

## FIASCO

**HOW TO WIN:** Everyone wins if an interesting (if often fatalistic) story is told and/or acted out at the table.

**PLAY SUMMARY:** Follow a FIASCO scenario for plot, character elements, In turns, players talk through — in dialogue or description — a developing plot that has a beginning, major plot twist, and an end. This is done in movie-like scenes. In-character conversation is encouraged.

**MATERIALS:** Markers, a black die and white for each player, and a stack of index cards, a FIASCO scenario, the FIASCO core book or companion.

### HOW TO PLAY, STEP-BY-STEP

1. **ON THE INDEX CARDS, JUST WRITE THE WORDS YOU ARE TOLD!** Give each player two index cards. Have them write "character," "name," "player," and "detail" on one. Then, have them write "tilt pile" on their second card.
2. **ON THE INDEX CARDS, JUST WRITE THE WORDS YOU ARE TOLD!** Take five index cards that are shared. Take one and write words "tilt," and "detail." Do this on another card, too. You have three more blank cards. One should have "object" and "detail" on it. Another should have "location" and "detail" on it. The last should have "need" and "detail" on it.
3. Count out two white dice and two black dice. These are the standard, six-sided dice like in most games. You cannot get by on digital dice. You need *physical* objects. In this phase, color doesn't matter.
4. Roll everyone's dice into one, big pile. Organize them, right to left, by the number on the face of each die, going smallest to largest. They should not be assigned to individual players at this point.
5. Go to the RELATIONSHIPS section of the module. Just look at the BROAD categories. The ones with the regular, 1-6 numbers by them and not the little pictures of dice. Ignore the ones with the little pictures of dice for now.
6. Go in turn order, starting with the person who has most recently been to a small town (or satisfied annoy other criterion you set down). Have them choose a broad relationship category whose 1-6 number matches the die face number on one of the dice you just rolled and separated by number in step 4. **COLOR IS IRRELEVANT AT THIS POINT.** You are limited to the numbers shown on these dice. Write that category on your relationship card. Put that die on the relationship card to indicate that it is out of the central dice pool. Choose either the person to the right or left of you, so that you know with whom you have that relationship. You will only have ONE relationship card per game, but everyone will have a relationship with someone.

7. This continues with the next player to the right or left. Who cares which direction, really, as long as the order stays consistent?

8. Okay, now, the next part gives you a LOT of freedom. Going in the same turn order, use the dice available to choose the location, object, need, and then a detail for each of the above, plus a detail for the characters. **INDIVIDUAL PLAYERS CAN CHOOSE THESE IN ANY ORDER (ESTABLISHING THE BROAD CATEGORY FIRST) ON HIS TURN!** Although the broad categories use 1-6 numbers rather than die faces, and the details use die faces rather than 1-6 numbers, they ALL require the represented dice you rolled in Step 4.

9. The last die's number is WILD for that player.

10. By the time this is done, you should each have your own character card with a broad category and detail linked to ONE other player. Collectively, the gaming group should also have a Need w/Detail, Object w/Detail, and Location w/Detail. The players should relate to these and integrate them into the story as fundamentally as possible... but remember that you are not slaves to it. Nothing on the cards is secret (from the plays, but maybe not the characters) in the game. It's all up for grabs for good story-telling.

### *Act One*

1. Both acts have TWO rounds. In each round, each player gets ONE turn to create/dictate/initiate a storytelling and/or roleplaying scene that establishes characters and moves the story forward.

2. AT THE START OF YOUR INDIVIDUAL TURN, choose if you want an "Establish" scene or a "Resolve" scene.

3. An "Establish" scene means that YOU set up and go through a scene and other players (it could be an individual player or the group) decide if it will go well or poorly for your character. "Poor" isn't a bad thing in FIASCO. It just is a plot complication. They will give you a BLACK die if it is supposed to end poorly. They will give you a WHITE die if it is supposed to go well. They may do this at any point in your scene. You, then, end the scene with that fate in mind.

4. A "Resolve" scene means that YOU choose for the other players to set up the conditions and maybe a few details of the scene you will do, and you choose the die and nature of the scene's ending. You may do this at any point in your scene. Note that a good ending is not necessarily an interesting ending.

5. Either way, reward any player you wish, for any reason, with the die you were given or chose to define the tone of your scene's end. They will put it on their "tilt pile" card and IGNORE IT until the act is over. Do not change the number on the face. Just keep this to the side. The dice you'll continue to draw from are the ones in the center of the table.

6. Everyone does this on his turn.

7. Go until every player has had two scenes. Character needs should now be clearly established.

### *The Tilt (when new elements complicate the plot)*

1. Go to your Tilt Pile Card. Add the numbers on any black dice together. Add the numbers on any white dice together. Subtract the smaller number from the larger number. The player with the largest white number and the player with the largest black number decide the Tilt. AFTER THE TILTS AND TILT DETAILS ARE CHOSEN, PUT THESE DICE BACK ON YOUR TILT PILE CARDS!

2. ROLL THE REMAINING DICE AGAIN that are in the center of the table.

3. The two players (highest rolling for black and highest rolling for white) deciding the Tilt will refer to the TILT TABLE in the Main Book. Each picks one of the re-rolled dice from the center of the table, using its number to select a major category. Write this on one of the two Tilt Cards (NOT the Tilt Pile Cards). They then temporarily set this die aside to indicate that its number is no longer an option in refining the tilt.

4. Then, they hand their Tilt Cards (NOT the Tilt Pile Cards) to the other high-roller. They then each select one more die from the center of the table to add a detail to the other high-roller's major category of Tilt.

5. Put these two categorized and defined tilt cards in the center of the table to be seen and used by all players. They define important elements that shape the end of the story. Return the tilt selection die to the pool of remaining dice.

### *Act Two*

1. Exactly the same as Act One (two rounds of turns), *except* that you do NOT give away the "resolve" or "establish" die you choose (in the case of resolve) or are given (in the case of establish). *Just put them on your Tilt Pile Card.*

2. The last die is wild in terms of color. Once you put it on your Tilt Pile, though, it stops being wild and regains its actual color value.

### *Aftermath*

1. Get out your Tilt Pile card. Do the same math you did for the Tilt. (Seen in *The Tilt* step 1.) What is your highest number? What color is it? Use that resulting number/color combo ("Black Five") when consulting the Aftermath table in the book. This will be done by each individual at the table, and it explains the tone of the character's post-plot life that will be described after the climax and resolution of the story. Think of it as a montage.
2. Each player, in turn, puts one of the tilt pile die into the center of the table and *briefly* describes a "shot" showing something crucial about their character in the future (or a revealing flashback). This should be a simple, descriptive phrase, always beginning with the words, "This is..." An example might be, "This is Joe, sitting at a seedy bar, downing his fifth shot of vodka." Use them to put an interesting coda on the story.

**YOU JUST PLAYED FIASCO.**