

Aspect-related actions and terminology in DFRPG

Note: I've tried to consistently bold terms which are both common English terms and DFRPG game mechanics terms to help keep the mechanical definition in mind.

Invoke

A player can **invoke** an **aspect**, which requires the expenditure of 1 fate point, to provide one of these benefits:

- Add 2 to the result of the dice just rolled.
- Reroll all dice just rolled. You must keep the new result unless you **invoke** an additional **aspect** for another reroll.

A player can **invoke** an **aspect** on their own character, other PCs, NPCs, and scenes. Players and NPCs most often **invoke aspects** of their own, their allies, or of the scene. However, a Player could invoke the aspect of a hostile NPC for this benefit if it makes sense from a narrative perspective.

Examples:

- A hero invokes his own aspect "The Dead Stay Dead On My Watch" and pays a fate point, and in return gains a +2 to attack a zombie.
- A hero invokes the "Enshrouding Mists" aspect of the scene and pays a fate point, and in return gets to re-roll a poor stealth roll.
- A hero attempting to infiltrate an illegal gambling den invokes the aspect "Not The Sharpest Knife In The Drawer" on a mafia henchman to gain a +2 on a deceit roll.

Invoke for Effect

A player can "**invoke for effect**" an **aspect**, which requires the expenditure of 1 fate point, to declare a fact or situation to be true in order to benefit your character or allies. The GM will decide if the "**invoke for effect**" is appropriate. The previously described simple **invoke** provides a simple mechanical benefit, whereas "**invoke for effect**" provides a narrative benefit. While this is called an "**invoke for effect**" it is still an "**invoke**".

Who can "invoke for effect" on what?

Players or NPCs most often "**invoke for effect**" on **aspects** of their own, their allies, or the scene. However, a Player could "**invoke for effect**" an aspect of a hostile NPC for this benefit if it makes sense from a narrative perspective. If the effect is detrimental to the NPC, the fate point would be paid to the NPC (and this particular case should be run as the "invoke for effect" creating a compel that has the desired "effect" as the goal of the compel).

Examples:

- A hero "**invokes for effect**" his own **aspect** "Nothing Up My Sleeves" to declare that he had palmed a knife and hidden it on his body prior to being caught by ghouls. This costs a fate point.
- A hero trapped within a burning warehouse "**invokes for effect**" the **aspect** "Cluttered with Crates" on the scene to find a desperately needed crowbar. This costs a fate point.
- A hero "**invokes for effect**" the **aspect** "Blinded By Science!" against a vampire that's been dazzled by an array of strobes in order to prevent it from defending against his

pistol attack. This costs a fate point, and the fate point would be paid to the vampire. This is essentially the same as a **compel**.

Compel

A **compel** of an **aspect** typically imposes a limitation or complication on a character. If a character is affected by a **compel** in this fashion, a fate point is earned. Compels are often initiated by the GM “against” a PC, but can be proposed by a player “against” their own PC. Additionally, a player can propose a **compel** on an **aspect** of an NPC or a scene against an NPC, and in this case the PC would give 1 fate point to the NPC. A player who plays their character in a way fitting of the narrative effects of a **compel** (often called an “**accidental compel**”) should be considered to have been compelled, and should earn 1 fate point. A compel is a narrative control, and will generally be employed to make narrative more entertaining.

Example:

- While fleeing the tomb of an angered spirit, a hero with the **aspect** “Relic Hunter” is **compelled** to stop to investigate what looks to be an ancient Celtic cross half-buried in the dirt. If the player accepts the **compel**, he gains a fate point, and has given the spirit one more thing to be angry about, as well as a chance to catch up with him.
- A captured hero is being interrogated by an evil mastermind. The hero, having studied his nemesis, **compels** the “Classic Bond Villain” **aspect** of the mastermind to have him reveal his nefarious scheme. This costs a fate point, and the fate point is given to the villain.

Tag

A **tag** is a special type of **invoke** that can be made without spending a fate point. An **aspect** that is discovered (perhaps by an **assessment** or basic observation) or created (perhaps by a **maneuver** or **declaration**) can be **tagged**. The window of opportunity for **tagging** such an **aspect** is narrow, and the **tag** must occur very quickly after it is discovered or created; usually within the same exchange in which the **aspect** was discovered or created. It is not necessary that the player who discovered or created the **aspect** be the one who benefits from the **tag**. It is possible to use a **tag** to gain free **invoke for effect**, and the “effect” of that **invoke for effect** can be a **compel** (which is a separate entity from the originating **invoke for effect**). If using a **tag** for a **compel** in this fashion the GM acts in the player’s stead for the bidding and fate-point economy aspects of the **compel**, and the originating player may not escalate the bid.

Assessment

An **assessment** is a way that a character can discover **aspects**, or other features (such as The Catch), of an NPC, object, or area, typically by using knowledge or perception skills. **Assessments** take considerable time (more time than is generally available in a combat exchange, for example). Check the skill and skill trapping entries for time guidelines. **Aspects** discovered by **assessment** have an exemption from the normal immediate-use requirements with regard to **tagging**. Normally an **aspect** must be tagged very quickly after its discovery, or the ability to **tag** (**invoke** for free) is lost. That said, **assessed aspects** should be tagged as quickly as narratively reasonable/appropriate. **Assessment** is an in-game action performed by a character.

Example:

- A group of heroes is regrouping after a defeat by what seems to be an impervious

golem. After a session of Arcane Research (a **trapping** of the Lore **skill**), the heroes discover that the golem is vulnerable to weapons made of stag horn.

- A cat burglar is casing the estate of a crime-lord. A few hours of observation reveals “Blind Spots In The Security Camera Coverage”, an **aspect** that will prove useful in infiltrating the compound.

Declaration

A **declaration** is a way that a player can exert some narrative control by **declaring** a certain fact or situation to be true. **Declarations** can in some cases create **aspects**. **Declarations** are generally made in one of two ways: by skill roll, or fate point expenditure.

Skill Roll

A player may make a **declaration** by choosing an appropriate character skill, and beating a target difficulty with a skill roll. **Declarations** made in this way do not cost a fate point, and can create **aspects**. **Aspects** created in this fashion may be temporary or permanent depending on the situation.

Fate Point

A player may make a **declaration** by spending a fate point. **Declarations** made in this fashion will generally not create an **aspect**.

Declarations are made by players in the meta-game, and take no in-game time.

Examples:

- (Skill Roll) While tracking an evil rakshasa through a zoo, a hero makes a Lore roll to declare that the shapeshifter’s presence disturbs birds, placing the “Fowl Know the Fowl” aspect on the scene.
- (Fate Point) A hero wants to make a public exchange of hostages with monstrous minions of a Red Court Vampire in Brazil. The hero spends a fate point to declare that costumed Carnivale revelers fill the streets.

Maneuver

A **maneuver** is an action a character can take to place temporary **aspects** on scenes, NPCs, or themselves. A character makes a skill roll to attempt a **maneuver**, and this roll may in some cases be opposed by another PC or NPC. An **aspect** created with a maneuver that results in no shifts is **fragile** (and will last only until the initial **tag**).

Examples:

- While verbally sparring with an NPC, the hero attempts a maneuver using the Infuriation trapping of Intimidation as an opposed rolled against the the NPC’s Discipline in order to place “His Goat Got Gotten” on the NPC. An angry opponent can be a sloppy opponent!
- A hero is attempting to disarm a time-bomb while a magic duel rages around him. He performs a Discipline roll to place the aspect “focus, Focus, FOCUS!” on himself. Once this is in place, he can tag this aspect for a +2 bonus when he uses the Demolitions Training trapping of Craftsmanship to pull the red wire. Or was it the green wire?
- While being pursued through a library, a hero employs Might to push over bookcases and applies the “Book-alanche!” **aspect** to the scene, which could be **tagged** to give a +2 toward widening the gap in the chase.

