



Comparing other RPGs to FATE-Core is like comparing a kazoo to a symphony. Here is my point: RPGs should be a journey for the mind, but so many existing RPGs very limiting in their mechanics. FATE Core is completely the opposite, and encourages your imagination to build logical and fun elements into the story and the conflict.

Standard RPG

For example, in standard RPGs a GM would simply state: “your arch enemy enters the tavern” and a player states “I’ll attack” and then you roll dice to see if you hit or miss.

vs. FATE Core [Queue the symphony for your mind]

In FATE Core the rules encourage you to not only tell the story of “who you are” but it also uses those descriptions as active abilities that you use when completing actions as the story unfolds.

When running FATE the GM would embellish and say “your arch enemy enters the bar to exact some revenge” and the player would say “Great, so my character, Abigale Zhao, will try to OVERCOME the villain by using her SNEAKY: Good (+3) skill to sneak around behind the villain while he is looking for Abigale.” The GM says “Ok, to succeed you need to earn a Good [+3] because the villain is prepared, and looking for you.” Player rolls the FATE dice and gets [-, -, +], since the [-, +] cancel each out Abigale gets a net of -2, now you add Sneaky [+3] to get +1, which is a failure.

The player, quickly thinking on their feet says “I’ll pay a FATE point to re-roll and modify the environment to add a SITUATIONAL ASPECT of ‘dimly lit room’. Because the villain is coming in from the brightly lit outdoors he will be blind until his eyes adjust.” GM considers this and says “Alright, this will give you +2, so role again”. Player re-rolls and earns [0, -, +] this nets out to [+1] for the dice, [+2] for the aspect “dimly lit room” and [+3] for her SNEAKY: Good (+3) for a total of +6. The target is still

Good (+3) so this is over by +3, making this a “succeeded with STYLE”. This means that “you get a situation aspect with TWO free invocations, instead of one”.

Standard RPG

Now, back to a normal RPG. The next step after “attack” is to roll “to hit” dice. The result is a “hit”, “miss” or in some games a special “critical hit”. Hits then lead to more dice rolls to determine damage, which is then added to a tally. Repeat the sequence many times and someone wins, and someone dies.

vs. FATE Core [Queue the trumpets]

Now to the attack. The GM states “Abigail, you varmint, come out and pay your dues to the lord of thieves.” The player describes what happens next: “Everyone in the room is hushed as they see the enforcer squinting around the room. With a sudden gasp from the portly made the villain realizes that Abigail is behind him ... ‘tell the lord of the flies to return to the sewers where he came from’ and she attempts to knock him unconscious.” Using a Forceful:Fair (+2) attack + the surprise due to the “dimly lit room” she gets a +1. A tense roll turns up [-, +, +] for +2. This gives us a total of +5. The thug rolls a [0, -, -, +] for a -1 + Forceful: Good (+3) gives him a +2.

The attack is successful and Abigale earns +3 over the villain. Since he only has 2 stress boxes he checks one off, and trades off the next Stress box to add a MODERATE consequence. The player suggests that the villain is not knocked out, but is partly stunned and wobbles around the bar nearly falling to his knees.

“With a few well placed kicks I point him towards the door. The final kick propels him out the door and he stumbles and falls into the street. ‘Tell your puppet master he’ll need to send better class scum next time’. Abigale finishes off her drink, pays the bartender and heads out the back.”

*Interpretation by Mike Dodgson, 4FxDGames.com
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