DEDICATION

To Autumn Winters, who loves a good fiasco.

THANKS

...to Jarrod Acquistapace, Kevin Allen Jr, Jason D. Corley, Adam Dray, Damian Fraustro, Nathan Herrold, William Huggins, Sage LaTorra, Jonathan Walton, Kamil Wegrzynowicz and my friends at storygames.com and elsewhere for insightful comments and enthusiasm.

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Heartfelt thanks to all of you, and to every playtester, too – and sorry about the mess out back under the tarp. Best not to look, OK? I’ve got it all under control.
PLAYTESTERS


Team Do Not Use Our Real Names: Tomg, Spuds, Darth and Heli.

Team EndGame: Chris “That’s my leopard” Bennett, Robert Earley-Clark, Chris Peterson, and Karen Twelves.

Team London: Steve Dempsey, Wai Kien, Simon Rogers, Graham Walmsley and Graham’s friend Dave.

Team High Point: Chad Bowser, James “Connie” Jeffers, Andi “Chicken Hut” Newton, Chris Norwood, and Clarence Simpson.

Team Milan: Claudio Agosti, Silvia Bindelli, Claudio Criscione, Damiano Desco, and Flavio Mortarino.


Team Morristown: Lowell Carson, Eric Tage Larsen, Ryan Macklin and Michael “Preacher McKean” O’Sullivan.

Team Peoria: Crystal Ben-Ezra, Gabrielle Ben-Ezra, Seth Ben-Ezra, Ralph Mazza and Keith Sears.


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Team Shot the Sheriff: Colin Creitz, John Daniels, Chris Deibler, Sarah “Heidi Jo” Thomas.

Team SuperNoVa: Jeff Hosmer, Auntie M, Joe Iglesias, Sean Leventhal, and Mel White.
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THE ELEVATOR PITCH

Here are just a few of the key ingredients: Dynamite, pole vaulting, laughing gas, choppers – can you see how incredible this is going to be? Hang gliding, come on!

Dignan, Bottle Rocket

Fiasco is inspired by cinematic tales of small time capers gone disastrously wrong – particularly films like Blood Simple, Fargo, The Way of the Gun, Burn After Reading, and A Simple Plan. You’ll play ordinary people with powerful ambition and poor impulse control. There will be big dreams and flawed execution. It won’t go well for them, to put it mildly, and in the end it will probably collapse into a glorious heap of jealousy, murder, and recrimination. Lives and reputations will be lost, painful wisdom will be gained, and if you are really lucky, your guy just might end up back where he started.

YOU’LL NEED

* Three, four, or five people, including yourself. There is no Game Master.

* Four six-sided dice per player, two each of black and white. You really just need two different colors you can use to denote success and failure – I’ll use black and white for clarity.

* Several dozen index cards or sticky notes and some pencils.

* About two and a half hours, varying with experience, play style and the size of your group.
GETTING TO THE GOOD STUFF

There’s a fly in the ointment, shit’s hittin’ the fan, the lion will speak!

Saul, Pineapple Express

JUST BROWSING

If you are browsing and want to get a feel for the game’s flavor, read the Elevator Pitch on page 8, the Overview on page 10, and maybe the Glossary. Then check out the Playsets beginning on page 60 and the replay – an extended example of play – beginning on page 101.

NEW TO WEIRD GAMES

If this sort of game is new to you, I’d encourage you to read the whole thing and pay particular attention to the examples cross-referenced in the replay that starts on page 101. It isn’t rocket science, and I hope it’s pretty clear how it works, but it might be a little weird on first reading. The examples should help!

STORY GAMING GOOBER

If you are comfortable with collaborative, narrative-heavy games (Fiasco is similar in a lot of ways to Prime Time Adventures or Montsegur 1244, for example), you can probably get away with ignoring the “Things to Look For” sections of the rules and the replay. It does behave a little differently than what you are used to, though, so don’t make any assumptions. I try to spell out exactly what to do and when to do it.

FIASCO REGULAR

The cheat sheet is on page 126, the Tilt table is on page 56 and the Aftermath table is on page 58. Playsets begin on page 60. Go crazy.
Before we go any further, all right, we have to swear to God, Allah, that nobody knows about this but us, all right? No family members, no girlfriends, nobody.

Peter Gibbons, Office Space

Fiasco is a highly collaborative game in which every player should always be engaged – either actively playing a character or throwing out suggestions, brainstorming scene ideas, and listening for ways to make each scene hit harder than the last. Because the pace is so frantic, every choice you make has to matter a lot.

A game of Fiasco begins with The Setup – a group activity where you and your friends create a potent and unstable set of circumstances. You choose a Playset, which fixes the game in a particular time and place – a contemporary southern town, maybe, or the old west. Using a pile of dice, you create an interconnected circle of Relationships and Details pulled from the Playset. Once you’ve created a situation poised on the brink of juicy disaster, you define characters based on your choices.

Once the Setup is done, you play out scenes, which focus on various characters in rotation. When it is your turn, you get to choose whether you want to Establish the scene (setting the nature of the scene, any obvious conflict, the location, and the characters on hand) or Resolve it (leaving the initial set-up to your friends, but deciding on whether the outcome is positive or negative for your guy). You can’t do both!

Play is divided into two acts. As a rule of thumb, each act ought to take about an hour. At the end of Act One is the Tilt, where some interesting and crazy things show up to disrupt the story. At the end of Act Two is the Aftermath, where you learn the ultimate fate of all your characters. Usually the Setup takes fifteen minutes, and the Tilt and Aftermath take another fifteen minutes total. Your playing time will vary a bit.

You’ll have a bunch of dice (four per player), and these are used throughout the game in different ways. The dice aid in The Setup, help determine scene outcomes, and pace the game – when half of them have been used, Act One ends, The Tilt is determined, and Act Two begins. When all of the dice have been used, Act Two is over and it’s time for the Aftermath.
In Act One you meet your characters, learn what they are after, and take some first steps toward getting them what they want. When the first act ends (after half the dice have been used), you add The Tilt that further destabilizes the situation. Then Act Two begins.

In Act Two, you drive toward clear goals for your characters – maybe quiet success, maybe theatrical revenge, or maybe just a warm place to sleep. After the last die has been used, you learn your respective characters’ fates and begin the Aftermath.

The Aftermath is played as a montage, and once again the dice offer you a chance to reveal your character’s fate in a colorful, fast-paced and sometimes surprising conclusion.

ONE LAST FUCKING THING

I tried to write these rules in a conversational style that suits the subject matter and the films it references. You can expect some foul language and salacious depictions of reprehensible behavior, which will likely be par for the course in play as well. If that sort of thing bothers you, this is probably not a game you will enjoy.
THE BASICS

Choose a Playset.
Roll a bunch of dice into a central pile.
Develop a web of Relationships and Details.
Create characters attached to those Relationships and Details.
Put all the dice back into a central pile.
HOW IT WORKS

I’ve been to prison once; I’ve been married – twice. I was once drafted by Lyndon Johnson and had to live in shit-ass Mexico for two and a half years for no reason. I’ve had my eye socket punched in, a kidney taken out and I got a bone-chip in my ankle that’s never gonna heal. I’ve seen some pretty shitty situations in my life, but nothing has ever sucked more ass than this.

Willie, Bad Santa

* Choose a Playset.

The Playset is Fiasco’s core – from it you’ll draw situation, characters, and inspiration. Think of Playsets like trouble construction kits – you’ve got big lists of cool stuff, and each will have a flavor unique to its time and place.

Playsets are divided into four lists. The lists reflect the things that will be central to your game – the stock elements. Relationships will be first and foremost, and they’ll be spiced up by Details that color and intensify Relationships. A Detail is always attached to a Relationship, and can be an Object, a Need, or a Location.

The Playset lists, in turn, are broken down into six general categories and six specific elements within each category. For example, in the Nice Southern Town Playset, general category three of Locations is “Out by the Interstate”, and within that list, number four is “The Quik-Pik gas station and convenience store”.

Choose a Playset everyone is excited about, or make your own (Four awesome ready-to-play Playsets start on page 60, and there’s advice on making your own, too).

* Roll a bunch of dice into a central pile.

Once you’ve chosen a Playset, roll some dice in the middle of the table – four per player, two black and two white. Thus, you’ll be rolling 12, 16, or 20 dice, for three, four or five people are playing, and they will be evenly split between black and white. It doesn’t matter who rolls – just make sure you start the Setup with a nice random assortment of numbers.
**Develop a web of Relationships and Details.**

You’ve now chosen a Playset stuffed with interesting things, and have a pile of randomly-rolled dice. The next step is to combine the two.

Your particular game is going to have a bunch of specific bits associated with it, like “Location: The Suds and Duds Laundromat on Commerce Street” or “Relationship: Friends with benefits”. Together these will form the bones of your game. The guy you make will have a pair of Relationships with other people in the community, played by your friends to your right and left, and a Detail – a Need, Object, or Location – to help fill out his particular background.

Start with the player who grew up in the smallest town and then take turns, building the web of information in rotation. You do this by looking over the Playset lists and grabbing a die from the central pile with a number that matches an element you are interested in. If it’s for a general category (Like “Location: Out by the Interstate”), write it on a new index card. If it is filling in a specific element for a general category already on the table (like “Location: Out by the Interstate: The Quik-Pik”), add that to the card to finish it. Leave a die you allocate on top of its card, just to keep everything organized. Since there will be one Relationship between each pair of players, you can simplify The Setup by starting with two index cards per player, and writing “Relationship” at the top of one of them).
THINGS TO LOOK FOR

A burglar broke in intending to loot the place, uh, repented, became despondent over his lifestyle and shot himself.

Freddy Bender, Intolerable Cruelty

CHARACTERS

As you engineer the fiasco, talk about what sort of people your characters might be, why they are in the relationships they find themselves in, why the Details are important, and what’s going on. Just don’t pre-play the game or get fixated on a particular character too early. You don’t have complete control over who your character ends up being, and you’ll be defining him based on Relationships and Details that won’t be fully fleshed out until near the end of the Setup. So don’t think too hard about who your guy is just yet – concentrate on choosing interesting and perhaps challenging elements as you put the fiasco together. Once all the glorious pieces are in place, then you’ll have a chance to build up a great character. So cool it at first and see what happens.

Here’s an important point – your guy may not be in trouble. The game’s central dilemma may not be about your character at all – maybe he’s a distant relative, or a do-gooder, or just collateral damage. If it turns out your guy isn’t in a jam as the game begins, focus on making the jam more intense until it touches him, too. Trust me, eventually it will.

Some Relationships are balanced and others are not. Some are very specific and some are amorphous. You may find yourself with a pair of oddly competing Relationships – this is strictly awesome! Feel free to interpret loosely if that helps. Many Relationships imply a power differential – con man and mark, for example – and it may be helpful to work out who is who based on the two characters’ other Relationships.
Needs stem from unmet desire. Somebody wants something (or someone) they do not have. The “wanter” might be one member of the Relationship, it might be both, or it might be a third person they both deeply care about. Regardless, both members of the Relationship stand to benefit or suffer equally. For a Need to really kick, both characters need to be heavily invested in it – possibly at cross purposes, but always invested. Obsessed, even! Is your guy’s Need to get respect from a family member by rescuing them from ruin? It’s perfectly acceptable for one half of the Relationship to be the family member in need of rescue. It’d also be fine to make the person on the brink of ruin external to the Relationship – maybe your two characters are parents out to save their child. The key is that if it all goes wrong, they both get dragged down.

Somebody needs to Need something problematic to have a genuine fiasco, but it’s important to note that not every Relationship needs a Need – in fact, the game is more fun if Needs are a little thin on the ground. Let some characters start the game removed from destructive motivation – maybe they will be a force for reason and good throughout the game, or maybe they will be caught up in the spiral of failure and destruction that will surely touch them at some point. Some questions to ask:

- Is the Need capable of being the obsessive core of the relationship?
- Is the Need alive with possibility, both good and bad (but mostly bad)?
- Is the Need producing nods of appreciation and excitement from your friends?

If the answer to each is a resounding yes, you’ve got a fun Need.
LOCATIONS

Well, here we are in a room with two manky hookers and a racist dwarf.

Ken, In Bruges

Locations should be metaphoric extensions of characters. These are places that serve as windows to the souls of the people associated with them, and you should return to them again and again. You can shape both the character and the place in partnership with the player you share a Relationship with. Does a married banker keep his mistress-secretary in a split-level duplex? That’s more than a building, that’s a way of life, and says a lot about their relationship. During the game, if you’re looking for a place to have a scene happen, scan around for existing Locations. If somebody cared enough to author the Chicken Hut out by the interstate, it ought to be a hub of in-game activity. Where else are you going to find an industrial fryer? Some questions to ask:

• Is the Location capable of being absolutely central to the Relationship?

• Is the Location able to backdrop lots of characters in different ways?

• Is the Location sparking ideas for scenes before it hits the table?

If the answer to each is an enthusiastic yes, you’ve got a great Location.
Fifteen million dollars is not money. It’s a motive with a universal adapter on it.

Joe Sarno, *The Way of the Gun*

Objects also make statements about characters and will help drive play. Think of them as physical stand-ins for the Relationship to which they are tied. Do the frowsy laundromat attendant and her live-in boy-friend share some legal records? Maybe they are adoption papers, or maybe they are a bequest. Either way, those papers are going to show up in the first part and – count on it – probably result in somebody’s death by the end of the story. Don’t be afraid to introduce an Object tied to another Relationship into your scenes, further entangling your character in their lives. Some questions to ask:

- Is the Object capable of being equally important to both sides of the Relationship?
- Is the Object a clear magnet for trouble of various types?
- Is the Object clearly going to have a life of its own, rather than being useless color?

If the answer to each is a fist-pumping yes, you’ve got a perfect Object.
When half the dice have been taken from the communal pile, Act One ends. The break between the acts is the time when something new and unstable is injected into the story. This is called...

THE

THE BASICS

At the end of Act One, roll the dice in front of you. Do some dice math.

If you have the high number of either color, you will help add a pair of complications. Roll the unused dice in the central pile.

Consult the Tilt table on page 56.

Reassemble the central die pile. Keep dice already assigned in Act One.

Take a break; stretch and get a snack. Talk about where the game is heading.
How It Works

Up is down, black is white.

* At the end of Act One, roll the dice in front of you. Do some dice math.

As Act One wraps up, you’ll have some dice in front of you as the result of the preceding scenes. Roll them all, and add all the black dice together and all the white dice together, and then subtract the higher from the lower. For example, if you have one black and one white die, and roll 6 and 4 respectively, that’s 2 black. If you had one black and three white dice, and rolled totals of 1 and 18 respectively, that’s 17 white. If you have no dice, your total is zero. For an example of calculating your Tilt score, see page 117.
If you have the highest number of either color, you will help add a pair of complications.

The player with the highest white total and the player with the highest black total each get to choose Tilt elements. The Tilt is a standard list of Details, just like Needs, Objects, and Locations—but this time, it represents disruptive, game-changing events, people, and impulses.

Roll the unused dice in the central pile.

You’ll want some random numbers. In a four-person game, you’ll have eight dice. Don’t mix these with the dice you’ve earned in Act One.

Consult the Tilt table on page 56.

Use the results of the roll to pick elements from the Tilt list, as during the Setup, with each high-scoring player choosing a general and a specific element. This is a good time to ask for input from the other players, who may have really good ideas. It’s also a good time to privilege your own character’s big finish!

Pick Tilt elements you are excited about and will have the potential to take the game in an intriguing direction. You are injecting trouble, so don’t be shy. Write the new Details on their own index cards and put them in the center of the table. These are fair game for anybody and are not Relationship-specific. Chances are everyone will know right where they belong. There’s an example of creating Tilt Details in the replay, on page 118.

Reassemble the central die pile. Keep dice already assigned in Act One.

Any dice used to choose Tilt elements get tossed back into the central pile, which should be half empty. The other half of the game’s dice should have already be assigned to players during Act One.

Take a break; stretch and get a snack. Talk about where the game is heading.

Once you’ve got a pair of juicy Tilt elements, discuss the events so far and what you’d like to see happen. Take a break and step away from the table, get a snack, and talk about the game. Check in with your friends, make sure everybody is having fun, and highlight cool things that have happened, and cool things that seem poised to happen. This break is actually really important!
THINGS TO LOOK FOR

He was alive when I buried him.

Ray, Blood Simple

DON’T BE A WUSS

Maybe you know exactly what you want for the Tilt, and there’s a perfect thing just sitting there. Sometimes, though, it is way better to shake things up with something unexpected, incongruous, or downright mysterious. Just because you introduce “love rears its ugly head” doesn’t mean you have to know how that is going to happen.

WEIRD EDGE CASES

If you end Act One without any dice, your total is a perfect zero for both black and white.

If you end Act One with only white dice or only black dice, that’s a good thing – you’re likely to have a high total one way or the other.

If the high black or high white score is a tie, have each tying player re-roll all of their dice. Highest total wins.

If no one has any dice of one color, the lowest die of the opposite color wins.

If the same person rolls both high white and high black, they choose all the elements themselves. This is really unlikely but it could happen!
PLAYSETS

We released ourselves on our own recognizance.

Gale Snopes, Raising Arizona

ABOUT PLAYSETS

A Playset provides a framework you’ll build on to create characters and situation. A complete Playset consists of four 36-item lists (six sub-lists of six items each), and some might have a custom Tilt list as well. The Playset you choose will inform your game in a huge way, so pick one you like or make your own. The ones included in Fiasco have been heavily playtested and are really solid, and more are available at the Bully Pulpit Games Website. If you are in a hurry, “Insta-Setups” have been provided that will allow you to blaze through the Setup.

MAKING PLAYSETS

Use the playsets provided if you like them, but by all means create – and share – your own. The feel of your game is tied to the content of the lists, so by changing them, you change the game. Localize. Change the time period. Alter the relationships implicit in the Relationships. Go crazy. The Relationships and Needs are likely to need very little tweaking, but Location and Object lists really define your setting, so they should get more attention. Each item should cry out for inclusion, either because it is totally crazy or deliciously prosaic.

You’ll need to come up with a ton of new elements (don’t forget to mess with The Tilt if necessary). One great way to handle this is to write each six-item list’s title on an individual index card, and then rotate the cards around. Everyone adds one new item to each list and rotates again. Once a card has six items, number them and set that card aside. Don’t be shy about re-using big chunks of existing Playsets as well – Relationships don’t change much, so consider grabbing and tweaking an existing set.

If you are feeling adventurous, think about replacing entire Details – what happens when you take away locations and replace them with burdens?

Budget a little extra time if you are building your own Playset, maybe an hour, and please share it with the world!
RELA TIONSHIPS...

1 FAMILY

 Parent-In-law / son or daughter-in-law
 Cousins, or aunt/uncle and niece/nephew
 Siblings
 Parent / child or stepchild
 Grandparent / grandchild
 Distant / unusual / unofficial relatives

2 WORK

 Former co-workers
 Current co-workers
 Supervisor / employee
 Mechanic, plumber, decorator, landscaper & client
 Salesman / customer
 Pastor, doctor, lawyer, dentist, drug dealer & client

3 FRIENDSHIP

 Manipulator / victim
 Old buddies
 Drug friends
 Friendly rivals
 Friends with benefits
 Bitter social adversaries (Church friends)
4 ROMANCE

- Former spouses
- Current spouses
- Life-long crush / Object of crush
- One-time fling
- Lovers
- Former lovers

5 CRIME

- Corrupt official / local big shot
- Gambler / bookie
- Thieves (shoplifters, burglars, car thieves)
- Con man / mark
- Hoodlums (racketeers, knuckleheads, delinquents)
- Drug people (dealers, manufacturers, distributors)

6 COMMUNITY

- Elected officials (Aldermen, mayor, commissioner)
- Civic volunteers (election officials, chamber, clubs)
- Church volunteers (deacons, Sunday school teacher)
- Rec league, minor league, pick-up team sports
- Case worker, parole officer, guardian ad litem / client
- AA/Narcanon sponsor / participant

...IN A NICE SOUTHERN TOWN
NEEDS...

1 TO GET OUT
- …of this town, before they realize you took it
- …of this town, to escape family
- …of the gang
- …of a relationship with a lover
- …of the obligation to a frail relative in your care
- …of a crushing debt coming due

2 TO GET EVEN
- …with the bad people, who think they are so tough
- …with this town, for what it has turned you into
- …with a police officer
- …with a family member
- …with a co-worker
- …with a rival

3 TO GET RICH
- …through stealing a drug stash
- …through robbing a business
- …through tricking a handicapped guy
- …through the death of an elderly person
- …through political back-scratching
- …through a misplaced suitcase full of cash
4 TO GET RESPECT
☐ ...from this town, by bringing down the machine
☐ ...from this town, by proving your convictions
☐ ...from your lover, by taking the fall
☐ ...from the police, by turning in your own kin
☐ ...from a family member, by rescuing them from ruin
☐ ...from yourself, by finally doing it once and for all

5 TO GET THE TRUTH
☐ ...about why they are all so shut-mouthed
☐ ...about the Sheriff’s political corruption
☐ ...about why he really came here
☐ ...about what she did behind The Patio
☐ ...about your real parents
☐ ...about the mistake that haunts you

6 TO GET LAID
☐ ...to get it over with
☐ ...by that sweet thing you’ve been thinking on
☐ ...because you need the raise that badly
☐ ...by an old lover, to start over
☐ ...by an old lover, to further your scheme
☐ ...by your sweetheart, who is acting squirrelly

...IN A NICE SOUTHERN TOWN
LOCATIONS...

1 MAIN STREET
- Peace Haven church
- El Perro Alto Mexican restaurant
- Royall’s drug store: Pharmacy in the back, soda fountain up front
- Shafter and Hazelbrook, LLC, the only lawyers in town
- Commercial Bank, the only bank in town
- Vantage Services, medical claims processor

2 COMMERCE STREET
- Suds and Duds, coin operated laundromat
- Municipal building, police station, courts and city hall
- Family Medical Clinic, the only doctor in town
- New Outlook tanning salon and weight loss center
- The Patio, a movie picture house
- Bill Rivers’ Pool Room, for pool and illegal gambling

3 OUT BY THE INTERSTATE
- Chicken Hut fast food restaurant
- Davenport’s Tire and Tractor, tire shop and tractor repair
- Rose’s Village Motel, convenient to the highway
- The Quik-Pik, gas station and convenience store
- Durable Paper Goods, paper bag manufacturing plant
- Accurate Automotive, used cars
**4 Up Center Road**

- J&K Gravel: Gravel, stone, and quarried materials
- The old fish house, an abandoned roadhouse
- Center Road Animal Care, large animal veterinarian
- Lyman C. Mills Consolidated High School
- Spiller’s, funeral services since 1911
- Charles Green Landscaping, lawn care and excavation

**5 Out and About**

- Town parking lot beside the freight tracks
- Red Run State Park
- A farmer’s field out past Surry Avenue
- The ball field
- Woods up around Hickory Terrace
- Construction site next to Accurate Automotive

**6 Residences**

- Van parked behind Royall’s
- Trailer out back of the high school
- Apartment above Suds and Duds
- Farmhouse up Center road
- Split-level ranch on Surry Avenue
- Mansion out by Hickory Terrace

...In a nice southern town
OBJECTS...

1 UNTOWARD
- Porn stash / sex gear
- Welfare check / food stamps
- Garage full of Amway products
- Mink farm
- Klan outfit / hate paraphernalia
- Eviction notice

2 TRANSPORTATION
- Golf cart
- New pickup truck
- Panel truck
- Small plane
- Pontoon party boat
- Dirt bike

3 WEAPON
- Shotgun
- Machete
- Poisonous snake
- Handgun
- Pipe bomb
- Firefighter’s Halligan tool
4 INFORMATION
- Secret recipe
- An overheard conversation
- Legal records
- Love letter
- List written in a Christmas card
- Photographs

5 VALUABLES
- Drug stash
- Mason jar full of gold coins
- Comic book collection
- Vintage car
- Purebred animal
- Suitcase full of cash

6 SENTIMENTAL
- Newborn baby
- War memorabilia
- Roadside accident shrine
- Mathematics trophy
- Wedding ring
- Heirloom silver tea set

...IN A NICE SOUTHERN TOWN
A NICE SOUTHERN INSTA-SETUP

RELATIONSHIPS
For three players...

* Family: Siblings
* Romance: Ex-spouses
* Crime: Corrupt official and local big shot

For four players, add...

* Friendship: Drug buddies

For five players, add...

* Work: Professional and client

NEEDS
For three players...

* To get even: With a rival

For four or five players, add...

* To get out: Of a crushing debt coming due

LOCATIONS
For three, four or five players...

* Main Street: El Perro Alto Mexican restaurant

OBJECTS
For three or four players...

* Valuables: Suitcase full of cash

For five players, add...

* Weapon: Poisonous snake
The replay is a Japanese innovation—a transcript of actual play that’s designed to both entertain and teach you the rules. It’s an extended example of play encompassing a whole session. I’ve edited this one down to the basics, but the intention is the same. Let me know if you enjoy it or find it useful.

**STEVE:** Hi Fiasco replay reader, allow us to introduce ourselves before we play. I’m Steve. I brought the game over tonight and I’ve played a few times. I’m no Fiasco expert, though!

**MONA:** That is definitely true.

**STEVE:** Thanks, Mona, I appreciate the support. Other than games I’m into the usual stuff—delicious toast, Patrick Swayze’s performance in Red Dawn, my son Henry and horror movies.

**MONA:** I’m Mona, the token girl, and I’m fairly new to role-playing. My favorite games so far, other than Fiasco of course, are 1001 Nights and Best Friends. I have two sweet dogs and I like making things. I sew my own cosplay outfits and knit and have a blowtorch.
JOEL: I’m Joel. I’ve been gaming pretty much all my life. Right now I’m running an L5R campaign and playing the second season of a Prime Time Adventures show. I work for the government and that’s about all I can say about that.

JEFF: Hi, I’m Jeff. Like Joel I’ve been playing games a long time, but only recently got interested in shorter-form games like Fiasco. I’ve got a regular D&D group that’s been playing together for years. I like to cook, and I’m into anime as well.

MONA: That’s all of us. Let’s get this show on the road, shall we?

STEVE: Right. From here on out we’re focusing on the game.

THE SETUP

*The rules for The Setup begin on page 15.*

JOEL: Steve, since you’ve played before, can you try to keep things on track and answer any rules questions if they crop up?

STEVE: Sure thing. I assume we’re playing straight – no rules tweaks.

*They agree and begin the Setup.*

JEFF: We need a Playset, right? Any preferences?

MONA: Let’s use “A Nice Southern Town.”

JOEL: Sounds good. Why don’t we set it in ... let’s see ... Robin Hood, North Carolina.

JEFF: I like that; it already sounds off-kilter. How many dice do we need?

STEVE: Four players, four dice each, so 16. Eight black and eight white.

*They gather the dice.*

MONA: Can I roll them?

STEVE: Sure!
Mona rolls all sixteen dice:

1 1 1 1 2 2 2 3 3 3 3 4 5 6 6 6

JEFF: Who goes first?

STEVE: Who grew up in the smallest town? Not me.

JEFF: Not me either. Joel? Mona?

JOEL: 2,000 people?

MONA: You win. My home town is tiny, but not that tiny.

Joel looks at the Playset lists, reviewing Relationships, Locations, Objects and Needs in a small southern town. They are seated Joel, Steve, Mona, Jeff, so Joel is first and Steve is last in rotation throughout the game.

JOEL: Hmm, there’s only one five, and I definitely want a crime Relationship so I’ll take that.

Joel writes “Relationship: Crime” on an index card and places it between himself and Steve – they will have a criminal relationship of some sort. He puts the die on top of the card.

STEVE: I’m next. How about a work Relationship between Jeff and Mona?

Steve writes “Relationship: Work” on a new index card, puts it between Jeff and Mona, and places a two die on it.

MONA: Work, huh? All right. I’ll take a two and make us co-workers. Where and how, we don’t know yet.

Mona finishes the Relationship card between her and Jeff by adding “Co-workers” and putting her die on it, beside the other two already on it.

JEFF: The Details will come, Mona. I want some community involvement in our story here. I’ll take a six.

Jeff adds the information to a card and puts it between Mona and Steve, with the six die on top of it.

JEFF: Joel, your turn.
Branch’s Ford Escort—until it is Mona’s turn again.

MONA: I don’t actually have anything in mind, so I’ll Resolve. Set me up, guys.

STEVE: A scene for Pete Branch.

JOEL: I’ve got an idea. Let’s have Joy make her first move at Sunday school.

STEVE: OK by me. Are you cool with that, Mona?

MONA: Definitely, since I get to decide whether Pete falls for it or not.

STEVE: So it’s a flashback to a few days before everything started getting really crazy. Shady Grove is a Baptist church, up on a hill, picture perfect. There’s a little rec room for Sunday school and all morning Joy’s been brushing up against him, making meaningful eye contact, that sort of thing.

JEFF: She’s looking good, too – a little too good for Sunday. She smells nice.

MONA: The last kid has just been picked up. It’s just the two of them, tidying up, a moment Pete’s been dreading.

Mona and Steve play out the scene in character.

MONA: Glad you’re here, Joy. An extra set of hands helps a lot with the Hudspeth twins.

STEVE: Oh, I know it! It was fun, though. Like old times. Remember youth group?

MONA: Oh, man, those were the days.

STEVE: We had a lot of fun, didn’t we, Pete?

MONA: We sure did.

STEVE: I miss those good times.

MONA: Well, you’re a married lady now, you’ve got certain responsibilities. You can’t go running off to the swimming hole whenever you please.
STEVE: No, I sure can’t. I sure can’t.


STEVE: Am I?

MONA: Sure you are. I mean, look at me. What do I have to show for myself? Nothing.

STEVE: That’s not true. You’re still a good man, a decent man, Pete.

Steve grins.

STEVE: OK, Joy sidles up and touches his face. She looks in his eyes and gets really close.

Mona grins and picks up a black die, choosing for her character, Pete, to fail

Pete can feel her warmth, smell her perfume – the same perfume she wore in high school.

MONA: And he turns away and grabs a broom, beet red and flustered. And she follows him, backs him into a corner.

STEVE: Pete, I’m so lonely.

MONA: And against his better judgment, against every instinct, he kisses her. Then he runs away.

JOEL: I’m so happy right now. This is all going to end in a terrible tragedy.

MONA: Oh yes.

Mona and Steve share a high-five. Mona gives her scene partner, Steve, the black die.

STEVE: We’re down to the final die before the tilt, and Jeff, it’s all yours.

JEFF: I want to Establish! Here’s the deal, if it’s OK with you, Joel.

JOEL: Bring it.
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