

In Which we add Loots to Fate Core

[fate-core] [magic-items]

Loot is a pretty fun part of some RPGs. Not the math-tuning loot that keeps characters' weapons and armor at the required values, but the *remarkable* and *empowering* loot that lets them do new things they were not capable of before.

Fate... doesn't really do loot, but I'd like to introduce this the experience of "getting stuff" somehow. I've got an idea of how I'd like items to work, but no particular notions about how best to handle this.

Here's what I'm looking for in how items should work

- Items power *outward growth*: they enable characters to do things they could not do before, rather than simply improving existing capabilities. *Upward* (usually bonus-based) growth is already supported by stunts and skills instead. Loot providing upward growth as well should be avoided, since it could lead to the zero-sum game warned about on Fate Core p278.
- Characters should be able to equip/use a reasonably limited number of magic items at any one time. This means they shouldn't be able to pile on fifty *Amulets of Power* and effectively ascend to demigodhood.
- Some of these items might provide an activated power, like a scepter shooting a fireball. Characters should be able to regularly take advantage of these, and if they can't, the power had better be proportionately good!

How can I support loots in Fate?

A word on "getting stuff"

Loot acquisition would be through discovery, creation, exchanges with others, and other *peaceful, non-murder* means. In contrast to D&D, Fate happily disconnects character progression from boundless slaughter and goblin genocide, and I'm happy to keep it that way.

How can I keep the nature and capacity of NPCs hidden to generate a fear of the unknown?

[fate-core] [gm-techniques]

In traditional games such as D&D, the mechanics of the NPCs you face are generally an unknown quantity. The players *and* the characters only have a rough idea of what an NPC is capable of, based on what they've already seen - ultimately, a player does not know much about his or her adversaries. This generates a very particular fear of the unknown *in the players themselves* which is exciting and useful, and lends considerably to immersion for some players.

In Fate, contrariwise, all the cards are on the table. The enemies are all known quantities, and there are no surprises for the *players*. If the elderly Count Montgomery is actually a facet of a hellish demigod, the players know that as well as the GM does. There is no fear of the unknown except that which the players decide to roleplay through their characters, because Fate's system integrity requires these things:

- The players must be able to meaningfully invoke and compel NPC aspects.
- The players must know the difficulties they're up against. As previous questions show, a policy of hiding DCs is potentially disastrous:
 - [How valid is lying to players about the rolls they are making in The Dresden Files?](<http://rpg.stackexchange.com/questions/10375/how-valid-is-lying-to-players-about-the-rolls-they-are-making-in-the-dresden-fil>)
 - [Should the GM in Dresden Files be telling us what the target numbers are for thaumaturgy spells and skill checks?](<http://rpg.stackexchange.com/questions/19566/should-the-gm-in-dresden-files-be-telling-us-what-the-target-numbers-are-for-tha>)
- The players need to be able to see consequences others have taken as a result of their actions.

But D&D's fear of the unknown is created through concealing its equivalents of these things, and ****I want to capture that Fear of the Unknown in Fate**** while keeping the Fate philosophies and engine intact. I want to be able to usefully make my player's opponents an unknown quantity, whilst still letting the players operate as close as possible to full Fate capacity. Fate Core p79 explains how to create aspects which can be meaningfully invoked and compelled, yet not give away secrets about the NPC. But this is not a full solution: ****How do I accomplish similar feats with other mechanics, or is there another entirely different way to use Fate to evoke the Fear of the Unknown in a game's players?****

(Please note that I do not feel it is necessary to specifically hide DCs; I want the *effect* that kind of thing creates, as I've described - keeping their exact capacity obscured - but I'm not attached to the methods used by 4e.)

I can hear what you're thinking: *"You don't hide stuff in Fate!"* I understand. This is definitely a strange thing to do in Fate - but I still want to do it.

Tuning the Fate dials to HEROISM

[fate-core]

This is gonna be kinda wacky: What "dial settings" on Fate Core mechanics would most mimic a D&D 4e experience? I've got some ideas, and would like evaluation of them and/or alternate suggestions. I value Fate's mechanics and wish to keep them as they are, but I want to explore what can be done with the tools available to create this experience.

Specifically, I'm considering these elements of 4e:

- **Many specific powers and features.** I suspect that handing out a lot of free stunt slots would mimic this nicely. **Magic!** would also be included here depending on the magic system the group works out using the Magic System Toolkit. I am not interested in mimicking 4e's at-will/encounter/daily format, merely the fact that every character is capable of a lot.
- **Make dice rolls significant.** The spread on a d20 result is pretty massive. Although part of the reason I'm liking Fate is the strong curve on Fudge dice, the application of Fate points makes the actual dice roll even less significant. My idea is to reduce each character's Refresh so the dice roll means more and spending Fate points is a bigger deal. Incidentally, this would make free invocations far more important.
- **Magic items.** The party must acquire some which allow them access to unique abilities they did not have beforehand. This is something worth exploring in greater depth all on its own, so I'm opening up [another

Other elements of race/class mechanics and artifacts are probably best handled through unmodified Fate mechanics (aspects, stunts, extras).