally assume that they have the equipment to perform their top six skills (those at Good, Great, and Superb) without penalty. After that, use common sense: If a knife or a piece of rope would be all you need, they probably have access to that with no problem; but only a serious mechanic has a spare set of spark plugs on him. Unless the task is simply impossible without equipment, however, the maximum penalty to the skill should be -2. That represents the player managing to jury-rig some tools and/or do without.

In addition to applying a penalty for inadequate tools, skills can be augmented with specially good tools (some of which are listed in the Equipment section). For the most part, the uses of a skill assume basic tools, so superior tools can give a player +1 on the roll if such tools are likely to exist. The GM might decide that some skills already assumed the best possible tools being used. For example, using Burglary/Lock Pick skill to open a bank vault: The Legendary result needed already assumed you were using the ideal tools for the job. However, your own Aspects, applied using FATE points, would still add to the roll.

Examples of Using Skills

1. Protecting the Pres

The characters are providing undercover security for the President of New Ellay at a party in his honor, and they are expecting trouble from a violent insurrectionist group. The GM knows that two members of the group are disguised as busboys, and are planning to take the President hostage. The GM has already rolled (or merely decided) that their disguises (skill: Deceit/Disguise) are Good (+3). Knowing that Tracy Dickson has an Investigation skill of Great (+4), he rolls for her, getting a 1 for a Superb (+5) result. Two shifts of success are enough that she spots them before they are even in position, so he explains that she notices two

new busboys, one wearing an ill-fitting jacket that seems to be hiding a weapon, are entering the dining room from the kitchen.

Immediately, Tracy uses her throat mike to inform Tony Pizzagi, who is watching from the upper balcony. Earlier, Dexter had an Epic (+7) success setting up their private communications system (skill: Electronics/Radio), so the GM has already decided that they can talk freely, even though the enemy has successfully jammed the communications of the President's official protective detail.

Tony sees the two intruders and wants to take them out immediately. He knows that his skill in Ranged Combat/Firearms is only Fair (+1) so he doesn't want to take a risk in the crowded room, even with his +1 Luger. Looking at the map of the room, the player decides that Tony will leap to a chandelier and swing into the intruders, trying to take them both down.

The GM informs the player that this action will require two rolls, Athletics/Acrobatics for the leap and swing, and Melee Combat/Unarmed for the attack, which will be at -1 because it is a supplemental action. He has already decided the first action will require a Good (+3) success to leap to and swing from the chandelier, but all he informs the player is that it looks like quite a leap, and most people wouldn't try it.

Tony's player rolls the FATE dice first for the leap, counting on his Superb (+5) skill level for Athletics/Acrobatics. However, he rolls a -2 for a total of +3. He considers spending a FATE point to improve it, but decides that is probably enough. He then rolls +3 on the Melee Combat roll, added to his Good (+3) ability but subtracting one for the supplemental action to reach total of +5. The player wants to make sure he takes them both down, and he worries that they might not be simple minions, so he spends a FATE point applied to his Aspect "Swashbuckler" and announces an Epic (+7) result.

The GM knows that the first intruder is no minion, but is actually Ned Sneet, an important Lieutenant of the insurrectionist group. If these were just minions, they would not get a roll, but would each have just a single point of Defense and Tony could take them both out with a Good (+2) success. As a Named Character, Ned Sneet has his own skills and gets a roll. After doing so, the GM gets a Great (+4) result, so he informs the player that he has three shifts to work with. He adds that, with no shifts of success on the first roll, Tony will finish this round on his butt, rather than standing and ready for the next action.

With the rolls done, Tony's player describes the scene with flair: *"With the scoundrels pointed out to me, I waste no time for deliberation. I step on the balcony railing and leap for the chandelier, winking at a pretty cocktail waitress as I grab it. It is this distraction, no doubt, that causes me nearly to lose my grip, but I hang on and smash both feet into the intruder who is obviously packing a weapon. Delivering a solid blow, I drive him back into the other suspicious fellow. All three of us land in a heap, none immediately ready for action, as a cry of outrage comes up from the stunned guests."*

Tony had three shifts of success on the attack roll, and he chose to use them to take out the second intruder (who is just a minion) rather than to put them all into the first man (Ned Sneet). Therefore, the GM decides that Ned takes one one shift of damage and suffers no consequences other than being knocked down for a round. The minion, however, has slammed his head against an oak buffet table and is out of the combat.

2. Bring Down the Oil Baron

The player characters are members of a secret society that wants to break the stranglehold the oil barons have on the entire Republic of Texas. Stage one is to locate some incriminating evidence that they believe is kept in the wall safe inside the office on the third floor of his mansion. They are pretty sure he keeps a thumb drive with his "home movies" of himself with young children, the contents of which will force even his loyal supporters to abandon him.

Knowing that this is a major operation, the team decides to do some reconnaissance first. José uses his Diplomacy/Contacting skill, which he has at Good (+3) level, trying to get an introduction to someone who works or has worked inside the mansion. Making a roll of 1 for a Great (+4) result, the GM decides that he contacts two people: a part-time cook who only fills in during large events, and a cleaning woman who works there every day. Jose then approaches the cleaning woman using specialty, Diplomacy / Convincing others, which his has at Superb (+5) level. When he rolls +3 for a Legendary (+8) result, the GM tells him to go ahead and describe their encounter, including her complete cooperation, but cuts him off when the player starts getting into what the woman does in her attempt to seduce José.

Physical Skills

Melee Combat

The art of poking someone (or something) else in the eye with a sharp stick.

Sub-skills

- Unarmed (includes brass knuckles and non-weapon martial arts)
- Blade weapons
- Blunt weapons
- Thrust weapons

Opposed By: Defense or Melee Combat

This is, of course, an over-simplified view of combat, but it works well with the FATE system. All weapons will have an inherent bonus of -1 to +1, and unarmed is considered to be a -1 weapon. (However, it has the advantage of being always prepared. Also, there are devices, such as brass knuckles, that add 1 or 2 to your unarmed skill, making them essentially a +0 or +1 unarmed weapon.) Some weapons fit more than one category, allowing someone who has specialized in one of the sub-skills to take advantage of his ability. Different types of armor will have a defense bonus of +1 against certain weapon types, as well.

Defense

Opposes Melee Combat and Ranged Combat.

This skill is rolled once per round by each person who is being attacked. The shifts by which the attack roll exceeds the defense roll determines the scope of the damage. Different types of armor add a bonus of up to +2 to defense, sometimes dependent on the type of weapon being used. Also, if a character is actively avoiding more than one assailant, that will decrease his defense. A character can choose to ignore some attackers and focus on avoiding only the one powerful one, if he chooses, and he will not suffer this penalty against the powerful opponent, but effectively has no defense against the weaker ones.

# Attackers	Defense Adj
1	0
2-3	-1
4+	-2

Full Defense: If a character focuses on avoiding his opponent(s) and does not try to make an attack, he is considered to be on "Full Defense" and he gets an extra +2 to his defense.

Endurance

Endurance is the ability to keep performing physical activity despite fatigue or injury. This skill determines the character's Health Stress Track, as well as being used as a normal skill for fighting off poisons or disease, resisting torture, and staying awake for extended periods.

The Health Stress Track determines how much physical abuse a character can take, so it is a dangerous idea for a heroic character to ignore it. The Health Stress Track starts at 5 + the value of the character's Endurance skill, and there is a stunt to increase it by one more. See the chapter on Conflict and Damage for a complete description of how the Stress Tracks are used.

Might

This is a measure of pure physical power, be it raw strength or simply the knowledge of how to use the strength one has. For lifting, moving and breaking things, Might is the skill of choice. In a combat, Might can be used instead of melee combat if the objective is just to move the opponent rather than give him damage. Of course, if you are fighting on a rooftop or near the edge of a cliff, just moving him is probably enough. In this case, the opponent still defends with Defense (or Athletics/Acrobatics, if he prefers), but 3 shifts of success would be enough to

throw the opponent off the cliff. One shift would force the opponent to drop to his knees to avoid be over-leveraged, and two shifts would leave him hanging on the edge of the cliff at the character's mercy.

Athletics

Agility, balance, focus, speed, and coordination are all wrapped up in the skill Athletics.

Sub-skills

- Speed
- Acrobatics, Climbing, and Balance
- Eye-hand coordination

Athletics is also a catch-all for many actions that otherwise would not have an appropriate skill, subject to the GM's approval. For instance, if the player wants his character to attempt to swim across a turbulent river, he would use this skill. However, first he will have to convince the GM that it is reasonable, given the character's background, that he would be a skilled swimmer. The GM might decide to instill a -1 or even -2 penalty if he remains unconvinced.

Coordination Skills

Burglary

The generous act of relieving others of their material burdens.

Sub-skills

- Pick locks
- Disable Security Systems
- Sleight of Hand (includes picking pockets)

Picking locks or disabling security systems will require different levels of success depending on the determination and investment of the owner. These are some guidelines, but the GM should adjust for the circumstances. A drug kingpin with a brother who is a security expert might have installed an epic security system on his house, for example.

> Legendary (+8): Bank Vault
> Epic (+7): Jewelry Store Safe
> Fantastic (+6): Typical store safe, best home safes
> Superb (+5): Typical home safe, bank entry door
> Great (+4): Typical business entry door
> Good (+3): Expensive home door with deadbolt
> Fair (+2): Typical home door or car door
> Average (+1): a flimsy latch, as on a screen door

Success in disabling a security system generally implies not activating it. However, in some cases – such as a mechanical trap of some sort – successfully disabling it might just mean activating it in a way that is harmless. The point here is that failure means failure. The player can't, after failing on his disable attempt, then say, "Ok, I'll just stand way over here and trigger it with a stick." That represents a success, so that description might be used for a zero-shift or one-shift success, not for a failure. A failure implies that he misinterpreted it somehow, the place he thought was safe turned out not to be, and someone gets hurt. If it was only a one- or two-shift failure, it won't be a serious injury, but something bad definitely happened. Note that there is some overlap with Outdoorsman/Snares and Traps, in that both can be used to disable mechanical traps. For that purpose, the player can use whichever skill is better.

Sleight of hand ability uses a combination of dexterity and knowledge of misdirection. It is much easier to slip a card off the deck when the mark is looking elsewhere. This ability, the knowledge of how to manipulate where people are paying attention, can also be used when there is no actual hidden hand movement, just when the misdirection is needed. It is opposed by Investigation or Alertness: When the opposition is purely visual, then use Investigation, but against an attempted pickpocket, where the opposition is as much awareness of body position and touch sensitivity, use Alertness.

Driving

Driving any kind of land vehicle will fall here. The more specialized the vehicle, the higher skill it will take even to start it up.

Sub-skills

- Cars and small trucks
- Motorcycles, jet skis, snow mobiles
- Heavy trucks (semis, tanker trucks, dump trucks)
- Heavy machinery (cranes, front-end loaders, etc.)

Basic driving tasks in regular passenger vehicles do not require any skill or roll at all – the skill will apply to doing maneuvers, driving significantly faster than normal, or under unusual conditions. However, even basic use of heavy trucks or heavy machinery require at least a point of those skills. Most heavy machinery is inherently at -1 to use, so even basic tasks will require two points in the specialty. Doing more complex tasks with the vehicles – using a crane to extract a safe without hitting any walls, for instance – might require a Great (+5) or even Superb (+6) result.

Piloting

This skill applies to all vehicles that are not land-based.

Sub-skills

- Planes
- Helicopters
- Lighter than air ships (balloons, zeppelins)
- Watercraft (Ok, not exactly piloting, but close enough, and it had to go somewhere. This skill covers sailing, motorboats, and other boats)

As with the Driving skills, the GM should use judgment on how difficult the vehicle is to pilot, from Average (+1) for a sail board in a light wind, to Legendary (+8) for a jumbo jet in a storm with 2 engines non-functional.

Ranged Combat

Damaging someone or something from way over here.

Sub-skills

- Thrown weapons (includes grenades, molotov cocktails, knives, spears, darts)
- Bows, crossbows, miscellaneous (e.g. blowgun, slingshot)
- Firearms
- Energy weapons

Opposed by: Defense

As with melee weapons, the weapons themselves will have a bonus from -2 to +1, and the range can impose an additional penalty. Some weapons can only damage a single target, even if the skill roll is much more than is needed to take out the minion.

An improvised thrown weapons (e.g. a rock) is a -2 weapon: It just isn't in the same league as a bullet fired from a handgun. Plus it will suffer from range penalties a lot sooner. A dart that is heavy and intended as a weapon (that is, not a gaming dart) is a -1 weapon and might have a cap of one shift of damage but it might carry poison that inflicts additional damage as long as it broke the skin. Use common sense and remember that even an expert is not going to do more damage with a thrown bean bag as a beginner could do with a shotgun.

Firearms and many thrown weapons make a lot of noise, which can have its own consequences. Energy weapons tend to be harder to find and more expensive, but are quite silent in their use.

Stealth

Not being noticed, in a variety of ways.

Sub-skills

- Staying out of sight (opposed by investigation)
- Moving silently (opposed by alertness)
- Mixing into a crowd (opposed by investigation)

The sub-skill 'staying out of sight' is as much about understanding where people (and cameras!) are looking as it is about staying in the shadows.

'Mixing into a crowd' is the skill of not being noticed even though you are in plain sight. This is the relevant skill to use when tailing someone, whether doing it on foot or in a vehicle. This does not require a disguise, unless the character is in some place where not having one causes you stand out excessively. Mixing into the crowd in a locked-down army base is nearly impossible without a uniform, for instance. Therefore, the GM should impose a penalty of -1 to -3 depending on the need for a disguise, or if a disguise was attempted and seen through.

Social Skills

Intimidation

Resisted By: Resolve or Intimidation

Intimidation is the art of forcing others to back down using only a menacing glare or a threatening stance, and it is resisted by Resolve or the character's own Intimidation skill, whichever is higher. (It's hard to intimidate someone who is better at Intimidation than you have, even if he has a low Resolve.) Someone with a high Intimidation roll can chase off several minor characters (considered to have a Social Track of 1) at once. However, note that minions, especially of evil characters, might have a situational tag of "More Afraid of My Boss Than of You" and therefore will behave as if they have a resistance of 2 or 3. They still don't get a roll (being minions) but a character with a Fantastic (+6) result will only scare off two or three of them.

Resolve

This is the skill used to determine the character's Social Stress Track — how many points of "social damage" he can take before dissolving into a quivering mass of jelly, or running away screaming. The Social Stress Track starts at 5+ the value of the character's Resolve skill, though there is a stunt that will add one more. See the chapter on Conflict and Damage for a complete description of how the Stress Tracks are used.

Empathy

Empathy is the ability to understand what others are thinking, by interpreting facial expressions, body language, manner of speaking, and accents and language.

Sub-skills

- Reading Emotions (opposes Deceit/Spoken)
- Understanding Backgrounds
- Leadership

Reading Emotions is used for lie detection and other evaluation of current emotion. It is used to oppose Deceit/Spoken and it can also be used to interpret the emotions of someone who is not necessarily being deceptive. For example, after viewing a video without sound of a conversation between three people, with a fair (+2) result a character would know who is the superior and who is the inferior or supplicant, and whether orders or threats were given or a request was made. With a great (+4) result, the character would know what the other party felt about the order/threat/request. With a fantastic (+6) result he would have a pretty good idea what the actual order/threat/request was.

Understanding Backgrounds involves picking up on accents, phrasing, posture, and expressions to determine people's backgrounds. Where are they from? Were they military? Former addicts? etc. Often a successful roll will lead to guessing one or more of a person's aspects, which can lead to a freely-tagged aspect.

Leadership is important if you want minions of your own. Also, there are stunts to bring out the best in other characters and to help people work together.

Diplomacy

Diplomacy is the art of convincing others to do what you want them to do, think what you want them to think, and reveal secrets that they would otherwise keep hidden. True diplomats maintain an impressive network of contacts who are glad to help them at need.

Sub-skills

- Contacting Network
- Information Gathering
- Convincing Others

Contacting Network has to do with the depth and breadth of the people the character already knows (and the people they know), plus the loyalty that people in the network tend to show to the character.

Someone high in this skill knows how to contact a hit man, can get a message to the Pope, and "knows a guy who knows a guy…" If a character has lived in a city for the past 10 years or more, then he is +1 in this skill within his home city, -1 in the rest of the country, -2 outside the country. If he has moved around within a country in the past 10 years, he has no bonus or penalty within his country, but is still -2 outside it. Any city he has spent at least a month in within the past two years, he is, at worst, -1.

Information Gathering is more about getting information from the street when the contacting network is not available (i.e. the character is far from his home turf) or for learning about specific things that might have happened recently. For example, if you need to score some weapons-grade Plutonium, the Contacting specialist would be the person to find it. However, if you want to know who it was who hit the government Plutonium storage facility last week, the Information Gathering expert would be more likely to get a good result.

The Convincing Others specialty possibly has a fair bit of overlap with Deceit/Spoken. Any problem that could be solved with one could be approached in a different way such that it can be solved with the other. The big difference is that Convincing Others does not necessarily include a falsehood, but instead appealing to a person's fears, needs, honor, whatever works best for that particular opponent.

Deceit

There are many ways to deceive others, and most of them fall under this category.

Sub-skills

- Disguise (opposed by Alertness or Investigation)
- Forgery (opposed by Investigation or some Knowledge skills)
- Spoken (i.e. lying, conning) (opposed by Empathy/Reading Emotions)

Disguises are limited by the materials and time available, but a specialist will probably have a kit with him to make quick changes that will fool even a careful eye. A reversible coat, a big hat, and a limp can make someone nearly unrecognizable. When you add a wig or some facial hair, only an expert will penetrate it. If the character does not have access to any sort of disguise gear, the GM should apply a penalty of -1 or -2 to the attempt, or perhaps even just say that it is impossible without locating the right equipment.

Only the most skilled forgers attempt to make fake money, and the security systems in wealthier nations make it nearly impossible. However, forgery can also apply to identity documents, contracts, artwork, even antique furniture. In these cases, the opposing skill might be Arts or even General Science.

Resources

Resources is simply a measure of available wealth, but the specific form this takes, from a secret family silver mine to a well invested portfolio, can vary from character to character (and may be indicated and enhanced by their aspects).

Rather than track dollars, credits, or whatever, Resources is an indication of what purchases a character is able to make during an adventure. See the cost list in Appendix ??, in which the costs are simplified to just a Resources level. Each character can assume that he can buy one item per adventure of his resource level, plus two or three items on one level below his. For special items that the entire group wants, two characters with the same Resource level can combine to obtain one item at the level above.

GM's should be careful that players don't abuse this simplified system by gradually collecting top notch items, making their characters overpowered. Items will wear out, be stolen, be required in trade to pick up the new items, etc. Remember that this game is about story-telling, and there's no story if there's no challenge. As a rule of thumb, a character should only rarely have more than two items at his Resource level, and never more than one above it. The exception is characters with Resource skill at Moderate (0) or Average (+1) level – they should have a weapon and tools for any skills above Fair (+2) but none that produce bonuses, even if the other characters could trivially acquire them. This is somewhat arbitrary, but there it is.

In addition, characters who have access to a sizable organization's resources can potentially make bigger

purchases than they otherwise would be able, but these should come with significant strings attached. (Usually it is part of the adventure hook in the first place.) These organizations, even quite benevolent ones, will demand some favor or action in trade for the use of their resources. These expenditures are tracked by the organization, and as such, if subterfuge is important, personal resources are a wiser choice.

Knowledge Skills

Computer Software

The areas of the world which still maintain some electrical power generally have some level of computers, whether for security, information, or automated industry. All of these computers and robots need programming, and this is the skill that gets it done.

Sub-skills

- Hacking
- Robotics Programming
- Automation and General Software

Hacking is used to get control of databases, computerized security systems, banking systems, etc. without exactly having authorization. Once you've gained access to a computer system, you can retrieve or destroy data, turn off cameras, or other immediate tasks, but then setting up anything more complex will require a General Software success to program it.

Robotics Programming is necessary to repurpose an existing robot to do something other than its current job. A robot can only be programmed to do things it is physically capable of, so a simple industrial robot arm couldn't be programmed to shoot a handgun with any accuracy, but it could be set up to swing around and block the way as someone walks past. Personal service robots vary from moderately versatile to practically human-equivalent. Robots for security generally have their programming physically and electronically protected, so a character might need to succeed at Electronics/Computer Hardware even before getting a chance to reprogram it.

Automation and General Software is used for any other programming task, from home automation systems to traffic management (for those few places that still have enough working automobiles to call it traffic) to high-rise elevator controls to election systems to banking account tracking to whatever.

Electronics and Electrical

Communications devices, energy weapons, and computers are all made up of electrical and electronic devices. Constructing and repairing as well as disabling or breaking these devices all depends upon the Electronics and Electrical skill.

These are still common in a world with limited electricity, because they are so important to the rich and powerful. However, because electricity has become unreliable, all important devices now come with built-in battery backup. In other words, just cutting off the power to the security system will not disable it, you will need a successful application of this skill.

Sub-skills

- Radio and recording (includes tracking devices, visual and auditory bugs, GPS, telephony)
- Energy weapons and lasers (construction and maintenance)
- Computer hardware and miscellaneous (includes construction and maintenance of robots, electrical detonators, electric motors, and everything in electronics that is otherwise not covered)

Medicine

Sub-skills

- Poisons and antidotes
- Surgery and Field Medicine
- Diagnostic medicine, diseases, and pharmaceuticals

The poisons available are generally more sophisticated than the ones available through the Chemistry specialty of General Science. These could include poisons tailored for a specific individual, time-released, multi-step poisons, etc. (A multi-step poison is one where a person must get all the steps to be poisoned, and is otherwise harmless. So, for instance, only someone who ate the soup AND smoked one of

the special cigars AND shook hands with the baron will suffer the consequences. Good ones are completely untraceable.)

If a character were to specialize in Poisons, he would still need access to a genetics lab to make targeted poisons, or a professional chemistry lab to make multi-step poisons. If the cost of the lab (i.e. the Resources skill to own it) is below the unadjusted skill roll, that is a one point penalty to the roll. This doesn't mean that the character must own the lab himself, just have access to one (perhaps by sneaking in one night).

In addition, apply the following adjustments to the roll.

Poison qualifications (all that apply)	Penalty
Lethal Poison (as opposed to knock-out)	-2
Multi-step, 2 parts	-1
Multi-step, 3 or more parts	-2
Targets a specific person and is harmless to others	-1
Targets all members of a family and is harmless to others	-2
Hard to detect	-1
Nearly impossible to detect	-2
Delayed effect (i.e. the food taster won't die until well after the target has eaten it)	-1
Injected or ingested delivery	0
Topical delivery (i.e. by touch)	-1
Airborne delivery, short range (sprayed directly into the face, or, perhaps, put into the target's scuba tank)	-1
Airborne delivery, long range (sprayed into the room, or delivered via the air conditioning system)	-2

The process is:

 - Roll Poison Skill roll
 - If this is higher than the Resources value of lab, subtract 1.
 - Adjust for Aspects and skill points spent.
 - Player can intentionally reduce the value to make a weaker poison
 ---- This value represents the hours needed in the lab.
 - Adjust for qualifications from table above
 - Double this result. Call this the Poison Strength.

Detecting the Poison

The target of the poison may have a chance to detect the poison and avoid eating, touching, or breathing it. Of course, if the target is being held down and injected with the poison, he probably detects that he's being poisoned but it doesn't help him prevent it from happening.

Typically the GM will roll for the player, and might apply a bonus or penalty of up to 2 points, depending on the situation.

Poison Type	Alertness Roll Required
Normal	3
Hard to Detect	4
Nearly impossible to detect	6

If the poison is properly delivered to the target (s), it will act upon the target's stress track as a single blow of the Poison Strength (the value after all adjustments and then doubling).

When the poison is created, the player must specify whether the poison kills its target or merely knocks out the target. If the result on the stress track is 'done' then it will kill / knock out. For other consequences, the target will be disabled according to the severity of the consequence, just as if he had taken a physical blow of that level.

Example: Dr. Lamson want to make a knock out poison that will affect only Aduz Agave. His Medicine / Poison skill is 5 and he rolls a 1 for six points. He is using a lab that costs Resources 7, so there is no penalty there. He then spends a FATE point and applies his aspect of "Make 'em all sick" to increase the roll by 2.

The value adjusted for Lab and FATE points is now 8, which means he will need 8 hours in the lab to create it.

 - Knock-out poison (non-lethal) (-0)
 - Targets only Aduz and he has a DNA sample (-1)
 - It is Hard to Detect (-1)
 - It is a cream (topical delivery) (-1)
 ----- For a result of 5. Doubled is 10.

So, if properly delivered, it will act as a single blow with 10 shifts. Dr. Lamson arranges for Aduz to "win" a free massage at a local parlor, and he arranges for the masseuse to use the cream he has prepared as the lubricant. The GM decides that Aduz is so trusting and has not expressed any suspicion about he good luck, so he imposes a penalty of -2 to Aduz's Alertness roll to detect the poison. Rolling a 1, plus his Alertness skill of 3, minus the penalty is not enough for Aduz to detect the poison. He gets his massage, which is a 10 point hit on the big man's stress track. This is beyond Aduz's 'done' level so he is knocked out.

Mechanical

Sub-skills

- Engines (includes internal combustion engines and electric vehicle motors, plus the drive train and steering systems)
- Firearms: Construction and maintenance
- Construction (includes basic building construction, plumbing, heat, and air conditioning systems)
- Basic mechanics (includes parts of a vehicle that aren't covered under Engines, including body work; mechanical clocks, watches and the like; also any mechanical traps or devices.)

General Science

Sub-skills

- Physics and Math
- Chemistry (including explosives, some simple poisons, polymers, organic chemistry.)
- Botany and zoology
- Everything else

Humanities

Sub-skills

- History
- Law, politics, current events
- Languages

A character's Humanities/Languages skill determines how many additional languages he speaks over his native tongue. If he tries to converse with someone in a language that he doesn't know, choose the closest language that he does know and apply the following penalty to a roll against this skill.

Closest known language	Penalty
Very similar (e.g. Spanish & Italian)	-2
Common Root (e.g. German & English)	-4
Distantly related (e.g. Mongolian & Korean)	-6
Unrelated (e.g. Mandarin & English)	-8

The number of shifts of success after the penalty will determine the proficiency and speed of the conversation. Barely succeeding will mean a lot of hand gestures will be needed and the process will be very slow. 3 shifts would mean nearly fluent conversation, or the character could follow an overheard conversation between two native speakers. 5 shifts would mean that a native speaker would not be able to tell that the character is not himself a native speaker.

Arts

Sub-skills

- Literature, Writing
- Singing, Performing
- Drawing, Painting

Perception Skills

Alertness

The Alertness skill has two important purposes. First, it is used actively by the player when starting a combat. Each player makes a FATE roll for his Alertness skill and the GM makes one for the NPC's. Actions go in order of highest to lowest. The GM can choose to make a single roll for an entire scene, or he might prefer to roll each round.

Secondly, Alertness is used passively, to detect and react to unexpected events. The GM can choose to roll for the players to see if they notice someone hiding, or he might have them roll for themselves to see if they detect an ambush before it is sprung.

Investigation

Investigation is the combination of keen observation and the ability to glean information from facts. A skilled investigator can look at the blood spatter and the position of the bodies and tell you the exact sequence of events that resulted in the scene. He will immediately notice details that are out of place and will put them together.

Investigation is also used to see through disguises, to spot forgeries, to detect mechanical traps, to avoid being fooled by misdirection, etc. The ability is generally visual, though the GM might also have it apply to sounds and scents, as appropriate.

Outdoorsman

Outdoorsman is a collection of skills that can be associated with successfully living in the wild. When assigning penalties for moderate and severe consequences, some uses of this skill (horseback riding, building a snare) should be considered to be a coordination skill.

Sub-skills

- Riding and Animal Handling
- Tracking and Scavenging (includes finding food and water in hostile environments, making ropes, knives, axes from natural sources, and having a basic intuition for the outdoors)
- Snares and Traps (includes making and disarming of physical traps. Spotting them is Investigation.)

Note that there is some overlap in the last sub-skill with Burglary/Disable Security Device, in that both can be used to disable mechanical traps. For that purpose, the player can use whichever skill is better.

Stunts

Stunts represent the special, often heroic, abilities of the character. The GM will decide how many stunts the character has available, though it is typically 5 for an experienced character. Stunts are split into the same groupings – Physical, Social, Knowledge, Perception and Coordination – as skills. This is just for convenience in locating the stunts that might be relevant to a character, since players will typically focus their character on one or two of those areas.

Categories of Stunts

Stunts fall into four categories.

1. Skill Synergy. These represent cases where the character has become adept at a particular use of one skill, such that it increases his ability in another skill. For example, someone with excellent Eye-hand coordination (a sub-skill of Athletics) can take the stunt Gunslinger and his eye-hand coordination will improve both his speed and his accuracy when using a particular ranged weapon. Like Gunslinger, these skills often have different requirements with different effects.

   A player might choose the stunt but only qualify for the lesser effect, then something changes in his character such that he now meets the higher qualification. If this happens, he automatically receives the higher effect for as long as he meets the higher requirement. (This does not include tagging an aspect to increase the value – you tag an aspect to affect a roll, not the skill the roll is based on.) Skill Synergy stunts are automatically applied and never require a FATE Point or roll.

> **GM Tip**
>
> You may want to limit the players to no more than two Skill Synergy stunts, or even to only one. Otherwise, the min-max players could end up with boring, one-dimensional characters. Also, you should not allow more than one Skill Synergy stunt to affect the same skill, even if not specifically called out in the Stunts.

2. Free-Activation. These are stunts that can only be used in special circumstances, but they do not cost anything to use. For example, the stunt Dazzling Brilliance in Humanities allows the character to make up lies within his area of expertise and use his ability in that area instead of the Deceit skill to make his lie convincing. If a player has built an interesting character around some esoteric skills and applied stunts to them, the GM should make an effort to modify a scenario enough that these stunts can be used once every other adventure, more or less.

3. Chains of Stunts. There are a few chains of stunts, where a more powerful stunt has a prerequisite of another stunt. These are usually free activation stunts, and can lead to some pretty powerful and interesting abilities for a character. Remember that a player (in the normal game) has only 5 stunts available, so spending two or three of them on achieving one heroic ability implies that it can be pretty heroic. For example, the stunt Separate Persona represents the character perfecting a single disguise and using it enough that people actually know the other character as a separate person. The stunt Split Personality requires Separate Persona and further enhances the effect by allowing the character to have, when in disguise, some traits that are different from the original character. By itself, Split Personality would be too powerful a stunt, but as the second in a chain, it is acceptable.

4. FATE point activation. These are stunts that can be used to achieve a special result, and require the player to spend a FATE point to activate the stunt. These stunts are more generally powerful and generally useful than the free-activation stunts, but they are limited by the character's available FATE

points. An example is the Fosters Cooperation stunt based on a character's leadership ability. He can spend a FATE point to coordinate the efforts of several characters for one important skill roll.

Inventing New Stunts

The GM, perhaps with a player's suggestion, is free (even encouraged) to invent new stunts to fit a particular character. If you do so, you should first consider which of these categories a stunt belongs, and then give it a power level equivalent.

1. Skill Synergy. For a cross-skill enhancement, if the requirement is a specialized skill, then the effect should be either to a specialized skill, such as with the stunt Takes One to Know One, or to specific uses of an unspecialized skill, such as with the stunt Hard to Draw a Bead on. If the requirement is an unspecialized skill, then the effect can be a little broader, as with Thieves are Good Cops.

2. Free-Activation. These stunts should generally have a fairly limited application, something that might come up no more than once every other session if the effect is considerable, or only one per session if the effect is relatively minor. Some examples are Contortionist and Linguist.

3. Chains of Stunts. These can be quite a bit more powerful, and are usually character-defining. (If a player is spending two or three of his five stunts on something, it is probably the trait he is centering his character around.) The first of the chain is typically a normal Free-Activation stunt, and the successive stunts in the chain either expand the use of the stunt to something that might come up one or two times in a session, or they expand the power of the effect significantly. Some examples are the chains {Linguist → Gift of Tongues} and {Danger Sense → Saw It Coming → Constant Vigilance}.

4. FATE point activation. These stunts can be quite powerful, because they are fundamentally limited in how often the player can use them. Some examples are Brings out the Best in People and Take Down.

Physical Stunts

Contortionist

Requirement: Athletics/Acrobatics 4+

Effect: Creates new available mobility options, plus.

You can fit into and through spaces and shapes that no normal human readily can. Normally, contorting tasks are impossible to attempt, or at best default to a (non-existent) Contortion skill rated at Mediocre. With this stunt, you can use your full Athletics/Acrobatics score instead, and have rationale to attempt feats of contortion that are simply unavailable to others. (e.g. "I'll hide in this small barrel and they'll carry me right into the warehouse.")

It also might provide the occasional free taggable aspect on some skill rolls, such as escaping from handcuffs or being tied up, or a Stealth/Staying out of sight roll where fitting into the hiding space would be a challenge. (As a free-activation Stunt, if this is regularly coming up more than two times in a session, it is being abused.)

Dexterous Combatant

Requirement: Athletics/Acrobatics 3+

Effect: +1 Defense vs. Melee Combat, +1 Alertness to establish attack order in melee combat

- OR -

Requirement: Athletics/Acrobatics 5+

Effect: +2 Defense vs. Melee Combat, +2 Alertness to establish attack order in melee combat

You are a slippery fellow (or chica), bobbing and weaving to make opponents miss. Your athleticism also helps you get in the first blow, when you want to.

Equestrian

Requirement: None

Effect: Use Athletics/Acrobatics instead of Outdoorsman for all maneuvers when riding horses or other riding animals.

- OR -

Requirement: Athletics/Acrobatics 3+

Effect: +1 to Outdoorsman for all maneuvers when riding horses or other riding animals.

- OR -

Requirement: Athletics/Acrobatics 5+

Effect: +2 to Outdoorsman for all maneuvers when riding horses or other riding animals.

Although you may not have all the skills of a true Outdoorsman, you were brought up around riding animals and you are very comfortable riding them, limited only by your inherent athleticism.

Hard to Draw a Bead on

Requirement: Stealth/Staying out of sight: 3+
Effect: +1 to Defense vs. Ranged Combat;
- OR -
Requirement: Stealth/Staying out of sight: 5+
Effect: +2 to Defense vs. Ranged Combat

Your natural stealthiness makes it difficult for someone to aim at you. You don't even think about it; you just naturally walk in the shadows and avoid places where you are highly visible.

Marathon Training

Requirement: Athletics/Speed 3+
Effect: +1 to Endurance rolls for sustaining physical activity
- OR -
Requirement: Athletics/Speed 5+
Effect: +2 to Endurance rolls for sustaining physical activity

You know how to conserve your energy when undergoing lengthy athletic activity (protracted battles, long-distance running, multi-day climbs, etc). Note that this does not affect other Endurance rolls, such as holding your breath, nor does it affect your Health Stress Track.

You should ask your GM before taking this stunt, whether or not it will really be used. Some GM's like to track such things, and start to impose penalties for characters who fail an endurance roll after prolonged activity, and others who do not want the bother, and just assume that the prolonged activity will affect all actors, and therefore is a wash.

Powerful Combatant

Requirement: Might 3+
Effect: +1 to Melee Combat
- OR -
Requirement: Might 5+
Effect: +2 to Melee Combat

You know how to put your extra strength into your melee attacks and to use your might to keep control of your opponent, reducing his options.

Big and Scary

Requirement: Might 3+
Effect: +1 to Intimidation
- OR -
Requirement: Might 5+
Effect: +2 to Intimidation

You're big. You're scary. 'Nuff said.

Safe Fall

Requirement: Athletics/Acrobatics 4+

The character can skip effortlessly down sheer surfaces without harm, allowing him to safely fall great distances. When the character falls, but is near a solid surface, such as the wall of a shaft, or has sufficient other things like ropes to offset his fall, all falls are treated as two categories shorter (and may be reduced another step with Athletics as normal).

Take Down

Requirement: Athletics (pre-specialized) 2+
Effect: Spend a FATE point after a successful Melee Combat/Unarmed to leave opponent on his butt

You know a technique for taking down an opponent and leaving him on his back. Call it a leg sweep, a judo throw, a kung fu toss, or just a trip, but if the attack is successful by 3 or more shifts, then, by spending a FATE point, you may reduce the damage by 1 shift and take the opponent off his feet.

The opponent makes an additional roll using either Defense or his Athletics/Acrobatics skill, whichever is greater. He then has a free taggable aspect of "on the ground" for a number of rounds from the table below. This aspect can be freely tagged by anyone attacking him.

Opponent's Defense or Athletics/Acrobatics roll	Rounds "on the ground"
Superb (+5) or better	0
Great (+4) or Good (+3)	1
Fair (+2) or Average (+1)	2
Mediocre (0) or worse	3

Black Belt

Requirement: Take Down,
    Athletics (pre-specialized) 4+
Effect: +1 to all Melee Combat, enhancement of Take Down.

You have achieved a high rank in some form of martial arts which enhances all forms of melee combat. (This should show up in your back story.) The Take Down maneuver does reduce the damage of the attack that caused it, and can be done any time you have succeeded in the attack by 2 shifts or more. (You do still have to spend the FATE point.) Also, the rounds "on the ground" is increased by 1 unless the opponent's roll is Epic (+7) or better.

If you also have the Powerful Combatant stunt, you do not get the additional +1 to Melee Combat, but you do still get the enhanced Take Down effect.

Tough Guy (or Gal)

Requirement: none
Effect: +1 Endurance for creating Health Stress Track

Maybe you got knocked around as a kid, or maybe you just naturally have a high pain threshold, or maybe you have unusually hard bones, but you do not suffer from physical damage as much as the next guy.

When creating your Health Stress Track (which tracks the physical damage you have taken), create it as if your Endurance is one level higher.

Coordination Stunts

Ambidextrous

Requirement: Athletics 3+

You are equally skilled with both hands. If you are forced, due to injury or confinement, to use your off hand to shoot, pick a lock, or whatever, then you do not have the -2 penalty that would normally be applied. In addition, at the GM's discretion, this either eliminates the supplemental action penalty or provides a free taggable aspect to tasks in which both hands are doing something complex, such as playing most musical instruments, performing field surgery while both you and the target are dangling from ropes, or disarming a bomb while attempting to stay balanced on a tiny ledge.

Attuned to all vehicles

Requirement: Driving and Piloting both 2+ and not specialized

Effect: +1 to one Driving sub-skill and one Piloting sub-skill without the normal specialization penalty

- OR -

Requirement: Driving and Piloting both 3+ and not specialized

Effect: +1 to two Driving sub-skill and one Piloting sub-skill or +1 to one Driving sub-skill and two Piloting sub-skills

- OR -

Requirement: Driving and Piloting both 4+ and not specialized

Effect: +1 to two Driving sub-skills and two Piloting sub-skills

Cars, trucks, planes, watercraft – they're all just vehicles to you. You just have a feel for vehicles and an intuitive sense for how to make them go where you like. While there are some with which you're especially skilled, that hasn't come at the cost of skill with others.

Casing the Joint

Requirement: Burglary/Disable Security Systems 3+ AND Mechanical/Construction 3+

Effect: Infer the internal layout of a building from the outside, and use Mechanical/Construction skill or +1 Investigation for noticing anomalies withing a building.

Your experience breaking into places, plus your basic knowledge of how buildings are put together have taught you how to get along without blueprints. Just from the placement of windows, doors, fire escapes, and vents you can figure out the likely layout of the building's internals. This skill could also be applied if you are inside a building and have scouted half of it. At that point, you would be pretty sure of the layout of the other half.

If you actually have a blueprint, you will immediately notice the interesting points: the best access, the likely location of cameras, of a wall safe, etc. (Depending on how well these things are hidden, the GM might require you to make a roll using the better of the two skills in the requirement. In this case, he would have a target skill level in mind which you must beat, much like making a burglary roll.)

Finally, if you are looking for construction anomalies, such as the location of a secret passage or a hidden safe room, you can choose either to use your Mechanical/Construction skill instead of Investigation, or add one to your Investigation skill, whichever works out better.

Gunslinger

Requirement: Athletics/Eye-hand coordination 3+

Effect: +1 Alertness when establishing order of attack with any ranged weapon; for one ranged weapon specialty, +1 to Ranged combat and an additional +1 Alertness when using that weapon

- OR -

Requirement: Athletics/Eye-hand coordination 5+

Effect: +2 Alertness when establishing order of attack with any ranged weapon; for one ranged weapon specialty, +2 to Ranged combat and an additional +1 Alertness when using that weapon

Your impressive speed and talent with your hands translates to a quick draw and more accuracy with one type of ranged weapon. This stunt affects only one ranged weapon specialty, whether or not you have specialized your ranged weapon skill. It may be a different specialty from your own specialization if you have one, or it may be the same as your specialization. Also, this stunt can be taken multiple times to affect different ranged weapon specialties, but the increase to Alertness with all ranged weapons does not stack.

Hush

Requirement: Stealth 2+, Empathy/Leadership 1+

Effect: -1 Stealth roll, applied to yourself plus others, up to your Leadership ability of others.

You have a talent for helping others be nearly as quiet and as slippery as you are. When you are leading others, pointing where they should stand, etc. then the whole group acts nearly as stealthily as you could on your own. Of course, this only works if the others are trying their hardest to follow your instructions. Make a single roll for the entire group, where the size of the group (not counting yourself) is up to your Leadership skill level.

Note that if some of the people following have their own Stealth ability which meets or exceeds the adjusted ability of the player, then they can roll on their own and not be counted as part of the crowd.

Social Stunts

Brings out the best in people

Requirement: Empathy/Leadership 4+

Effect: Spend a FATE point to improve another's skill by +3 for one use

-OR-

Effect: Spend a FATE point to improve another's skill by +2 for an entire scene

-OR-

Effect: Spend a FATE point to improve a skill of several people by +1 for an entire scene

You know just how to give the pep talk that can inspire others to accomplish deeds greater than they otherwise would be able to. Whether instilling courage and skill in the engineer just before he tries to disarm the bomb, or giving a speech to a group of men just before combat, your words are just what the listeners needed to hear in order to do their very best.

The player can choose which effect at the time of spending the FATE point. When a player is affecting more than one person, it must be the same skill for all the recipients. He should announce his intention to spend the FATE point, and then make a leadership roll to determine how many people he can affect (as many as the result). He could choose to spend another FATE point to improve the leadership roll via an aspect.

Con Man

Requirement: Deceit/Spoken: 5+ and NOT Counterfeiter

Effect: +1 to Resources

You always get a deal. You can cajole, threaten, say whatever it takes to get the supplies you need. Note that, because the costs are on a logarithmic scale, +1 is really pretty significant.

Counterfeiter

Requirement: Deceit/Forgery: 5+ and NOT Con Man

Effect: +1 to Resources

You are able to supplement your real cash with a bit of funny money. For major purchases, the people you are purchasing from are likely to be a little angry when they find out, which might lead to further adventures. Note that, because the costs are on a logarithmic scale, +1 is really pretty significant.

Fosters Cooperation

Requirement: Empathy/Leadership 4+

Effect: Spend a FATE point to get people cooperating productively to reach a common goal.

When a player has a single important skill roll, typically others can assist by (each) spending a FATE point to help, improving his roll by 1. However, a true leader can get several people working in harmony. Once someone has declared that he will be attempting a task, and others have agreed to help how they can, your help is to coordinate the effort. The result is that the person with the highest relevant skill will roll, and he will get +1 for every person your stunt affects. You should announce your intention to spend the FATE point, and then make a leadership roll to determine how many people you can affect. The people being affected must have some skill rated at least Fair (+2) that credibly helps.

For example, suppose the heroes are at 4000 feet altitude when their airplane's engine bursts into flame. One character is a Great (+4) Mechanic but the GM decides that this is going to take a legendary deed to repair in mid-air before a crash. The mechanic spends his last FATE point on an aspect to gain him +2, but it will still take a lucky roll to succeed. Another character is also a fair mechanic, so he can help; the skilled pilot says that he can glide the plane, buying the mechanic some time; and the electronics expert can reroute some of the circuits around the damaged area.

They could each spend a FATE point to each provide +1 to the mechanic's effort, or the leader with this stunt could spend a single FATE point. As long as he makes a leadership roll of Great (+4) or better, then he

coordinates the efforts of all four members. The mechanic is rolling his Great (+4) ability, adds +2 from his own aspect (which he spent his own FATE point for), and he adds a total of +3 for the three teammates helping, each in their own way. This inspired bit of teamwork has the mechanic rolling at +9, so a Legendary result is reasonably achievable.

Note the the GM: You really shouldn't be putting your players in a "Make a Legendary Result or Die" situation very often, or really ever. But it's ok to make them *think* they are in such a situation now and then. Perhaps if they had failed, they'd be on a tough survival adventure in the mountains, but now they made it and you have to scramble for where they are headed.

Member of a Secret Society

Requirement: Humanities/Language +1 and spend one language slot
Effect: no penalty to Empathy/Contacting Network for being outside your home turf

You are a member of a secret or semi-secret society that spans the continent. This could be the Freemasons, La Cosa Nostra, the KKK, or many others. Anywhere you go, you will have the ability to contact others in your society, which you recognize by signals, special handshakes, or special phrases that sound like mumbling or unimportant phrases to non-members. These other members will automatically be well-disposed towards you, so you can use your normal Empathy/Contacting Network skill wherever you go.

You must have at least one extra language slot and you must spend that slot on the secret society language. The language is not so complete that you could talk about any subject without others understanding; but you would be able to communicate your standing and position in the society, you would be able to discuss topics that are important to the society, and you would be able to set up a time and place to have a more private conversation.

Say What They Want to Hear

Requirement: Empathy : 3+

Effect: +1 to Deceit/Spoken OR +1 Diplomacy/Information Gathering OR +1 Diplomacy/Convincing Others
- OR -
Requirement: Empathy : 5+
Effect: +2 to Deceit/Spoken OR +2 Diplomacy/Information Gathering OR +2 Diplomacy/Convincing Others OR +1 to all three

Your ability to read people facilitates your ability to lie to them, and/or get information from them, and/or convince them to do what you want. By making a read of what they are hoping to hear, you can modify your conversation to make the subject more pliable.

Note that which effect the stunt has must be decided when the stunt is taken. If the character already has the stunt and achieves the higher requirement somehow, at that point he must decide if he will improve the existing effect to +2 or apply his new-found ability to the other two options (that is, convert to the "+1 to all three" choice).

Separate Persona

Requirement: Deceit/Disguise: 4+
Effect: +2 Deceit/Disguise for one specific disguise

You have a Disguise that you have used so much and are so adept at constructing that people know him as a different person. They are so used to seeing this other person that they do not even think to question that it is really you. Also, you can switch between personas in only minutes. This stunt can be taken multiple times for different additional personas. (Pro tip: Don't use the names Clark Kent or Peter Parker for the alternate persona.)

Split Personality

Requirement: Deceit/Disguise: 5+, Separate Persona
Effect: Replace five skills, two aspects, and one stunt when in alternate personality

Your embodiment of your alternate personality is so complete that you have fooled yourself. Your other persona actually has different skills, different aspects, and a different stunt that you do not have. From your skill tree, replace one skill you have at Great (+4), one skill you have as Good (+3), one that you have as Fair

(+2), and two that you have as Average (+1). Note that these refer to the slots that the skills sit in. If you have specialized the skill, so that one sub-skill is a level higher and the others are lower, ignore the specialty – it is the overall level for the skill that matters. Also, you can not replace the Deceit/Disguise skill.

The new skills that you take for the alternate personality can be specialized normally. If you take a skill that is also one on your primary list, but specialized differently, or at a different level, this still counts as one of your five skill replacements.

In addition to replacing five skills, you replace two aspects and one stunt. Of course, the new stunt must be one that your new personality qualifies for. Finally, you can not replace Separate Persona or Split Personality.

You have to change your disguise to gain the benefit of the other personality, and you should be secretive about it. Even if your comrades know of your separate persona, you should be unhappy about letting them actually see you change.

You must have the correct clothes/gear/makeup/wig available in order to make the change, and it will take up to five rounds of reasonable calm and privacy to do so. However, if you are pressed for time, make a Deceit/Disguise roll to determine how long it will take and apply the following table.

Deceit/Disguise Roll	Rounds needed
Epic (+7)	2
Superb (+5)	3
Good (+3)	4
(Automatic)	5

Takes One to Know One

Requirement: Deceit/Spoken: 3+

Effect: +1 to Empathy/Reading Emotions
- OR -
Requirement: Deceit/Spoken: 5+
Effect: +2 to Empathy/Reading Emotions

As an accomplished liar, you're especially able to figure out when someone else is lying as well.

Clever Facade

Requirement: Say What They Want to Hear or Takes One to Know One.

Whenever the character is the target of an Empathy "read", decides to put a false face forward, and wins the contest, he not only provides a false aspect to the reader, he also gets a read on the reader himself (revealing an aspect). The reader has fallen for your clever trap! This aspect that the player has gleaned can be freely tagged in the following round to gain an advantage. However, it should have diminishing returns – it is not a free +2 against the character for the rest of his life. If the opponent is a recurring character, then the GM should feel free to have the character grow and change in the same way that player characters do. Once the player character has exploited it successfully once or twice, the opponent will patch this hole in his repertoire and not be vulnerable to the same trick next time.

Unflappable

Requirement: None
Effect: +1 Resolve for the purposes of creating the Composure Stress Track

You are not easily embarrassed, intimidated, or confused. When creating your Composure Stress Track (which tracks the social or mental damage you have taken), create it as if your Resolve is one level higher.

Knowledge Stunts

Actor

Requirement: Arts/Performing 3+
Effect: Deceit/Disguise +1
-OR-
Requirement: Arts/Performing 5+
Effect: Deceit/Disguise +2

All that practice on stage has improved your ability to create a disguise and the confidence to pull it off.

Dazzling Brilliance in Arts

Requirement: None

When trying to deceive someone on a subject covered by Arts, you can use your Arts skill instead of your Deceit skill. If you have a specialty within the skill, then use the appropriate ability for the subject about which you are trying to dazzle someone. The person being dazzled will be able to defend using the same skill, if that is higher for him than Resolve.

Dazzling Brilliance in Humanities

Requirement: None

When trying to deceive someone on a subject covered by Humanities, you can use your Humanities skill instead of your Deceit skill. If you have a specialty within the skill, then use the appropriate ability for the subject about which you are trying to dazzle someone. The person being dazzled will be able to defend using the same skill, if that is higher for him than Resolve.

Dazzling Brilliance in Science

Requirement: None

When trying to deceive someone on a subject covered by General science, you can use your General science skill instead of your Deceit skill. If you have a specialty within the skill, then use the appropriate

ability for the subject about which you are trying to dazzle someone. The person being dazzled will be able to defend using the same skill, if that is higher for him than Resolve.

Linguist

Requirement: Humanities/Languages 3+

Normally, someone may only speak a number of additional languages equivalent to the value of his Humanities/Languages skill. With this stunt, the character doubles this number.

Gift of Tongues

Requirement: Linguist and Humanities/Languages 5+

There is no "mainstream" earthly language you cannot read or speak – no need to pick those languages. Instead, you may use your usual language "slots" (not doubled from Linguist) to choose languages that you have no business having learned, such as small regional languages, clan languages, or secret society languages.

While you know the phrases and gestures that would get you initially accepted by members of La Cosa Nostra, they probably will find out, eventually, that you aren't really a member. And they really don't take jokes well.

However, knowing the language would let you identify who is giving the secret handshake or the code phrase, even if you don't respond in kind. Overhearing a conversation that the speakers think is not understandable to anyone outside the organization also has its merits.

See the stunt **Member of a Secret Society** for limitations on secret society languages.

Golden Voice

Requirement: Arts/Performing 3+
Effect: Deceit/Spoken +1
-OR-
Requirement: Arts/Performing 5+
Effect: Deceit/Spoken +2

You understand the tone and modulation needed to make your words believable.

"The secret of success is sincerity. Once you can fake that you've got it made." Jean Giraudoux (or possibly George Burns)

Serious Bit Head

Requirement: Electronics and Electrical/Computer hardware and misc.: 3+

Effect: +1 to any one specialty of Computer software
- OR -
Requirement: Electronics and Electrical/Computer hardware and misc.: 5+
Effect: +2 to any one specialty of Computer software OR +1 to all specialties of Computer software

Your deep understanding of how computers are put together improves your ability to program them. Dropping into machine code to take a little shortcut on the programming is not a problem for you.

Which specialty the stunt affects has must be decided when the stunt is taken. If the character already has the stunt and achieves the higher requirement somehow, at that point he must decide if he will improve the existing effect to +2 or apply his new-found ability to the other specialties.

Perception Stunts

Quick Reactions

Requirement: Alertness +3 (unadjusted)
Effect: Go first in any face-to-face encounter

While you're always fairly alert, when you find yourself looking an enemy in the eye, your nerves are on fire. Even if he reaches for a weapon, you'll have yours out faster. There is no need for roll for first action, you already got it.

Note that this does not help in cases where you did not see the enemy, and it does not affect other uses of Alertness. If opponents both have this stunt, then they roll normally for who acts first between them, but they act before others who do not have it. The Gunslinger stunt also negates this advantage; you still have to roll against such an opponent, but you do so at +2 (unless he also has this stunt).

Run Interference

Requirement: Quick Reactions

Normally, a character who has held his action cannot interrupt another's action at all; he must allow the action to finish before acting. If your character has this stunt, you may bend that rule.

Whenever you choose to hold your action, you may wait until someone declares his or her action. You may then use your held action to block the action your target has declared, using whatever skill is appropriate to create the block. If you are not opting to block the effort, you may not use your held action before your target, and your target may proceed.

If you do act and your most recent target then changes his mind based on that block, he must do so as a supplemental action, putting him at -1. If he continues his declared course of action despite what you did, he must overcome the block.

Example: Aduz automatically wins initiative, but chooses to wait until Ned Sneet declares his action. Ned (who is a named character being managed by the GM), declares that he is going to attack Tony in an effort to stop Tony from disabling the alarm. (If the alarm goes off, then dozens of armed guards will arrive within a minute or two.) Now that Ned has declared his action, Aduz declares that he will use a might-based attack to keep Ned away from Tony. Ned can choose to continue with his original plan, but first he will have to roll either defense or might to overcome Aduz's attack. (And good luck to him – Aduz doesn't lose a lot of might-based conflicts.) Alternatively, Ned could change his plans and attack Aduz instead, but now he will be doing it at -1 because it is a supplemental action.

Danger Sense

Requirement: Alertness +4 (unadjusted) and Quick Reactions
Effect: Always detect ambushes, +1 to Alertness for detecting traps

You simply can not be ambushed. When someone is staring at you in hatred and anticipation, you get a tingle, a warning, that something is up. You are never surprised: you may always take a full defensive action when ambushed and your base defense is not reduced.

In addition, while your danger sense against snares and mechanical traps is not perfect, it is Great (or even Fantastic). You get +1 for detecting such things as pitfalls, trip wires, poison darts, etc. This stunt does not affect other uses of Alertness, such as spotting sleight of hand.

Uncanny Vigilance

Requirement: Danger Sense
Effect: Able to reverse ambushes, additional +1 to Alertness for detecting traps

Not only are you never surprised, you are never even forced onto a defensive footing by an ambush. The ambush rules simply do not apply to you. In the first exchange, where others may normally only defend (if

that), you may act freely, in normal initiative order (which generally means that you go first).

Rather of taking an offensive action, you can instead choose to take only a full defensive action, plus warn your comrades and enable them also to take a full defensive action. You can warn up to your Alertness score of comrades.

In addition, your bonus for detecting snares and mechanical traps is increased by another +1 over the bonus from Danger Sense.

Keen Observer

Requirement: Investigation 4+
Effect: Able to ask one question about a scene after having left it.

After learning what you can from a scene and moving on, when some other detail comes up which makes you want to know more information about the scene, you can get an honest answer from the GM if it is something you could have seen when you were there.

For example, suppose you find some boots with nearly-dry mud containing tiny leaves. At that point, you can ask the GM if the color of mud and the types of the leaves matches the mud and fauna on the shore of the lake that you investigated the previous day. You also might ask if they are the same boots that you saw McFeeney wearing at the picnic last week. (The two questions would be allowed because it is two different scenes you are asking about.)

The question should not be open-ended, but should basically be a yes-or-no question. In the example above, you would not be allowed to ask if you had seen anyone wearing such boots, only if a specific person was, though that person might not have been a suspect at the time of the scene you are remembering.

Eidetic Memory

Requirement: Investigation 5, Keen Observer
Effect: Able to glance at a scene and recall it in detail later

The restrictions on Keen Observer are removed, and you can ask any number of questions about a scene you've visited, as if you are still there. You do not,

however, get to spot things that you would have needed an Alertness roll even to notice, originally, or that you would have had to move something or stand in a special spot even to be able to see. You also still must ask about a specific scene, and not completely open-ended questions.

Contrary to popular myth, an Eidetic Memory is not like taking a photograph that you can study at leisure later. If you were just to glance at a page of numbers that have no meaning to you, you would not be able to recite them later, though you could say accurately how many rows there were. On the other hand, just a glance at a balance sheet would be enough to be able to repeat, accurately, the important totals and sub-totals. This is because the balance sheet provides context; the numbers have meaning.

Loyal Pet

Requirement: GM Permission, Outdoorsman/Animal Handling 4+
Effect: Own a basic pet.

You have a completely loyal pet that you have trained, probably having raised it from a pup/calf/eaglet/etc. This pet has a six-skill tree and one aspect which you define. That is, it has one skill at Good (+3), two at Fair (+2), and three at Average (+1). These skills can be specialized, and may include some modifications if agreed upon with the GM.

Some recommended modifications:

- Outdoorsman/Tracking is super-specialized, rising two levels over the slot assigned but applying only to tracking by scent, and the other Outdoorsman skills are non-existent.

- Pet can take Melee Combat/Unarmed specialty and does not suffer the -1 that this skill normally has, but does not have any of the other Melee Combat sub-skills at all. (Essentially the teeth and/or claws count as a permanently-readied weapon, and the wolf can't hold a knife anyway.)

If the pet is skilled in combat, it will automatically defend its owner without being instructed. However, in order to instruct it to attack someone who is not engaged with the owner will require loss of initiative

on character's own attack plus a successful roll in Outdoorsman/Animal Handling. The challenge level required for the roll is determined by the GM who will decide based on how unlikely and unfamiliar the task is that the player is asking of it. I typically 'attack' command against a normal-looking opponent will be an Animal Handling challenge of 2. An human-sized but unusual looking opponent would be a challenge of 3, and a large opponent would be a challenge of 4.

The pet does not have its own FATE points. Use of its aspect would require the player spending one of his FATE points, and a compel against the aspect would potentially earn the player a FATE point. The GM always has the opportunity to make a compel around other people's reaction to the huge dog, the cheetah, or the orangutan following the character around. (Consider it a freely taggable aspect that the GM can use for compels.)

While all stunts are subject to GM Permission, this one is specifically called out because some GMs do not like player characters to have additional henchmen or pets who can act during a combat. Ultimately, the GM is the one who does the bulk of the work on the game and it is his right to run it the way that he likes.

This stunt can be taken a second time in order to have a second pet, again, with GM Permission.

Exceptional Pet

Requirement: GM Permission, Loyal Pet, Outdoorsman/Animal Handling 5+
Effect: Upgrades the Loyal Pet.

This does not provide an additional pet, it upgrades the existing loyal pet to a ten-skill tree (one at Great (+4), two at Good (+3), three at Fair (+2), and four at Average (+1). It also provides the pet with an additional aspect.

The same rules about GM permission apply for the exceptional pet as the loyal one. Note that the GM acceptance of Loyal Pet does not imply acceptance of the Exceptional one.

Thieves are good cops

Requirement: Burglary (unspecialized) 3+
Effect: Investigation +1
- OR -
Requirement: Burglary (unspecialized) 5
Effect: Investigation +2

Having some training into the skills of a thief has provided you insight into what to look for when investigating crimes.

You can take this stunt if you have specialized the Burglary skill, but it must occupy the requirement slot before specialization. Also, the GM might decide to temper the bonus based on the use of Investigation. For instance, if you have Burglary 3, specializing in Disable Security Systems, he might decide that the bonus only applies in Investigation rolls that have to do with ambushes and hidden traps, but not those for penetrating disguises. Or, if you have Burglary 4, specialized in Pick Pockets, he might decide to give you a +2 bonus when using Investigation to see through a disguise or a magician's trick, but not when finding a hidden passageway.

Conflict and Damage

The FATE system is generally used to support a pulp style of fiction, where the heroes take impressive damage but are never permanently harmed. After the Collapse is intended to be somewhat more gritty than most FATE games, but it is still not the intent that the players become cautious church mice because they have had too many characters killed off. While fun, daring action should be rewarded, there still needs to be a consequence to overstepping your abilities. This combat system tries to stay well away from the extremes both of pushing players to caution and of letting them get away with stupid risks.

Note that most skill rolls are a single roll, or a single opposing set of rolls. You put on a disguise and roll your disguise ability, and the GM rolls the investigation ability of the guard. Either he sees through it or he doesn't, and there are no more rolls to make. (… at least, with respect to the disguise. There might now be a physical combat if he saw through the disguise.) This conflict resolution system is for a more protracted event, typically between player characters and "named" opponents, that is, opponents who are not just minions. They can take some time to resolve, so it should be something important to the story. The point is to add more drama and fun to the game, so if you find yourself going through tedious battles then you might want to use simpler skill resolution techniques more often.

Stress Tracks

The damage in FATE-based systems is measured on Stress Tracks. A character has two independent stress tracks, one for physical combat (the Health Track) and another for mental and social combat (the Composure Track). Both are used the same way: "Hits" are recorded according to the number of shifts of success from an attack, and then once enough damage is taken there are four degrees of consequences. Note that each hit only causes a single box to be filled in – they are not hit points. But if the natural box for a hit is already filled in, you slide up to the first empty one above it.

Health Stress Track

The Health Stress Track is for any kind of physical injury, whether from a knife wound, a shotgun blast, laser rifle burn, or a fall from a cliff. The track is based on the skill Endurance – on your character sheet, make a row of empty boxes, one box for each point of Endurance, plus five more boxes. (If you have taken the Tough Guy or Gal stunt, you get an extra box.) The top four boxes are labeled Minor, Moderate, Severe, and Done, which refer to the level of consequences you will take if you take a hit that causes you to mark off one of those boxes.

Social Stress Track

The Social Stress Track is used for any mental or social "combat." This might be a formal debate, two diplomats each trying to convince the President to take opposite actions, a reporter trying to get a politician to reveal his dirty secrets on camera, a lawyer trying to break a hostile witness, or two men both trying to seduce a barmaid into warming his bed for the night. The track is based on the skill Resolve; add 5 to your Resolve skill, plus one more if you have taken the stunt Unflappable, and make a row of that many boxes. As with the Health Stress Track, the top four boxes are labeled Minor, Moderate, Severe, and Done

Using the Stress Tracks

Note that these boxes are not like hit points; you will only put one mark in one box at most for each attack against you, per round. (If the opponent has minions, typically all the minions together will only count as a

single attack, or, at most, one attack per three minions.) The GM should roll the FATE dice for an opponent and add the appropriate skill (and possibly additional points from Aspects). He then tells you the result and the opposing skill that you should use. You roll the FATE dice, adding in your skill level and applicable Stunts and Aspects to get a result. If your result is equal to or higher with your defense than the total of the attack, then there is no effect. However, if the attack is higher, the number of shifts of success determines where on the stress track you must put a mark. If that box is already marked, then you must move higher until you find an empty box. After a prolonged combat, you might have many boxes checked off, such that any wound you take will slide up to the consequence boxes.

Minions

The entire FATE system is intended to revolve around the major, heroic characters, in a pulp fiction style. James Bond and Dr. No, Holmes and Moriarty, Kirk and Khan – these named characters are what the story is all about. There are always some named lieutenants who are also significant and can even rise to fame or infamy on their own, but the bulk of the bit players – the minions and the red shirts – they don't get names and they do not really slow down any of the named characters significantly.

The minions do not have stats, and they do not have stress tracks. They go out with a single hit, or even several of them can be taken down with a single action. A player character using an appropriate skill can often take out as many minions as he has shifts of success. The GM might decide that they have some other Aspect that affects them, making them each require two shifts of success to eliminate, but that is about it. This is not intended to be realistic, it is intended to support good story telling: The heroes are supposed to be heroic.

When minions attack, even several minions only get a single attack, and the value of the attack is just the number of minions that are attacking. That is, they get a single point each on attack as well as on defense. Their do, however, affect the hero's Defense skill, according to the table for that skill. So four minions attacking will cause the hero's defense to be reduced according to the table in the Defense skill.

Example: Aduz Gets Ambushed

Aduz is rushing to meet with Tony and Tracy, but as he passes by a dark alley he hears a woman's voice shouting, "Help! No, you can't... Help!!" and the GM informs the player that he is compelling Aduz's Aspect "Protector of the Small and Weak." The player could "buy off" the compel by spending a FATE point, but instead chooses to accept the point and walk into the obvious ambush. (He knows that the GM, who looks determined, might follow up with a compel on his Aspect, "Big as an Ox and Almost as Smart.")

The big man charges into the alley, looking for the woman in distress, only to see her slipping into a door at the far end. He hears the click of a deadbolt and stands there, looking confused. The GM asks the player to make an Alertness roll, but it is four shifts below what the GM already rolled for Ned Sneet's Stealth skill, so Aduz does not even get to defend against the first attack. Ned slams a blackjack on the big man's head, rolling a 1 to add to his Great (+4) Melee Combat skill, and the GM instructs Aduz's player to suffer a 5-shift injury.

Aduz has an Endurance of 3, so his Health Stress Track now looks like this, with the "minor consequence" block (which, for someone with 3 Endurance, represents 5 shifts) now filled in.

	1	2	3	4	min	mod	sev	done
Health Stress Track:	☐	☐	☐	☐	◼	☐	☐	☐

The GM narrates, "Aduz turns around to see his long-time adversary Ned Sneet, along with Ned's buddy Charlie Horn and four other men. Ned holds a blackjack, Charlie has a vicious-looking blade; for the others, two have clubs and two have switchblades. All six men are grinning at the opportunity to apply some pain to the big man."

The GM and the player agree that Aduz's minor consequence will be that he will automatically lose initiative and will attack at -1 until he spends a round on full defense. The GM also agrees that if he backs up to the wall, only 4 men at a time will be able approach him.

The player describes his part of the action, "Aduz quickly steps so his back is to the wall while he draws his ebony billy club. He holds them off for a minute, purely defending, as he shakes his head to stop the bell that's ringing in it."

The GM explains that Aduz is at +2 defense for full-round defense, but at -2 because there are four attackers he is trying to avoid. The player reminds the GM that Aduz wears an old metal-reinforced leather jacket which counts as +1 armor against blades, but then rolls a disappointing -1. Added to his Good (+3) defense, Aduz is presenting +2 against the men with blades and only +1 against the men with clubs. After some rolls, the GM says that Ned hits him with 4 shifts of success, Charlie with only 1 shift, and the other guys together with only 1 shift. The player marks in the hits on his Health Track; the second hit for 1 shift goes into the #2 position, because the #1 position is full. As the GM narrates the action, the player updates his Health Stress Track, which now looks like this

	1	2	3	4	min	mod	sev	done
Health Stress Track:	■	■	□	■	■	□	□	□

The player knows he has to reduce the numbers against him, so he asks if he can take out all four of the minions even though only two of them are close. The GM replies that he can do it, but the ones in back will count as having two defense points each. The player wins initiative for the round, then he rolls his Melee Attack, adding up all his bonuses: Melee Combat +4, specializing in blunt weapons is another +1, and his stunt Powerful Combatant with his Superb (+5) Might gives him another +2 behind the weapon. A roll of 0 leaves him with a total of 7, enough to eliminate all four minions.

Aduz's player narrates, "I feint right, then come low across my body to snap the knee of the man on my left. As he goes down, I swing my club over my own head and slap it into the ear of the man behind him. He screams like a girl and runs off. Before they even can blink, I return to my right and crack the man holding a switchblade so hard in the chin that he staggers back into the man behind him. Their legs tangle and the second man goes down hard, hits his head on the concrete, and doesn't move."

Smiling at the narrative, the GM asks for a Defense roll, reminding that defending against 2 opponents puts Aduz at -1. The player groans as he rolls -2, his +3 ability and the adjustment giving him a feeble 0. He decides to spend a FATE point to invoke his Aspect "Numbers Don't Matter," and decides to take a chance on making a reroll instead of adding 2 to the roll. Rolling a 1 this time, at least he has +3 defense, and +4 against the blade. The GM makes his rolls and informs the player that Ned has rolled +4, for 1 shift of success, and Charlie also has +4, but with the blade this represents no success.

The GM: "Charlie takes a moment to gloat, knowing that he finally has his and Ned's nemesis in their grasp. But before he even can manage a chuckle, the huge man has eliminated all four

of the goons that had Ned had brought along for the take-down. Ned lands a tap on Aduz's leg, which would have been nothing if it hadn't hit the same bruise from the last round. In his shock at how quickly the goons went down, Charlie takes a wild swing that nicks the leather jacket but does not reach the skin."

Aduz's player adds the new, 1-shift blow to his Health Stress Track. The #1 position is full so he slides up to the next higher empty block, the #3 position. His track now looks like the following, and even a light tap is going to mean a moderate consequence.

	1	2	3	4	min	mod	sev	done
Health Stress Track:	■	■	■	■	■	☐	☐	☐
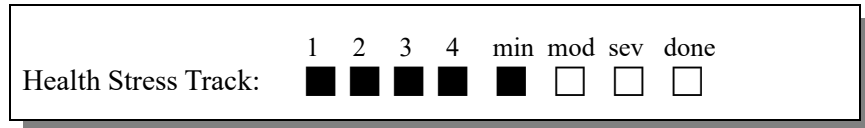
The player decides that Aduz goes straight for Ned, planning to take him out in one round. Rolling a 1, he adds his skill and bonuses to reach +8. Worried that Ned is tougher than that, the player uses a FATE point powering his Aspect "Biggest Bad-ass in Brownsville" to bump the roll up to 10. He suggests that Ned could have a freely-taggable Aspect of "Stunned by the turn of events," but the GM isn't buying it.

The GM shakes the dice with a grin. Looking at the player, he "lets slip" that Ned's defense is Great (+4). After a dramatic period of shaking, the dice come up with three minus signs and a blank. Consulting Ned's sheet, he declares that Ned will suffer a moderate consequence, that he drops his weapon, will be out of the fight for this round and the next retrieving it, and will attack at -2 and defend at -1 for the rest of this scene.

With Ned Sneet out of the picture for a couple of rounds, Aduz has little trouble getting rid of the second banana. When he turns to take care of Charlie, he discovers that the scoundrel has no appetite for a fair fight, and has already taken off.

The fight over, the GM has a bit of a stunned look on his face. He had planned that Aduz was going to be disabled and taken captive, and that Tony and Tracy were going to have to rescue him. Some good play and a couple of well-timed FATE points, plus one horrific roll, and Aduz walks away without even a lasting injury. Being a skilled GM, however, he allows the narrative to follow its own trajectory. He is already planning how to change the story such that it is Aduz's girlfriend who is captured, and all three player characters will be needed to rescue her.

Consequences Guidelines

To keep discussion of consequences from becoming heated, keep in mind that the game is one of shared story telling, not a competition between the players and the GM.

When a player is forced to mark in one of his consequences boxes an a stress track, he and the GM need to decide what the consequence will be. If you keep in mind the idea that the game is shared story telling, that it is not meant to be competition between the players and the GM, then this discussion will be less controversial. With this goal in mind, remember to invent both the story aspect of the consequence and the game-mechanic aspect. Focusing more on the latter will make the game just an exercise in dice rolling rather than a creative endeavor.

Minor Consequence

A minor consequence should last only a few rounds, or until the character takes a round off from the action to regroup. They should reduce the character's abilities slightly, but not be crippling.

Example, Physical Combat: The character receives a stinging blow to the wrist, drops his weapon, and either has to pick it up or draw another. Drawing another will cost -2 to initiative roll but he can attack right away. Picking up the weapon will cost one round's worth of attack, but he may use full defense on that round (which gives +2 to defense). Either way, he will attack at -1 this round (if he attacks at all) and next round.

Example, Social Combat: The opponent has delivered an insult so vile that the player is tongue-tied, and so amusing that the audience has started to chuckle. The player suddenly starts to stammer, completely ruining his point. He will have -2 on his next roll.

Medium Consequence

A medium consequence should last for the rest of the scene, and should be a significant but not crippling drawback.

Example, Physical Combat: The character has badly twisted his ankle. His speed and mobility are reduced, giving him -2 defense. Enemies can easily step away from him, causing him to be at -1 melee combat. His lack of balance causes him to be at -1 ranged combat, as well, unless he is using a weapon that can be used sitting or prone without penalty.

Example, Social Combat: The opponent has emboldened his friends in the audience, and they now start to boo and whistle whenever the player character speaks, making his diplomacy rolls -1 for the rest of the scene. Also, the situation has angered him enough that his empathy rolls will also be at -1.

Severe Consequence

A severe consequence should initially be a nearly-crippling drawback, with a lesser consequence that lasts for the rest of the adventure or scenario.

Example, Physical Combat: The character takes a bullet in the leg, breaking his femur cleanly. He immediately collapses, and can not act or even think for a round due to the pain, but he will instinctively defend at -2 (that's really -4, but +2 for full defense). After the first round, he is at -3 for all physical skills, -2 all coordination skills, and -1 all the remaining skills. In addition, he can only move by one zone, and only by forgoing any attack. Once he gets the leg properly splinted, his mobility and ability will depend on a first aid roll, using the table to the right. These problems will go away once he has an extended opportunity to heal, typically at the end of the current adventure. (If this is late in the adventure, at the end of the next one.)

First Aid Roll	Effect
1 or less	-2 all physical skills -1 all coordination skills maximum move 2
2 to 3	-1 all physical skills -1 all coordination skills maximum move 3
4 to 6	-1 all physical skills -1 all coordination skills maximum move 4
7 or more	-1 all physical skills maximum move 5

Example, Social Combat: The character was just humiliated publicly, with a comment or fact that she never saw coming. Her face turns bright red and she starts to stutter or cough. She completely loses her cool, losing her entire next round of action and will be at -2 for all Social skills and -1 for all Knowledge skills until she has a chance to

take a break (i.e. the end of the scene). Even after the break, word gets around about how she was made a fool of, so she'll be -1 on all social skills until the end of the adventure.

Extreme or 'Done' Consequence

This state really represents 'dead' unless the character's comrades can get him out of the situation. The character is so injured or so shocked that he is unable to take action on his own. If his comrades can get him to a hospital or into a rubber room with some major anti-depression drugs, then he will eventually recover, but it should be a significant deficiency that lasts at least through the current adventure and a lesser one that lasts through the next.

The player might instead choose to craft a death scene for the injured character and start up a new one. In this case, even if the GM is not using the "Starting Out Small" optional rule, he might choose to make use of the concepts somewhat. Have the player's new character start out 8 Improvement Points less than a full player character, and give him 3 to spend in the rest of the current adventure and 5 in following one.

If you are already using the optional rule and the other characters are still improving, then the new character should start 8 points behind where the others started this adventure, but have 6 to spend in the rest of this adventure and 8 (instead of only 5) to spend in the next two adventures. At that point, he will be only one Improvement Point behind the others and should continue normally.

The World

An atlas of the After the Collapse world would be recognizable to a person of today, at least the geographical structures. Some of the political boundaries still exist, but many have shifted and many are simply redrawn as some countries collapsed and new ones were formed.

North America

While most of Canada stayed intact, the United States quickly separated across a divide between those regions that had oil and those that did not.

The Fractured States (a. k. a. The Badlands), north eastern states

The northeast coast, with no oil wealth and far too many people for it to feed, quickly fell into chaos. The result is a series of small, independent city-states run by warlords, where food is scarce, life is cheap, and the people are brutally xenophobic. The area is often referred to as the Fractured States, though only by those outside of it. If the people within use any name for the area in the collective, it is "The Badlands." and the people are often referred to as "the cannibals," a name that is not wholly inappropriate. Although nearby city-states might temporarily form an alliance against a larger threat, the people have no allegiance nor sense of identity that is

any larger than the domain of their own warlord. This area includes all the New England states, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, parts of Virginia and West Virginia, and Washington, D.C.

South East states (The Confederate States of America)

The former states of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee, along with parts of Florida, Kentucky, Virginia, and the Carolinas, formed the Confederate States of America. As the name implies, their sense of national identity is not as strong as their state and local identities. However, representatives do meet annually to hammer out some trade agreements, and they have an as-yet-untested alliance for mutual protection.

Midwest (The United States of America, or the U S of A)

The breadbasket and Bible belt of the former United States stayed together, stretching east to Ohio, Missouri, and Arkansas; west to Utah, Montana, and most of Idaho; and south to cut Oklahoma in half. This region maintained a claim on the name of the country. It was glad to cut its ties with the heathens and liberals who lived on both of the coasts, and they formed a new Constitution based on their strict interpretation of the Bible. All Christians are welcome, though the members of the LDS church in Utah are accepted but still eyed with some suspicion. Of the cities, only Chicago and Detroit suffered any real devastation, and Kansas City thrived, becoming the new seat of power. The area has reverted to primarily family farms, but these have been quite successful thanks to the people's hard work and their dedicated belief in Jesus Christ (at least, as they would tell it).

After The First Cleansing of 2073, weather has been reasonable and the country has thrived. As a people, they are extremely friendly and helpful to strangers who share their beliefs, but they are not willing to risk another apocalypse by consorting with heathens (which they are convinced was the cause of the first). Anyone practicing heresies will be lucky to be jailed, luckier still to be exiled, but most likely will be killed, probably painfully.

The primary form of government is the town meeting, where everyone – well, everyone in good standing at the church – gets to speak and everyone gets a vote, as long as they vote the right way. For larger elections, where a town meeting is not feasible, representatives are elected, usually according to their perceived piety and adherence to church doctrine. Criticism of the government is not tolerated, and criticism of the Church is far worse.

When referring to this country in shortened form, it will always be "the U S of A" and never just USA. If a person says simply USA then he is referring to the former country that no longer exists.

The Republic of Texas

The Republic of Texas includes the former states of Texas, much of New Mexico and Oklahoma, and, as a disjoint member, most of Alaska. It is the country that would (initially, anyway) be the most recognizable to people who lived in the earlier half of the 21st century. They have cars, electricity, computers, personal robots, the Internet, and other modern conveniences. The government, however, is completely owned by the oil barons, such that they do not even pretend, anymore, to be independent of them. While there are fringe groups rebelling against the plutocracy, the only real hope of unseating any one of the barons would be to turn the other barons against him. Fortunately for them, their tolerance for each others' foibles is significant. As a government, they are more like the royalty of 15th century Europe than anything resembling democracy.

New Ellay

The southern half of California joined with Las Vegas and surrounding sections of Nevada and Arizona to form New Ellay. The name was originally presented as a memorial to the many killed in the earthquakes of 2072, not as a serious contender for the final name, but simply to honor the many dead. However, as name after name was rejected by one faction or another, finally a compromise was reached and the country was officially known as New Ellay.

Of the new countries in the former U.S., New Ellay is the least capable of independent survival. Its economy is built around trade with its neighbors, primarily exporting wine, almonds, figs, potatoes, pomegranates, and cabbages – all products that can survive a couple weeks in transit as they are transported by horse-drawn wagon. Electricity is available, but less than half the population can afford even household use. The wealthiest people have access to gasoline or diesel fuel, or solar rechargers, for their vehicles, but horses and horse-drawn vehicles are much more common.

United Northwest

Washington state, Oregon, and the northern half of California created the United Northwest just after The First Cleansing of 2073. Most citizens were relieved to have a good reason to pull out of the United States, since they had been miserable with the oppressive theocracy that the country had become.

The northwest states were the ones most embracing of alternative energy even before the bombs fell, and this tradition carried on well past the problem years. The government-owned solar arrays and windmill farms provide enough power to keep people living comfortably, and the richest half of the population can even afford to power their electric vehicles most of the time. Everyone has a computer connected to the Net, and most middle-class families have at least one personal robot for cleaning, grocery shopping, etc. However, gasoline and diesel fuel are non-existent – simply not available except for powering large construction vehicles that have not yet been replaced by electric versions.

Mexico

Before the collapse, Mexico was run primarily by crime lords, with a puppet government. However, ironically the collapse in the economy also caused a collapse in the drug business. Many of the crime lords became over-leveraged, and their own security forces turned against them. The result is that the east portion of Mexico has become a fairly peaceful agrarian society with little enough to interest the outside world that they are mostly left to themselves. The western portion of Mexico is completely run by the cartels, and is even more dangerous for a visitor than the Badlands. Life there is hard and desperate, and another word for stranger is 'victim.'

Canada

Most of Canada stayed intact, and it keeps its national identity. The country has enough oil to keep the lights on and the people fed, but not enough to attract the attention of powerful enemies. Many of the citizens have adopted the clothing and ways of their Inuit neighbors, and are eking out an existence by fishing, hunting, and trading furs.

Equipment

In the After the Collapse world, there is not a consistent concept of money, and some things are more easily available in some places than in others. For instance, a tankful of diesel fuel is nearly impossible to get in the Badlands. However, in the Republic of Texas, the same fuel could be bought for a hotel maid's weekly salary, or for a day's salary of a low-level bank employee. Rather than try to document currencies and exchange rates, the game system simply identifies the Resources level that a given item represents. The characters have a Resources skill and that should be compared directly to the values below.

The following table shows the equivalent Resources for an item, in each of the game regions. A character can generally obtain one item that equals his Resources level per adventure, and 3 or 4 items of one level below. Beware of players abusing this and collecting exceptional items – each character generally should never have more than one item over his Resource skill, or more than two items at his Resource skill. All purchases are subject to GM approval, of course, and sometimes must be role-played to obtain. Note that this is especially true of items that can only be obtained on the black market because they are restricted or forbidden. Any item that requires Epic (+7) Resources or greater will require role-playing to obtain and doing so might involve significant obstacles to overcome.

The table below does not include boring items, like food, standard clothing, etc. If you're tracking that sort of item, you have not yet bought into the less restrictive, pulp-fiction style gaming of the FATE system – think about grand heroics, not mundane bookkeeping. If a character has a skill at Fair (+2) or better, just assume he has the normal tools for that skill (lock picks, socket wrench set and a multi-tool, volt meter, bandages, etc.) and that they are with him if they are easily carryable. However, if the normal tools wouldn't fit in a pocket or two, the player must make a note of where the items are and how they are being transported. The player doesn't have to specify if he isn't going to try to claim the items are anywhere other than where they normally are, such as 'back at the lab' or 'in the garage storehouse.' If he wants to claim that he has a spare set of brake pads and shoes with him that he needs a note on his sheet. (And he could typically spend a FATE point to write the note retroactively. As a GM, your guiding principle should be what makes a good story, and you can cover up a lot of sins by telling the player to spend a FATE point on something.)

-     The item is essentially unavailable

\# | \#   Entries with two values separated by a bar represent gasoline/diesel and electric versions of that item.

⊘   Item is restricted. Being caught with it (without a proper license) is a fine and it will be confiscated.

✗   Item is forbidden. Being caught with it will probably lead to jail time or worse.

While nothing is marked as forbidden in the Badlands, the local warlord's word is law, and he likely is looking for a reason to have strangers killed. And he doesn't need a *good* reason.

Weapons

Weapons will all have two numbers after them. These are attack and damage modifiers. Ranged weapons also will have a range given in Zones. The energy weapons generally have a higher attack modifier than a damage modifier; the firearms are the opposite. It is easier to aim an energy weapon, but they do less damage.

Attack Modifier

The attack modifier is added to the requisite skill, either the appropriate Ranged Combat or Melee Combat skill, ONLY for the purpose of seeing if the attack is successful, but is NOT used in determining if how many shifts if applies. This means that it is very possible to make an attack that does no damage. When this happens, the result of the attack can be a situational advantage on the character the following round.

Damage Modifier

The Damage Modifier is the opposite of the attack modifier. It is NOT applied to the attack skill for the purpose of determining whether or not the attack hit, but, if there is a hit, the damage modifier is applied to the shifts of result.

Doing Zero Damage

A positive attack modifier or a negative damage modifier can cause a situation where an attack hits but does no damage. These hits will have a distracting effect, perhaps causing a situational advantage in the next round, and might have a secondary effect if they hit (such as a poison dart), but they do not directly cause any marks in the victim's stress track.

Range

Ranged weapons also have a range, shown as Z#, which represents the difference in zones at which the weapon is effective. Beyond the range, the weapon loses a point on both attack and damage modifier for each range difference. For example, a thrown stone is Z0, and can only be used effectively at a target in the same zone as the thrower.

Item	Bad-lands	Texas Repub.	U.S.A	C.S.A	New Ellay	United NW
Bow and Arrow, sportsman (-1 / 0 / Z2)	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bow and Arrow, professional (0 / +1 / Z2)	2	2	2	2	2 ⊘	2 ⊘
Crossbow 1 (0 / +1 / Z3) (fires 1 per 2 rounds)	2	2	2	2	2 ⊘	2 ⊘
Crossbow 2 (0 / +2 / Z3) (fires 1 per 2 rounds)	3	3	3 ⊘	3 ⊘	3 ⊘	3 ⊘
Well-selected rocks (-1 / -2 / Z0)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cheap throwing knives, Shiruken (-1 /-1 / Z0)	1	1	1	1	1	1
Good throwing knives, Shiruken (0 / 0 / Z0)	2	2	2	2	2 ⊘	2 ⊘
Cheap Handgun (-1 / +1 / Z1)	2	1	1 ⊘	1 ⊘	1 ⊘	1 ⊘
Good Handgun (0 / +1 / Z2)	3	2	2 ⊘	2 ⊘	2 ⊘	2 ⊘
Shotgun (0 / +2 / Z0)	3	2	2 ⊘	2 ⊘	2 ⊘	2 ⊘
Hunting rifle (0 / +1 / Z2)	3	2	2	2	3 ⊘	3 ⊘
Assault Rifle (0 / +2 / Z2)	5	3 ⊘	4 ⊘	4 ⊘	5 ✗	5 ✗

Item	Bad-lands	Texas Repub.	U.S.A	C.S.A	New Ellay	United NW
Small Energy weapon (+1 / 0 / Z1)	4	4✗	3⊘	3⊘	3⊘	2⊘
Laser Rifle (+2 / 0 / Z3)	5	5✗	4⊘	4⊘	4⊘	3⊘
Industrial Laser, weaponized (+2 / +1 / Z3) (This is too big to carry and fire, mount separates and takes 2 minutes to assemble.)	7	7✗	5⊘	5⊘	5⊘	4⊘
Crate of 12 grenades (0 / +# targets / Z1) Add skill + roll + # of targets, divide total across the targets.	6	5✗	6✗	6✗	7✗	7✗
One RPG or RPG launcher (which can be reused) (+2 / +2 / Z4)	6	5✗	6✗	6✗	7✗	7✗
Military grade bomb	7	6✗	7✗	7✗	8✗	8✗
Brass knuckles (use Melee Combat / Unarmed, but removes the natural -1 penalty)	2	2⊘	2✗	2⊘	2⊘	2⊘
Cheap melee combat weapon (-1 penalty) (Bowie knife, shillelagh, ice pick)	1	1	1	1	1	1
Well-made melee combat weapon (no penalty) (Scimitar, nightstick, spetum)	2	2⊘	2✗	2⊘	2⊘	2⊘
Exceptional melee combat weapon (+1) (Katana, iron-bound staff, titanium spear)	3	3⊘	3✗	3⊘	3✗	3✗

Armor

All armor entries will include a modifier which works much like the Damage Modifier for weapons. The armor does not affect whether or not an attack succeeds, but it is deducted from the shifts of damage, possibly creating a situation where an attack was successful but did not cause any harm. In this case, the result of the attack can be a situational advantage on the following round.

Item	Bad-lands	Texas Repub.	U.S.A	C.S.A	New Ellay	United NW
Armored leather jacket (+1 Defense vs. Melee/Unarmed & Blunt and RC/Thrown)	4	3	3	3	3	3
Kevlar vest and leggings (+1 vs. Melee Combat/Thrust and Firearms and Bows)	5	4⊘	4⊘	4⊘	4⊘	4⊘
Metal reinforced reflective suit (+1 vs. Melee/Blade and Ranged/Energy Weapon)	4	4	4⊘	3	3	3

Vehicles

The costs for vehicles are split into two entries. The first is for a gasoline or diesel powered vehicle, the second is for an electrically-powered version.

Item	Bad-lands	Texas Repub.	U.S.A	C.S.A	New Ellay	United NW
Gasoline / Diesel (2 full tanks for a car)	8	2	4	4	3	8
Vehicle 1 (motorcycle, cheap car)	7	3 | 8 ✕	5	5 | 6	4	- | 3
Vehicle 2 (nice car, light truck)	8	4 | - ✕	6	6 | 7	5	- | 4
Vehicle 3 (semi, bulldozer)	9	5 | - ✕	7	7 | 8	6	8 | 5
Vehicle 4 (major construction)	9	6 | - ✕	8	8 | 9	7	9 | 6
Solar Panel (3 hours in bright sun to charge Vehicle 1, or can continuously power a typical small residence, with battery backup for light use overnight. It must be unfolded to use, so can't be used while moving except in very large vehicles where it is built in.)	6	8 ✕	4	5	3	2
Air/Water craft 1 (small fishing boat with outboard, ultralight plane)	7	2 | 8 ✕	4	4 | 5	3	8 | 2
Air/Water craft 2 (cigarette boat, small yacht, Cessna, small helicopter)	7	4 | 9 ✕	6	6 | 7	5	9 | 4
Air/Water craft 3 (large yacht, trawler, personal jet, large helicopter)	7	5 | - ✕	7	7 | 8	6	9 | 5
Air/Water craft 4 (cruise ship, tanker, fighter or commercial jet, major military helicopter)	7	7 | - ✕	9	9	8	9 | 7
Mule, Pack horse	4	3	3	3	3	4
Trained riding horse	5	4	4	4	4	4
Saddle, bridle, pack animal gear	2	2	2	2	2	2

Running a Game

Acting as the GM for any FATE-based game is a challenge that is different from GM-ing games in more traditional RPG systems. The first big shift you must make is to understand that you are just one of the story-tellers, perhaps the lead one, but you still have to make opportunities for the players to have input beyond what would happen in, say, PathFinder or d20 Modern. In those games, you are essentially the all-powerful god, and you determine everything that isn't a choice made within the narrow free will of your "worshippers." In a FATE game, you are more powerful than the others, but still have to bend to their ideas. This is at once frustrating and exhilarating: Elements you've planned may go completely unused, and you have to think fast to keep the story going in a direction that you never expected, but the result is often more interesting than what you would have ended up with if you had rigidly defined every aspect of the world.

Players' skill rolls should usually succeed

These are heroic, incredibly skilled characters, and they generally accomplish the tasks at which they excel. When you plan an adventure, putting assorted skill tests in it, most of those tests should be no harder than needing a Fair(+2) or Good (+3) result. What becomes important is not so much whether or not the character succeeds, but how well – i.e. the number of shifts of success. If you have some important plot point that requires a Great (+4) Investigation roll for the players to find it, even your best investigator might roll badly and miss it. Then the characters are stuck without the key piece of information they would need to move forward.

Instead, have a sense of how much of the story, how much of the drama, a particular element is worth, and just expect your players to take that long to get there. For some information, meeting, or activity that is absolutely crucial to the plot, think of several ways that it might happen, and be prepared for the players to think of others you hadn't even considered. If you had planned them taking half the session getting to some important goal, and then they have a great idea or just make a great roll that they get there quickly, don't stand in the way of this success, just put another layer on the problem – someone else shows up, the address is really just a call-forwarding mechanism, the key NPC took the day off from work to go to a ball game, whatever. When you think about making a good story, you should have a sense of how much playing time a particular goal is worth in terms of suspense in the narrative. Don't penalize good play, and certainly don't reward bad play by making it easier, but try to work with it and make the whole thing more fun.

For example, suppose that today's session, you plan, is to culminate in the player characters learning where Ned Sneet's secret hideout is. The next session will be assaulting the hide-out, so this one is just about learning its location. You might have this level of detail planned out for how they might go about it.

- The Post office has a forwarding address of a P.O. Box in Rosharon, a small town south of Houston, implying that the hideout could be near there. Any of a variety of methods from computer hacking to intimidating or persuading a postal employee would with any Fair (+2) result would find this. Investigation at his old apartment might also turn this up.

- Staking out the Briar Shoppe in Houston where Ned gets the Cuban cigars, using stealth, tracking, etc. will turn up a minion who also knows the P.O. Box in Rosharon. However, the minion doesn't know the location of the hideout, so no amount of Intimidation will get that out of him.

- Charlie Horn, a named character who is known to have worked with Ned in the past, knows that it is just outside Rosharon but doesn't know the exact address. He also knows that Ned has jokingly referred to it as "The Treehouse." A Good (+3) result in Diplomacy/Contacting would find Charlie, but he'll try to avoid the PCs. He has a motorcycle gassed up and there could be a good chase scene. He still won't talk without Superb (+5) Intimidation, but a credible threat to his sister could give a free tag to that. (A Fair

(+2) use of Diplomacy/Information Gathering would turn up that Charlie has a sister, or maybe the characters already know.)

The point is that the plot is completely stalled without the characters getting to Rosharon and knowing at least something that could lead to the hideout, so the GM has planned several ways they might get that information.

- In Rosharon

  ○ First try of staking out the P.O. Box fails, and could bring trouble with the sheriff for loitering. (Stealth or persuade to avoid.)

  ○ Diplomacy/Information Gathering is an obvious skill, but the GM should require the players to role-play it. Are they hanging out at the coffee shop, buying beers for the crowd at the bar, or trying to make a connection with a local blogger? The GM should decide before the players roll what the chances are both of success and of the information about their queries getting back to Ned.

This whole example brings up a good point. Typically, the GM has a strategic plan for the story arc, that the players will spend this adventure learning the location of the hideout. However, the tactical plan – exactly how the players will learn this – is more up to the players than to the GM. He has a few ideas and knows a few of the named characters that are in the area, but inevitably the players will come up with something he hasn't thought of. When that happens, he should run with it, but be ready to throw a twist into their plans for the sake of drama and fun.

The GM should try to avoid just saying, "no, that won't work." Instead, even for approaches that he considers to be terrible ideas, he should come up with some way it might work, and then assign a (high) difficulty level to it. For example, suppose a player declares that he's going to find out where Ned Sneet is hiding by using Intimidation on the bartender in a crowded biker bar. It's a terrible idea – it's certain to get back to Ned, and the regulars at the bar will NOT be happy about it, but then the player makes a Legendary (+8) roll. The GM can't exactly ignore a Legendary roll, so he decides that, while the bartender doesn't know the location, one of Ned's minions happens to be at the bar and is frightened enough by the action that he tries furtively to slip out a side door, only to be noticed by the character with the best Alertness. Also, there's a big bar fight which the characters have to survive, and a group of bikers will not all be simply minions.

Optional Rules

Character Creation: Starting Out Small

Usually with FATE-based games, the player characters start out as heroic, larger-than-life characters, already massively skilled. However, some gaming groups might like to use the FATE system but still have the characters start out as beginners and steadily improve, as in most other role-playing games.

If the group decides that they would like this approach, rather than starting out the group with the full skills pyramid, 10 aspects, and 5 stunts, they start out with the Reduced Skills Pyramid, only 2 aspects, and only 1 stunt.

Normal FATE	
10 Aspects	
5 Stunts	
Full Skill Pyramid	
1 skill at Superb (+5):	❏
2 skills at Great (+4):	❏ ❏
3 skills at Good (+3):	❏ ❏ ❏
4 skills at Fair (+2):	❏ ❏ ❏ ❏
5 skills at Average (+1):	❏ ❏ ❏ ❏ ❏

Rather than starting as a heroic character, the player characters start out being barely better than an average person, at Tier 1. As they complete adventures (which are hopefully tailored by the GM to be appropriate to their skill level), they gradually improve in skills, aspects, and stunt, until they reach Tier 2. Once they completely fill out Tier 2, they can start to move towards Tier 3. Once they completely fill out that level, then then finally can improve until they reach Tier 4, which is a normal FATE character.

Tier 1	
1 Aspect	
No Stunts	
Tier 1 Pyramid	
1 skill at Fair (+2):	❏
2 skills at Average (+1):	❏ ❏

Tier 2	
3 Aspects	
1 Stunt	
Tier 2 Pyramid	
1 skill at Good (+3):	❏
2 skills at Fair (+2):	❏ ❏
3 skills at Average (+1):	❏ ❏ ❏

Tier 3

6 Aspects

3 Stunts

Tier 3 Pyramid

1 skill at Great (+4):   ❏

2 skills at Good (+3):   ❏ ❏

3 skills at Fair (+2):   ❏ ❏ ❏

4 skills at Average (+1):   ❏ ❏ ❏ ❏

Tier 4 (Normal FATE)

10 Aspects

5 Stunts

Full Skill Pyramid

1 skill at Superb (+5):   ❏

2 skills at Great (+4):   ❏ ❏

3 skills at Good (+3):   ❏ ❏ ❏

4 skills at Fair (+2):   ❏ ❏ ❏ ❏

5 skills at Average (+1):   ❏ ❏ ❏ ❏ ❏

Think of the Tier 1 character as a first-level character in many other games. There are only a few skills at which he is noticeably better than the average man on the street, and he will need life experiences (a.k.a. 'adventures') to improve and grow.

At the start of each adventure, the GM gives each player 5 "Improvement Points" which the players will spend during that adventure. To raise a skill by one level costs one Improvement Point, and he can do it when he is about to use a skill. The player should role-play the improvement, as if just as he was using the skill he had a flash of insight that improved his technique. The use of the skill has to be something real, something that furthers the plot along, not just the character doing something for no in-character reason, just so the player can improve the skill. This includes introducing a new skill on the Average level of the pyramid as well as moving a skill from one level to another.

For a faster progressing game, the GM might give the players 2 Improvement Points per session, or even 3 for a long session. This should work out to 6-10 Improvement points per adventure.

In the course of improving skills, a player might have, temporarily, more skills on one level than is allowed at that level by the next Tier, because he plans to promote some of those out of the level. For instance, see the inset.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Tyler applies his improvement                                                            │
│  points such that he temporarily    ┌──────────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────────┐
│  has an excess of skills at Average. │ Tyler's plan for Tier 2  │  │ Intermediate state might be │
│                                      │                          │  │                             │
│         ┌─────────────────────┐      │ Good (+3)                │  │ Good (+3)                   │
│         │ Tyler: Tier 1       │      │     Melee Combat         │  │                             │
│         │                     │      │                          │  │ Fair (+2)                   │
│         │ Fair (+2)           │      │ Fair (+2)                │  │     Might                   │
│         │     Might           │      │     Might                │  │                             │
│         │                     │      │     Endurance            │  │ Average (+1)                │
│         │ Average (+1)        │      │                          │  │     Endurance               │
│         │     Endurance       │      │ Average (+1)             │  │     Melee Combat            │
│         │     Melee Combat    │      │     Defense              │  │     Defense                 │
│         │                     │      │     Athletics            │  │     Athletics               │
│         └─────────────────────┘      │     Mechanical           │  │     Mechanical              │
│                                      └──────────────────────────┘  └──────────────────────────┘
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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The important point is that a Tier 2 tree has only six skills, so he can not have any more than that added to the tree, but he might, in the interim, have all the new ones added at the Average level – more than that level could normally accommodate. Those skills are really in higher slots, but haven't gotten there, yet.

Note that a player is not "locked in" as to which skills are his best. He might introduce a new skill at Average, promote that skill to Fair, promote it again to Good, and again to Great, all in the same adventure. This might be done because the player changes his mind on the direction of the character, or it might have been planned all along, for role-playing. Perhaps the character started out as a mechanic, but the player planned all along for him to become a Field Medic. He would probably start with Mechanic as his top skill, but might then never improve it. There is also no requirement that a player have a plan at all; he just lets his character grow as the stories develop.

The Improvement Points can also be used to add a new Stunt or to add a new Aspect, each of which costs 3 Improvement points. The player can gain the new stunt or aspect at the time he needs it, and use it right away. A player might have a plan all along of what Skills, Stunts, and Aspects he plans to have at every stage, and he manages his character's improvement accordingly; or a player might just let the character grow organically, improving Skills, and introducing Stunts and Aspects as they are needed, letting the story define his character. Neither approach is right or wrong, as long as it makes a good story in the end.

One improvement point can also be used to specialize a skill that was unspecialized, or to remove the specialization on a skill that had been specialized. Note that a player can not change from one specialty to another with a single point, he would first have to unspecialize and then respecialize it. However, when a player increases a skill from one level to a higher one, he can also specialize or unspecialize it. In this case, no skill level is being reduced, it is just that, in the unspecialize case, the player is focusing on those other abilities and bringing them up to the same level as his former specialization. In the specialize case, he is focusing so much on the new specialty that that sub-skill is going up by two points while the other sub-skills are not changing.

At any time, a player can, without cost, choose to drop a skill to a lower level of ability in order to make room for another skill that he has decided is more important. In doing so, he does not get the improvement point back for the skill that dropped, it is just lost, and he still has to use an improvement point to raise the other skill. However, the GM and the player should at least arrange to give the player a FATE point, if the loss of ability is the result of some aspect being compelled, and the luck went against the character, and the whole thing should be role-played.

When the adventure is over, if the player has improvement points left over, he can either apply them immediately or save them for the next adventure. Applying them immediately represents Skill improvements that he would like to make but did not have a chance to use in that adventure. He is practicing the skill or getting training off-camera, so to speak. A player might also want to save Improvement Points for the next adventure if he wants to add a Stunt or Aspect but doesn't have enough points at the moment to do so.

> Tier 1 → Tier 2: minimum 15 Improvement Points = 3 Adventures
> Tier 2 → Tier 3: minimum 25 Improvement Points = 5 Adventures
> Tier 3 → Tier 4: minimum 33 Improvement Points = 7 Adventures

These numbers are assuming that the player is perfectly efficient with his improvement points, and never reduces or re-specializes a skill. In reality, most players will spend 10-25% of their improvement points in this manner, so it will likely take 18-20 adventures to reach the full FATE character. Once any one character has participated in 18 adventures, he certainly should be heroic!

Character Creation: Writing Books

One approach for making complete, well-rounded characters is to write about their formative experiences in "books." Of course, you are not going to write the actual books, just the book jacket descriptions, but this should be enough to hold the gist of what your character took away from the significant event. Then the players swap books, and write a few sentences about how they played a bit part in each others' books, as a guest star.

This approach is best for a team of experienced role-players who will be together for some time. Once the process is complete, the players can draw on the rich background which defines their characters, adding depth and interest to their role-playing. Remember, however, that this is supposed to be fun. Some groups will look on this approach, which is admittedly a fair bit of work, to be as much fun as participating in the an action session. However, other players might look upon this as a chore. If your group more resembles the latter, then skip it and just build the characters with Skills, Aspects, and Stunts, and invent more polished backgrounds as you like, or never.

Assuming you do plan to go ahead with this approach, here are the steps

1. Each player writes two "books" about his character. (Remember, they really only write the blurb that would be on the jacket cover, not a whole book!) They should be about critical times in the character's life, such as:

   • Her most important childhood experience.
   • A formative event in her teens, or her "coming of age" event when she became an adult.
   • The story of her reaching heroic stature.

2. The player adds to his character sheet one or two Aspects from each book.

3. Players read each others' books, each choosing two or three books in which their characters played guest-starring roles. For each of those they write one or two sentences about their characters' involvement. In addition, each player adds an Aspect to his character sheet, based on that involvement. Players continue this process until every character has a total of six Aspects.

If you struggle for ideas, then take a look at the timeline and describe what your character was doing during each event. Characters who are older than 35 or so will remember when the bombs fell (it happened 28 years ago). It will, no doubt, be an important formative event in their pasts. 20 years ago the United States fell apart, fractioning into the separate countries, which is the other world-changing event that would stand out large in a character's memory. A player should feel free to invent local changes that happened in his character's past which were significant in his life. This is especially true for characters originating in the Badlands, where warlords rise and fall with the changes of the seasons.

Player Tip

Have the titles of your books include the player name. It sounds like bad 1930's pulp fiction if they all sound like "Tony and the Austin Caper" or "Tracy Dickson: Rookie Cop." However, as you exchange books to make your guest-starring roles, it keeps confusion to a minimum. With four or five players, each with three books, that's a lot of titles to keep straight if you haven't used this handy mnemonic device.

Example: Tony "Pizza Guy" Pizaggi

Book 1: Tony and the Austin Caper

Born in 2061, on the day the first bomb fell on Rutba, Iraq, Anthony Michael Pizaggi spent the first years of his life in Little Italy, within New York City. His father's connection to Enzo Harrigan, the head of the Giaccovi crime family, was enough to keep his family fed through the food riots, and it was enough to get transportation out of New York when Enzo left the city to form "Il Composto" outside of Austin. By agreement with the Juarez Syndicate, Il Composto did not interfere with their business, and was left alone.

For fifteen years, this relocated bit of New York City continued traditions that came originally from Sicily, returning to a lifestyle that would have fit more in the 1920's than the 2070's. Tony spent his days learning the catechism as his mother planned his life as a priest, and he spent his nights as part of the Junior Forty Thieves, and later as a member of the Five Points Gang. He was Father James' most trusted acolyte, and he was a valuable second-story man.

Tony is given his first responsible role in a major heist when the gang plans a caper in downtown Austin. At first, he thinks they are breaking into the Oil Exchange, the Republic of Texas' center of finance. But Tony's divergent backgrounds clash, and he must make a critical choice when he learns that the real target is the Austin Archdiocese.

Aspect: Trusted Acolyte
> Invoke: To make contacts and friends within the Catholic Church hierarchy, to know
>> Biblical literature, and to fit in (perhaps in disguise) in an ecclesiastical setting.
> Compel: Tony will follow orders from a Priest, and tries to "do the right thing."

Aspect: Second-story Man
> Invoke: For the basic breaking and entering skills: burglary/pick locks, burglary/disable
>> security systems, and athletics/acrobatics for climbing buildings.
> Compel: Tony runs into one of the Five Points Gang, which he left on somewhat bad terms,
>> or into one of their many enemies, who don't care that he has left the gang.

Book 2: Pizza Guy Joins the Rebels

Tony encounters, first-hand, the greed of the oil barons and the corruption of the government that the barons have placed over the entire Republic of Texas. He is a natural recruit into the New Aggie Rebels, and his skills bring him to the attention of their leader, Cardinal Mary Margaret Burke. She puts Antonio, as she calls him, to work demolishing key strongholds, weapons factories, and even an office park. His ability to slip in and out, unseen, of some of the tightest security, has kept the government weak enough that the rebels still thrive.

Aspect: Slippery Fellow
> Invoke: Tony rarely makes a sound when he walks, and he naturally sticks to the shadows.
>> (Applies to any Stealth Skill rolls)
> Compel: Tony's natural stealthiness tends to put people off. Skilled security people tend
>> to track him, at least once they spot him.

Aspect: Make it go boom
> Invoke: Tony is familiar with explosives, a variety of ways to detonate them, and he has
>> a knack for knowing where to place them to bring down a building. (Applies to
>> Mechanical/Construction when choosing where to place an explosive for
>> maximum damage, and to General Science/Chemistry when creating
>> explosives.)

Compel: Tony rather likes to blow stuff up, and will turn to explosives even when a
      more subtle approach might make more sense.

Guest Star: Tracy Dickson

(Tracy's player added this in the story-swapping phase.) Investigating a robbery as a young cop, Tracy met Tony and always suspected that he was the shadowy figure that none of the cameras managed to catch, but she could never prove it. She only learned about him by tracing the money backwards through a Catholic charity where the tracked bills showed up. The two had several long conversations that strayed further and further from the investigation, as Tracy found that she rather liked the young miscreant. Their conversations finally forced her to face the fact that the police force was riddled with corruption and was just acting as a private army for the oil barons.

Aspect: Sometimes the good guys are the bad guys

Invoke: Tracy is especially vigilant when people in power are the target of her
      investigation, including the wealthy but especially law enforcement officers.

Compel: Tracy is outraged by corruption, and will go out of her way to confront corrupt
      law enforcement officers and government officials, even at risk of her own
      safety.

Sample Characters

Aduz Agave

Health Track: 1 2 3 4 ▢ ▢ ▢ ▢ ███ min mod sev done ▢ ▢ ▢ ▢

Social Track: 1 ▢ ███ min mod sev done ▢ ▢ ▢ ▢

Skills

Superb (+5): Might

Great (+4): Melee Combat, Blunt weapons (+2 from Powerful Combatant)
Great (+4): Outdoorsman/Riding and animal handling

Good (+3): Alertness
Good (+3): Endurance
Good (+3): Defense

Fair (+2): Arts, Drawing & Painting
Fair (+2): Intimidation (+2 from Big and Scary)
Fair (+2): Athletics
Fair (+2): Medicine/Surgery and Field Medicine

Average (+1): Piloting
Average (+1): Mechanical/Construction
Average (+1): Resources
Average (+1): Ranged Combat/Firearms
Average (+1): Driving

Dog

Aduz has a pet pig, which he has named 'Dog' (Loyal Pet stunt).

Good (+3): Outdoorsman, Tracking (+2 spec, scent only)

Fair (+2): Melee Combat, Tusk specialist
Fair (+2): Defense

Average (+1): Intimidation
Average (+1): Resolve
Average (+1): Endurance

Stunts

Powerful Combatant: Might of 5 ==> +2 Melee Attack
Big and Scary: Might of 5 ==> +2 Intimidation
Loyal Pet: Allows a 6-skill pet
Quick Reactions: Automatically win initiative
Run Interference: Held action enables interfering with opponent's action

Aspects

Protector of the Small and Weak: Aduz's Mom taught him always to protect those smaller than himself. That turns out to be everybody.

> Invoke: Melee Attack or Defense when used to defend a weak or helpless person against a stronger foe
> Compel: Aduz must fight to defend someone he sees as helpless.

Big as an Ox and Almost as Smart: Aduz is huge and strong both in body and in his ability to trust people. Even when he probably shouldn't, he continues to trust.

>Invoke: Any use of Might
>Compel: Aduz will believe any outlandish thing that anyone, even an enemy, tells him. Only if he is offered an alternative truth (perhaps by a comrade, perhaps by a harsh dose of reality) will he even question whether or not someone might be lying.

Numbers Don't Matter: Once he became an adult, Aduz rarely found himself fighting only one enemy. He was so often ganged up on that he got used to it.

>Invoke: Melee Attack or Defense when Aduz is outnumbered.
>Compel: Aduz will hold back against a single opponent, ignoring the first attack if it is only 1 or 2 shifts of damage. He will not strike back until a second blow or a 3-shift or higher blow lands.

Biggest Bad-ass in Brownsville: Aduz became an adult in the Fight Clubs in Brownsville, Texas, and he quickly became the man to beat.

>Invoke: Any Melee Attack
>Compel: Mabel Rissetti and her gang, which controls most racketeering from Brownsville to San Antonio, are still a little bitter about Aduz failing to throw the fight he was instructed to lose. They've put a bounty on his head, and he *is* rather recognizable.

Animals are less confusing: Aduz continues to be confused by much of human interaction. Animals are honest, and he has a natural affinity for them.

>Invoke: Outdoorsman, Riding and Animal Handling, and any use of Medicine applied to an animal
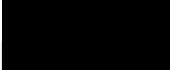>Compel: Aduz will not leave an injured animal behind, and might use up precious resources to try to save one. He probably will attack someone, even an ally, who casually hurts an animal.
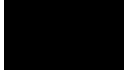
Big man has a light touch: In spite of his significant ability to cause injury to others, Aduz has a good eye (and hand) for art, and his giant mitts are remarkably adept at doing field surgery.

>Invoke: Arts, Drawing & Painting; and Medicine, Surgery and Field Medicine
>Compel: Aduz assumes that anyone interested in fine arts must be a gentle soul, and will likely be blind-sided by a villain with a gallery. He will take foolish risks to try to patch up an ally, ignoring the fighting going on around him.

Tracy Dickson

Health Track: 1 2 3 ▮ min mod sev done □ □ □ □ □

Social Track: 1 2 3 4 ▮ min mod sev done □ □ □ □ □ □

Skills

Superb (+5):   Investigation

Great (+4):   Alertness
Great (+4):   Driving (Cars and small trucks +1 from Attuned to All Vehicles)

Good (+3):   Resolve
Good (+3):   Ranged Combat (Firearms specialist. Additional +1 from Gunslinger)
Good (+3):   Empathy

Fair (+2):   Piloting (Planes +1 from Attuned to All Vehicles)
Fair (+2):   Diplomacy (Information Gathering specialist. +1 from Say What They Want to Hear)
Fair (+2):   Athletics (Eye-hand coordination specialist)
Fair (+2):   Endurance

Average (+1):   Melee Combat (Unarmed combat specialist)
Average (+1):   Mechanical
Average (+1):   Resources
Average (+1):   Might
Average (+1):   Arts (Singing, Performing specialist)

Stunts

Keen Observer
Eidetic Memory (Can recall any scene from the past and ask the GM questions about it.)
Attuned to All Vehicles (Adds +1 to Driving/Cars and small trucks and Piloting/Planes)
Gunslinger (Adds +1 Alertness for Ranged Combat order of attack. Adds additional +1 when using Firearm, and
adds +1 ability to Ranged Combat/Firearms)
Say What They Want to Hear (Adds +1 to Diplomacy/Information Gathering)

Aspects

Sometimes the good guys are the bad guys
Invoke: Tracy is especially vigilant when people in power are the target of her
investigation, including the wealthy but especially law enforcement officers.
Compel: Tracy is outraged by corruption, and will go out of her way to confront corrupt
law enforcement officers and government officials, even at risk of her own
safety.

Sherlock Holmes is my hero
Invoke: Tracy has read and reread so much of the works of Arthur Conan Doyle, she can
recite much of his complete works by memory. In an Investigation, she will
consider what Sherlock Holmes would do, often giving her an insight.

Compel: Tracy will sometimes refuse to consider possibilities for which there is no evidence, especially possibilities for which there is any evidence against, no matter how flimsy.

Not Just a Pretty Face

Invoke: Tracy Dickson might be a doll, but she can shoot and she packs a mean right hook.

Compel: Tracy can get pretty angry when someone thinks of her as "just a girl."

Character Sheet

Feel free to copy the following three pages as much as you like. The first cover sheet has a space for a portrait, but if you have skills that are specialized and modified by stunts, you might prefer the second to give more room for comments on the skills.

For the Stress Track, it's total length should be the character's Endurance plus 5 (possibly plus one for the Tough Guy / Gal Stunt). So the numbered cells should go up to one more than the Endurance (possibly plus one), because there are still 4 more cells beyond that. Just black out the unused cells and their numbers. So, for a character with Endurance of 4 and Resolve of 2, you would have:

Health Track: 1 2 3 4 5 ▮ min mod sev done ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Social Track: 1 2 3 ▮ min mod sev done ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

If this character took a blow with 7 shifts in a physical blow, that would have a moderate consequence.

Name:

Health Track:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	min	mod	sev	done
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Social Track:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	min	mod	sev	done
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Skills

Superb (+5):

Great (+4):

Great (+4):

Good (+3):

Good (+3):

Good (+3):

Fair (+2):

Fair (+2):

Fair (+2):

Fair (+2):

Average (+1):

Average (+1):

Average (+1):

Average (+1):

Average (+1):

Stunts

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Equipment

Name:

Health	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	min	mod	sev	done
Track:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Social	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	min	mod	sev	done
Track:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Skills

Superb (+5):

Great (+4):

Great (+4):

Good (+3):

Good (+3):

Good (+3):

Fair (+2):

Fair (+2):

Fair (+2):

Fair (+2):

Average (+1):

Average (+1):

Average (+1):

Average (+1):

Average (+1):

Stunts

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Equipment

Aspects

1.

      Invoke:

      Compel:

2.

      Invoke:

      Compel:

3.

      Invoke:

      Compel:

4.

      Invoke:

      Compel:

5.

      Invoke:

      Compel:

6.

      Invoke:

      Compel: