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CONVERSION GUIDE

FATE (Fantastic Adventures in Tabletop Entertainment) is a free RPG system that focuses on telling stories and balancing characters based on story significance, rather than points and cool powers. It's the system of choice for GMs who are looking for rules that get out of the way of the story, but still provide enough structure to get the job done. The most recent edition of the rules system, **FATE 3.0**, debuted in the pulp RPG *Spirit of the Century* from Evil Hat, and will be appearing in a number of other releases, including *The Dresden Files RPG*, also from Evil Hat, and the *Starblazer Adventures RPG*, from Cubicle 7 Entertainment.

The **d20 System** is the world's most popular rules system, behind such games as *Dungeons & Dragons*, *d20 Modern* and many more.

In the current RPG market, there are far more support products for **d20** than there are for **FATE**. Yet **FATE** gamers should not be barred from such a wide array of useful material. To that end, we present this conversion guide, which will provide suggestions for converting any of the hundreds of available **d20**-based adventures for use with **FATE**-based games.



CONVERTING SCENES

In FATE, the Game Master declares if there are any Aspects on the scene, and lays them out for the players. Given that this is already something that is decided by the GM, this conversion is the easiest thing to accomplish: simply look at the description of the scene elements in the d20 product, and determine which of those elements would make sense as an Aspect.

For example, if a d20 product describes the scene as follows:

The French Riviera Café is a small nightclub. There are bouncers at the door. The main room has a bar, a stage, and many tables, including semi-private booths. There are a number of rooms on the second floor for Le Renard's girls use. Le Renard prefers a booth near the stage and is usually accompanied by two beautiful women.

Two guards, one at the bottom and one at the top, always man the stairs to the second floor. A couple of men also patrol the main hallway to ensure that there aren't any problems. Most of the doors lock with home deadbolts (DC 25).

Looking at that description, the GM could come up with several Aspects:

Well-stocked Bar
Semi-Private Booths
Crowded Floor
Deadbolt Locks

Or more, depending on the GM's wishes.

If the scene is taking place over a broad area, the GM also describes the zones the scene will be occurring in. Each zone is a loosely defined area where characters may directly interact with anyone else within that zone. When looking for a quick rule of thumb, remember that people in the same zone can "touch" each other, people one zone apart can throw things at each other, and people two (and sometimes three) zones apart can shoot each other. Any one given scene should not involve more than a handful of zones. Considering that guns easily operate over three zones, sometimes a few more, a comfortable number would be around three to five zones – but don't feel like you're forced to cram in more zones than the area readily supports.

CONVERTING CHARACTERS

Here's the real bread-and-butter of the conversion process. In d20 character and monster write-ups are the most detailed element of the rules, and as such, will require the most attention here.

The concept which is most important here is the idea of the Challenge Rating. The CR is a numerical rating, which shows the average level of a party of adventurers for which one creature or character would make an encounter of moderate difficulty. For example, a CR1 would represent a moderate difficulty for a group of 1st-level characters, a CR10 would represent a moderate difficulty for a group of 10th level characters, etc.

For conversion to FATE, we use the CR of a character or creature as an indication of the overall importance of the character or creature being described. This is used to determine what type of character this is in the FATE rules (a Minion, an Extra or a Named Character), how many Aspects they should have, and how many stress boxes.

The type of character should also be determined by the context in which the character appears in the adventure. It should be obvious who is intended to be a Minion or an Extra, vs who is considered a major Named Character.

Player characters in FATE should be considered to be 10th level characters in d20, as a baseline for determining relative challenges. This assumption is based on the number of Aspects and Stunts that a FATE PC possesses -- their general level of competence as it would be translated into d20 terms.

Given that, any write-up with a **CR of 10 or higher** should be considered a **Named Character** -- equal to or exceeding the power of the player characters.

Encounters with **CRs of 5 to 10** should be treated as less important **Extras**, and those with **CRs of 1-4** would most likely be **Minions** or **Companions**. Depending on the context of the adventure, it's possible to have wiggle room with these definitions -- you may have Minions with slightly higher CRs, in which case they'd be represented by Minions with higher quality ratings, for example. Or a powerful NPC who isn't necessarily critical to the plot may have a high CR, but be rated as an Extra.

Aspects

As is the case with determining Aspects in scenes, choosing Aspects for character write-ups is largely an exercise in Game Master judgement, based on the description in the existing text. As a rule of thumb, however, **a character or creature has as many Aspects as their Challenge Rating, with a maximum of 10.**

FATE GMs may want to leave some of the character or creature's Aspects undefined, to allow for player declaration and Aspect-tagging to fill in the blanks.

Stress

Standard FATE rules specify that the Health and Composure stress tracks default to 5 boxes each, modified by certain Stunts. For quick conversion from d20, the GM should give Extra or Named characters or creatures a number of starting stress boxes equal to their Challenge Rating minus 5, with Minions having a number of stress boxes equal to half their CR, rounding up.

The number of boxes in Health or Composure can then be modified by the presence of Stunts, as per FATE standard. As we will discuss in just a bit, d20 Feats correspond to FATE stunts.

Skills and The Ladder

d20 characters and creatures often have a wider array of more narrowly-defined skills than their FATE counterparts. While player characters in FATE have a specific number of skills in their Skill Pyramid, NPCs generally have only those skills detailed which are important to the plot.

As such, the GM will have a large number of skills presented in a d20 stat block from which to choose those skills which he or she feels is important to the plot of the adventure. The list on the following page gives a list of d20 Skills and their FATE equivalents.

To determine the level of the skill in question (or the difficulty of any specified action in the text of a d20 adventure), use the total skill bonus (in the case of skills) or the Difficulty Class (DC, in the case of actions), which correspond to the levels on The Ladder as follows:

Bonus or DC	The Ladder	Bonus or DC	The Ladder
0	Terrible (-2)	22-25	Great (+4)
1-4	Poor (-1)	26-29	Superb (+5)
5-8	Mediocre (0)	30-33	Fantastic (+6)
9-13	Average (+1)	34-37	Epic (+7)
14-17	Fair (+2)	38+	Legendary (+8)
18-21	Good (+3)		

The GM can also boost the Ladder ranking of any FATE skill which has multiple versions in a d20 character's stat block (for example, 3 different Knowledge skills, all of which translate to Academics).

The following is a list of d20 skills (both fantasy and modern), and their FATE equivalents (in bold):

Balance: Athletics	Knowledge: Academics
Bluff: Deceit	Listen: Alertness
Climb: Athletics	Move Silently: Stealth
Concentration: Alertness	Navigate: Drive, Pilot or Survival
Craft: Art, Engineering or Science, depending.	Open Lock: Burglary
Decipher Script: Mysteries	Perform: Art
Demolitions: Engineering	Profession: Depends on the profession.
Diplomacy: Rapport	Read/Write Language: Academics
Disable Device: Engineering	Repair: Engineering or Science
Disguise: Deceit	Ride: Survival
Drive: Drive	Search: Investigation
Escape Artist: Athletics	Sense Motive: Rapport, Contacting or Deceit
Forgery: Deceit	Sleight of Hand: Sleight of Hand
Gamble: Gambling	Speak Language: Academics
Gather Information: Contacting, Investigation, or Rapport	Spellcraft: Mysteries
Handle Animal: Survival	Spot: Investigation
Heal: Science	Survival: Survival
Hide: Stealth	Swim: Athletics
Intimidate: Intimidation	Treat Injury: Science
Investigate: Investigation, Alertness,	Tumble: Athletics:
Jump: Athletics	Use Magic Device: Mysteries
	Use Rope: Athletics

d20 Feats and Combat Skills

You'll note that the above list lacks any Skills which could translate into Fists, Guns or Weapons. This is because in d20, combat is not handled through skills, but rather through a combination of the Base Attack Bonus (BAB) and Feats.

Given this, the Game Master should examine any d20 stat block, and check the Feats listing for any Proficiency Feats (Personal Weapons Proficiency, Exotic Weapons Proficiency, etc.) and any other combat-related feats (Brawl, Combat Martial Arts, etc.) and use those as indications that the write-up in FATE should feature the appropriate combat skill. To determine the Skill level, use the stat-block's BAB plus total attack roll for each attack with that particular form. If the character has any Feats that are "Improved" or "Greater," bump the appropriate skill to the next level on the Ladder. If the character has a feat that is "Advanced", bump it two levels on the Ladder.

For example, if the Stat Block says this:

BAB +8; Grap +10/+5; Atk +10/+5 melee (1d4+2 lethal or nonlethal, unarmed strike); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d4+2 lethal or nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +10/+5 (by weapon) or +10/+5 ranged (by weapon);

And the Feats list includes things like this:

Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Combat Martial Arts, Combat Throw, Defensive Martial Arts, Elusive Target, Improved Combat Martial Arts, Improved Combat Throw, Improved Initiative, Personal Weapons Proficiency.

The character obviously has Fists, Guns & Weapons. The character is listed as having 2 attacks per round (which really doesn't fit into the FATE rules, so we'll just consider a combination of the two (as it indicates a higher level of proficiency, so should be reflected in the FATE stats)

Unarmed, the total would be (BAB 8 +10 and +5 for the two attacks) +23, for a Fists skill of Great (+4). However, the character has several "Improved" feats with unarmed combat, so we'll bump that to Superb (+5) With a weapon, the total would be (BAB 8 +10 and +5 for the two attacks) for 23 -- a Weapon skill of Great (+4), and the ranged combat would also be a 23 -- a Gun Skill of Great (+4)

Other Feats will also apply to FATE Skills, often as a bonus to the Skill's Ladder rating in combination with other skills (for example: Lightning Reflexes would give a Ladder bonus to the Alertness skill). Use your best judgement here.

Stunts

Other Feats, as well as Special Abilities and class Talents, give the character or creature the same sort of bonus abilities as the Stunts in FATE.

Rather than translating from d20 to FATE in this case, however, the GM should instead base the FATE Stunts on the Skill list that they've already determined. Essentially, choose the Stunts as if you were creating a brand new FATE character, and use the names of the d20 Feats, Abilities and Talents as a guideline.

You won't end up with a direct translation of the abilities of the d20 character or creature, since those abilities are more geared to the miniatures-based skirmish-level semi-wargame that is d20. FATE is a Story-based system, and as such will result in a more abstract write-up.

AN EXAMPLE CONVERSION

What follows is the d20 Stat Block of an NPC from Adamant Entertainment's **THRILLING TALES** line of pulp products:

DOCTOR SIN

Smart Hero 6, Mastermind 2, Mesmerist 5 CR 13; Medium-size human; HD 6d6+12, 2d10+4, 5d6+10; HP 63; Mas 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; Defense 18, touch 13, flatfooted 12 (+0 size, +1 Dex, +5 class); BAB +7; Grap +9; Atk +9 melee (1d4+2, martial arts), or +9 ranged (varies by weapon); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ Minions, Crime network, Hypnotic ability, Hypnotic Trance, Trick, Command Word, Lengthy Trance, Winning Smile; AL none; SV Fort +5, Ref +10, Will +13; AP 13; Rep +8; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 13, Cha 17.

Occupation: Doctor (Craft [pharmaceutical], Knowledge [Behavioral Sciences])

Skills: Balance +7, Bluff +10, Climb +10, Concentration +14, Craft (chemical) +13, Craft (electronic) +13, Craft (mechanical) +9, Craft (pharmaceutical) +15, Decipher Script +8, Demolitions +9, Diplomacy +12, Disable Device +8, Disguise +12, Escape Artist +13, Forgery +10, Gather Information +8, Hide +9, Intimidate +12, Investigate +7, Jump +3, Knowledge (Arcane Lore) +12, Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences) +18, Knowledge (Tactics) +9, Knowledge, (Underworld) +10, Move Silently +5, Read/Write Language +4 (Chinese, English, German, Tibetan) Speak Language +4 (Chinese, English, German, Tibetan)

Feats: Combat Expertise, Combat Martial Arts, Defensive Martial Arts, Educated (Knowledge [Arcane Lore], Knowledge [Behavioral Sciences]), Frightful Presence, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Personal Firearms Proficiency

Talents (Smart Hero): Savant (Knowledge [Behavioral Sciences]), Exploit Weakness, Trick

Wealth: +13

Doctor Tsung-Chi Sin is known as the Devil of Chinatown. He is notorious for his skill as a Mesmerist and as a poisoner and torturer. He runs a criminal empire centered in the Chinatown district of the player-characters home city, where his influence extends into gambling, drugs and white slavery.

Doctor Sin is a cold, ruthless killer, with a voice like a silken strangling cord. He can be charming when he has to be, and relies upon lies and subterfuge as a matter of course. If backed into a corner, he will not hesitate to endanger innocents to cover his escape.

And now, the character roughly converted to **FATE**, with annotations:



DOCTOR SIN

[Obviously, this is a Named Character]

Significant Aspects:

Devil of Chinatown • Mesmerist • Criminal Empire • Cold, Ruthless Killer • Voice Like A Silken Strangling Cord • Mastermind
• (plus 4 more) [This CR 13 character has 10 Aspects]

Skills:

Academics: Superb

[The ones we deemed important]

[Based on the highest Knowledge skill (+18), plus a bonus for the number of such skills.]

Alertness: Good

[Based on Concentration, with a bonus for the Lightning Reflexes Feat.]

Athletics: Average

[Based on Climb +10]

Contacting: Average

[Based on Gather Information +8]

Deceit: Good

[Based on Disguise +12, plus a bonus for other Deceit-based skills, and another bonus because we noticed the "Trick" talent.

[Based on the highest Craft skill]

[Based on Intimidate, plus bonus for "Frightful Presence" feat]

[Based on +12 Knowledge (Arcane Lore), plus a bonus for the Educated (Arcane Lore) Feat plus another bonus for the Mesmerist abilities]

[Based on Diplomacy, plus bonus for other skills]

[Based on highest Craft Skill, plus bonus for number of other related skills]

[Based on BAB, Attack rolls and Feats]

Engineering: Fair

Intimidation: Fair

Mysteries: Great

Rapport: Good

Science: Good

Fists: Fair

Guns: Fair

Stunts:

[Based on above Skills, using the character's d20 stat block Feats, Talents, etc. as a guide line]

Academics: Linguist

Alertness: On Top of It

Contacting: Network of Contacts, Big Man

Engineering: Demolitions

Fists: Martial Arts

Intimidation: Subtle Menace

Mysteries: Mesmerist, Hypnotic SPeech, Mind's Shadow, Enthral

Science: Doctor

Stress: Health 8, Composure 8

[Based on CR minus 5]

Fate Points: 10

[Equal to Aspects]

As you can see, it is a very rough conversion, and the Game Master will most likely want to tweak the final results to suit their own campaign needs.

The important thing to remember is that it is the story of the adventure that is the most important thing, and that can be brought over from a d20 product with no translation required.

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