

THE FIRST ADVENTURE



A fiasco playset to teach fantasy gaming tropes and roleplaying



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BOILERPLATE

This playset is an accessory for the Fiasco role-playing game by Bully Pulpit Games.

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FIASCO TO TEACH FANTASY GAMING

This Fiasco playset is a bit different than other playsets you might see. It aims to teach and familiarize new players with the trends and tropes of fantasy gaming. Since Dungeons and Dragons™ is a gateway game for many gamers, I wanted something to familiarize new gamers with roleplaying aspects in a more comfortable way before throwing mechanics and character creation at them. I've written it with some accommodations to players who have never played and have set it up so that the characters players make here can be ported into D&D classes and races easily.

Because this game is set in a fantasy themed city run by magically powered technology, players can call upon real world parallels while exploring fantasy tropes and experience what it is like to roleplay out a game. Then, they can move a little more easily into games with more mechanical aspects and tactical combat. In a way, this is like a full roleplaying backstory for a group of adventurers —their first job, so to speak. I often describe the world setting with analogues to other media or real world elements to help players have a sense of things. That won't work for every player or scenario, but it's helpful to have a starting point to deviate from.

"It's like Manhattan, but almost all technology is Harry Potter style magic and all sorts of magical races exist, plus you kill things and take their loot."

"Yes, you can steal money from the bank. It's exactly like you'd imagine a bank in the wild west, except it is run by Dwarves and the security guards carry swords."

THE SCORE

“There is adventure and glory waiting out in the dungeons and warrens of the wilder world, but all the dangers and rewards out there are in here as well, if only you break the chains of mundanity and seek them.” – Greb Ironjaw, Dwarven Ironsmith

ADVENTURE WAITS ON YOUR DOORSTEP

Magic and adventure rule the world. Adventuring out on the steam powered trains and travelling in magic lifted airships to ancient sites of incredible power are normal for those seeking fortune and fame. For those within the walls of the city, there is much intrigue and danger to be had as well. Magical crafting guilds vie with transportation guilds and security guilds to control the city. Assassins and spies are dispatched by the houses to steal secrets or gather information on political rivals, while the lower levels of the city and its ancient origins are home to secrets that might destroy the foundation of society. You’re just trying to make it another day in the magical metropolis, navigating the politics, using your sword or your spells to make some coin, and maybe, just maybe, making a name for yourself that will be remembered for ages.

MOVIE NIGHT

The Gamers, The Gamers 2*, The Gamers 3*, The Eberron Campaign Setting**, Golden Compass, Any Fantasy Themed Action Movie, Record of Lodoss War, Escaflowne, Willow, Stardust, How to Train Your Dragon, Gormenghast, Anything in Terry Pratchett’s Discworld Series, Any fantasy movie that inspires*

* For new players looking for a good example of gaming at the table and how it plays out, the Gamers series of movies are the prime source you should look at. They model gamer behaviour as well as the in-game actions and how the players drive those actions in the narrative environment.

** I originally wrote this as a transition into an Eberron-light campaign setting. I chose that world specifically because the more modern elements made it easy to accommodate player ideas. If you are planning to use this to transition to a different type of setting, consider changing out the guilds or other elements that don’t map as well.

PLAYING HACKED FIASCO

The rules for this are slightly different than the ones that create explosive endings in a one-shot game of Fiasco. In this playset, the goal is to let the players get used to each other and play out their origins. It's a prequel. To that end, we're playing towards unity and getting the group together. Here are the changes to a regular Fiasco setup.

Setup

- For each player, add 2 good dice and 3 bad dice into the pile.

Act One

- One person, let's call them the Game Master, who will probably be running a follow-up game in another system, will play out the NPCs with the players and help craft the story as it goes along.
- Players each take turns playing out their relationships and goals in scenes. The player whose turn it is chooses to
 - **resolve** (choose success or failure and play the scene to that outcome, gaining a die of the appropriate color)
 - or **establish** (set up the scene and play it with success or failure determined by players not in the scene and/or the Game Master)
- Players will generally aim to get good dice rather than negative dice. You will be rolling these to try to determine the outcome at the end.
- As the game goes on, players should play more scenes together with an eye towards meeting each other, forming bonds, and establishing a fellowship.
- Play until everyone has 2 dice in front of them.

The Tilt

- Play the Tilt per normal Fiasco, with each player rolling their dice to determine highest good and bad results. The two players with the highest numbers from their rolls each add a complication or decide the rival.
- By the Tilt, a Rival should be created or picked by the GM (from objects and rivals) to throw things into chaos if the roleplaying hasn't already created one.

ACT TWO

- The players will put all their dice together in a group pile.
- The second act should have all the players playing and roleplaying together in most scenes, working against the rival, even roleplaying out combat scenes to justify their wins or losses.
- In the second act, players **ALWAYS** establish, but they are now playing to
 - **hinder the rival** (enact plans that take resources - bad dice - out of play for the rival if their actions in the scene work out)
 - or **gain advantage** (Get more of the remaining good dice for themselves).
- Play twice more around the table, with the players establishing a scene and determining if they are trying to Hinder or Gain in each scene.

Outcome

- At the end of these turns, the Rival will roll all the bad dice left, and the Players will roll all the dice they have collected (good and bad). They will compare and use the Outcome table to determine success or failure as a group.
- Play out the final scene, working towards the outcome that comes up on the table.

THE SETTING

The setting for this playset should partially be built by the players. Here are a few ways to describe it in general terms. The concept of this fantasy setting is meant to be a mix between familiar elements with a fantasy flair so that new players can bridge the gap between movies and books they've read and fantasy tropes. Here are ways you can answer questions or describe concepts to help get the players involved.

- **What is the name of the city?** _____
- **What is the world like and how much technology is there?**
Imagine if Harry Potter style magic and the muggle world never really split, but were at a Renaissance / Victorian level of tech, with magic powering everything. There are many people who know a little magic, and a few who know a lot, but technology never bothered building engines and guns, because we had magic to power it. Because there is magic around, there are also magical beasts and many more threats. Non-magic users are prepared to fight and so are magic users. Many people learn to fight and make a living out of it protecting from these threats or going out and "Adventuring" to make money/solve problems.
- **What is "Adventuring"?**
The world is ancient, and a lot of cool stuff (and treasure) has been lost to the ages. People go Adventuring and delving into dungeons or fighting monsters to find ancient secrets, because others pay them to solve problems, or because there are no armies around to protect innocent people. There are less defined borders and more dangers around. Plus, you're the heroes, and you adventure because those are the kinds of stories we are telling together. You may be trying to make a name for yourself or you may just get sucked into it by circumstance.
- **If I have magic or holy power, how do I use it?**
In this game, like most others, you say you are trying something and play that out. In other games there are mechanics to control and give it more definition, but in this game you are doing it all narratively. You're still pretty novice, so you can't cause a tidal wave or banish your enemies with a wave of the hand, but you can do some incredible things that mundane people can't.
- **Why is it important that we "buy in" to the game and story?**
Narrative games like this require a bit of "buy in" from the players to work. You have to buy into the concept and choose to become invested in the story, even if it might not be a perfect logical fit. Your Jealous Thief character may not logically have a reason to help the party overthrow the evil duke, but you as a player can find a way to buy in to that concept since it is the focus of the game. "Buying In" to a concept or the story makes it more fun for everyone. You are working together to craft a story and there are mechanics to help push it along/make it interesting.

On the next few pages, have the players pick (without dice) from each category of details so they can later match their characters to options in another game.

RACES

Humanity is not the only intelligent race to inhabit this fantasy world. In fact, there are an incredible number of sapient creatures who make up the tapestry of society. There are far more than are represented here, but these are ones you will most commonly find. They have come together to form the many societies and countries of the world. Like in real life, racial and cultural tensions exist, but adventuring parties overcome these differences to work together towards common goals. Anything written below should only be taken as generalities of culture and are not limitations.

Pick a **Race** for your character.

- **Dragonblooded** – A race of humanoids with scaly, strong bodies and the heads of their ancient Draconic ancestors.
- **Dwarf** – Short, stout, and stocky stonemasons and mechanical engineers who traditionally come from underground holds. They live incredibly long lives and are known for their stubbornness.
- **Elf** – Elves are tall, fair, and graceful, while sometimes being quite annoyingly proud of this. They are masters of magic as well as being nimble and dexterous. Their long ears and slight frames differentiate them from Humans.
- **Gnome** – Short and skinny, Gnomes are tinkerers and entertainers. They can often be found playing with new gadgets and devices and their curiosity is insatiable.
- **Half-elf** - Produced from the union of an Elf and a Human and bearing slightly elongated ears, half-elves share traits of each of their parents but don't truly fit into either world.
- **Half-orc** – Half-orcs come from the union of Orcs and Humans, and they are often strong and tough. Their skin-tones range from grey to green.
- **Halfling** - Halflings are about half the height of a human and are often friendly and jovial, preferring comfort to combat, most of the time. They can be quite sneaky and nimble.
- **Human** – Found everywhere, humans are the most adaptable of all races. Some races are combinations of humans and other races.
- **Demonblooded** – Demonic entities of the underworld sow their seed amongst the races, creating demonblooded. Blue, red, or grey-skinned, these horned individuals are often mistrusted by others, despite their actual actions.
- **Golemcrafted** – Mechanical people created through magical rituals, golemcrafted have strong bodies made of metal and wood. They are as alive as anyone else, but do not need sleep or food.

CLASSES

Classes are like job-titles that outline what your character does in the game. These are not the only things that define your character's abilities, but they are the general umbrellas for how you might approach challenges in the game. Just like accountants in real life spend a lot of time with numbers, Clerics in a fantasy world spend time channelling divine power and healing others.

Pick a **Class** for your character.

- **Barbarian** – Mighty and strong, you are the stuff of legends. While you are not a master of graceful combat, you are a powerhouse who deals out damage.
- **Bard** – You know a little bit of everything; magic, history, fighting, and stealing, but music and art are your passion.
- **Cleric** – A devotee of a god (or gods), you can channel their power into magical divine effects. You are bound by a code of ethics that is determined by your religion's rules.
- **Fighter** – You live by the sword, you die by the sword. There are many weapons to wield and many ways to wield them.
- **Monk** – Master of unarmed combat and exotic weapons, Monks take on the toughest foes and channel their spirit to make their attacks more powerful.
- **Paladin** – Paladins are the knights of holy orders, called by their gods to right wrongs. They can channel holy power while also mastering combat.
- **Ranger** – At home in the woods, Rangers are experts with bows and often have animal companions as well as small amounts of natural magic.
- **Sorcerer** – Magic flows through a Sorcerer's veins, and they can wield it with style. They don't know as many spells as others, but they don't need to study to wield magic, it comes naturally to them.
- **Rogue** – Masters of espionage and shadow, Rogues are thieves, for ill or good. They are masters of opening doors, disarming traps, and conning people into doing their work for them.
- **Warlock** – Power comes at a cost, but Warlocks always think they can pay it. Through study and sacrifice (not always their own), Warlocks make deals with powerful entities to gain access to great magical powers.
- **Wizard** – Years spent with noses in dusty tomes have unlocked the powers of magic for Wizards. They must study and memorize spells every day, but they can learn more spells than others do.

GUILDS

There are many guilds that operate throughout the world and work beyond country or city-state borders to keep things moving. Many guilds are magical and utilize their abilities to keep the world moving. In the world of your magical metropolis, guilds provide a structure for characters to interact within and a way to help mirror real world elements. Did a player suggest a newspaper in the world? Excellent. That could be partially put out through or created by the communication guild, or it might be possible because the Crafting Guild helped create printing presses. Guild rivalries provide a reason for in-city adventure, but their existence provides an excuse for more common elements for those not familiar with fantasy tropes.

(Optional) Pick a **Guild** for your character. This is a group you belong to that might help out or provide plot hooks.

- **The Crafting Guild** – These magical engineers create and maintain much of the mystical machinery used throughout the world.
- **The Mercenary Guild** – Need a soldier or extra muscle, hire from the Mercenary guild. They employ fighters and skilled individuals.
- **The Respite Guild** – Need a break, head to the respite hall. No fighting here, just healing and hospitality.
- **The Banking Guild** – Powerful throughout the lands, the banking guild maintains the world's economies and exchanges money through teleportation and communication.
- **The Travel Guild** – Train, Airship, boat? Head to the travel guild and they will use their magically powered vehicles to help you get from place to place, for a price.
- **The Covert Guild** – Need something acquired, need hidden information, the covert guild will investigate and use its contacts to find or acquire what you need.
- **The Communication Guild** – Need a message there NOW? The communication guild can transport through magical means any message, and they often hire couriers for those messages that need extra care.
- **The Beasts Guild** – Want to control or tame a wild beast, go to the Beasts guild and employ their services. They will help you gain a mount or magical companion.
- **No Guild** – You are not affiliated with any guild, but make your own way.

RELATIONSHIPS

IN THE ADVENTURING PARTY

1 OR 2 — BUSINESS

- Business Partners in an “Acquisitions” Company
- You come from the same guild and are working to rise in the ranks
- The person who does the hard work and the person who takes the credit
- You come from rival guilds, but formed a friendship despite that
- The one always getting in trouble and the one looking out for them
- The brains and the muscle (but neither of you can agree who is who)

3 OR 4 — MUNDANE CONNECTIONS

- You are in the same gaming group sponsored by the local tavern (darts, Accountants and Actuaries, racing)
- You fought in the same branch of the army
- Drinking buddies
- You were new to the city and they showed you the ropes
- You were both hired for previous jobs and found you worked well together
- High noble and orphan from the streets (or similar)

5 OR 6 — TIES OF DESTINY

- Siblings or Cousins
- The child of destiny and the one who must protect them
- The one whose life was saved and the one who saved the life
- Survivors of your village being destroyed
- The secret noble and the one who knows the secret
- You both have your eyes on a treasure that will make your name and your fortune

NEEDS

1 OR 2 — TO MAKE A NAME FOR YOURSELF

- ... by running your _____ business
- ... by killing the most incredible monster
- ... by doing good works for your god
- ... by gathering enough secrets to get leverage
- ... finding the ancient artefact in the under-city
- ... by saving the world from the evil only you know of

3 OR 4 — TO ...

- ... get rich so you can retire to a leisurely life
- ... get back to the world you came from (Where the hell am I?)
- ... get answers about what that strange mark means
- ... advance in your guild
- ... advance in social class
- ... unlock the secret of your origins

5 OR 6 — TO GET ...

- ... Respect for your people
- ... Forgiveness from the person you broke the promise to
- ... Revenge on the family member that kicked you out
- ... Revenge on the person who killed your _____
- ... Justice for your destroyed village
- ... A leg up on the rival guild

LOCATIONS

1 — IN THE UPPER ECHELONS

- ☐ ... The Financial Trading Cathedral
- ☐ ... The Church of the Many Gods
- ☐ ... Zelbor's Mansion
- ☐ ... The Airship Docks
- ☐ ... The Sky Bridges (All throughout the city)
- ☐ ... Cloudborne Park (Floats above city)

2 — IN THE UNDERCITY

- ☐ ... The Tent Camp (Refugees)
- ☐ ... Gate of Gears (Opens to under-dungeons)
- ☐ ... Forgotten Towers (Stretch down over giant chasm)
- ☐ ... The Quarry (Mining for rock to build city)
- ☐ ... The Dark Portal (No one knows where it leads, or how to activate it)
- ☐ ... The Steel Halls (Industrial buildings)

3 — WHERE YOU GET DRUNK

- ☐ ... The Loaded Dice Tavern (A clean inn in the center of the city)
- ☐ ... The Inns on the North Bridge (Fancy)
- ☐ ... The Upper Rooms of the Red Velvet Stairs (Nudge nudge, wink, wink)
- ☐ ... The Rusty Mug (Dwarven run tavern)
- ☐ ... The View Below (Built on a bridge, glass floor to look down)
- ☐ ... The Rathskeller (At the University)

4 — THAT STAY IN THE SHADOWS

- ... Behind the Statue of the Orc Lord (Statue in undercity)
- ... The Private Room in the View Below
- ... The Gambling Dens of the Red Tower
- ... In the Private Office of _____
- ... The Edge of The Rising Wall (A skywalk around the city where guards patrol)
- ... In your dreams, visited by the Smiling Lady

5 — WHERE ADVENTURE HAPPENS

- ... The city wall, as it is being breached
- ... On the deck of an airship
- ... The old caves that lead to the underground world
- ... The graveyard in the city
- ... In the old opera house
- ... The old, mysterious shrine at the end of the alley

6 — THAT HELP YOU OR HARM YOU

- ... The City Guard's jail
- ... The apartment in the city
- ... The street of religions
- ... The University outfitters
- ... Magica Mechanica
- ... The shops on the bridge

OBJECTS AND RIVALS

1 — ARTEFACTS

- ▣ ... The Seed of Life (Gives life to Golemcrafted)
- ▣ ... Keys of Obsidian (Mysterious hexagonal keys)
- ▣ ... Lenses of Crafting (Help crafters make things)
- ▣ ... Wings of Zalair (Grant flight to a creature)
- ▣ ... Stone of Dragons (Said to grant communion with Dragons)
- ▣ ... The Missing Eye (From a mysterious statue)

2 — WEAPONS

- ▣ ... A city guard's stolen sword
- ▣ ... A magical staff that bears the image of a spider
- ▣ ... A dagger that, when thrown, returns to one's hand
- ▣ ... An axe with a spirit trapped inside of it
- ▣ ... A hand crossbow linked to a murder
- ▣ ... A weapon that is a family heirloom

3 — RIVALS

- ▣ ... The Lord Mayor
- ▣ ... Head of Guild _____
- ▣ ... Alistair, the crime boss
- ▣ ... The Horned Crusaders (Dragonborn adventuring party)
- ▣ ... The corrupt mercenary captain
- ▣ ... The Iron Warlord (Golemcrafted raider who wants to take over the city)

4 — MORE RIVALS

- ... A gang of thugs who terrorize the undercity
- ... An ancient spirit that was trapped in a gem
- ... The notorious Blue Hood
- ... A gargoyle whose domain you violated
- ... The powerful mage who hired you for a job, which you failed
- ... The immortal vampire who manipulates the city from the shadows

5 — DESIRABLES

- ... The missing bag of gold from the vault
- ... Potions of wound healing
- ... A bag with no bottom
- ... The map that leads to an ancient treasure
- ... A spell scroll that contains an ancient ritual
- ... The attention of a noble who has great influence

6 — TRANSPORTATION

- ... The old reliable cargo airship
- ... Regional tickets on the rail lines
- ... The Horselord's horse rental stand
- ... Teleportation Circle (Sends you anywhere, costly to use)
- ... The winged mount you seek to tame
- ... The Rilome, seaship of wonder

THE SOFT TILT

1 — MAYHEM

- ▣ An out of control rampage
- ▣ A frantic chase
- ▣ Somebody loses a limb
- ▣ Somebody is not so innocent
- ▣ A well-meaning stranger intervenes
- ▣ The wrong guy gets busted

2 — VIOLENCE

- ▣ A spectacular wreck
- ▣ Ill-considered vengeance
- ▣ An old-fashioned ass-kicking
- ▣ Impotent rage
- ▣ The showdown
- ▣ Something important (perhaps metaphorical) is demolished

3 — DECEPTION

- ▣ Misplaced trust
- ▣ Stabbed in the back—maybe literally
- ▣ The secret goes public
- ▣ A sabotage
- ▣ Framed for a crime, but on the run
- ▣ The mighty fall exceedingly hard

4 — TRUTH

- ▣ Someone confesses
- ▣ A lie is told
- ▣ The secret noble is revealed
- ▣ A lie is believed
- ▣ Truth becomes a lie
- ▣ A BIG reveal

5 — FOLLY

- ▣ An unexpected proposal
- ▣ A simple mistake leads to complex pain
- ▣ A complex mistake leads to simple pain
- ▣ A single moment of miraculous luck
- ▣ Someone loses their nerve
- ▣ You can't afford to lose, but you did

6 — THE RIVAL

- ▣ The Rival gains more power
- ▣ The Rival strikes an incredible blow
- ▣ The Rival gets there first
- ▣ The Rival has an ally
- ▣ The Rival's plan has started
- ▣ The Rival leaves a friend dead

FINAL SCENE OUTCOME

BAD FOURTEEN PLUS: HORRIBLE

One of you is probably dead, and all you can do is remember them as you try to overcome the challenges now. You may have been kicked out and sent to the undercity.

BAD TEN TO THIRTEEN: EXTREMELY AWFUL

You have been knocked down, kicked back, and you are ready for revenge. Your power has been stripped away and the Rival is gloating from afar, knowing there is little you can do right now to stop them.

BAD FIVE TO NINE: SAVAGE

The outcome for you is more savage than it could have been. You lost and left to lick your wounds, but the wounds were mighty indeed and one of you may have lost a limb. Good luck coming back from this. You'll have to, but you'll be on the defensive.

BAD ONE TO FOUR: ROUGH

Wherever you were before, you are worse off now. You've scraped through and you haven't lost much ground, but the Rival is out there and they have their eye on you now.

ZERO: SOMETHING DARKER OUT THERE

Well, you actually managed to defeat the Rival for good. They aren't coming back, but in their defeat something worse was revealed, something you can't possibly hope to tackle as you are now. You are left without much hope to succeed.

GOOD ONE TO FOUR: EKED OUT VICTORY

You are beat, tired, and wounded, but you won. Success may have come at a cost, but you did achieve success, at least in this matter. The Rival is still out there — and they are planning revenge — but for now you have the upper hand, if only slightly.

GOOD FIVE TO NINE: STABLE

Not much has changed, but you're a group now. You knocked the Rival back and kept them from achieving their immediate goal. They retreated and are plotting, but it may be a while until you see them. You've probably gained some stability or a reward that helps you move forward.

GOOD TEN TO THIRTEEN : ON TOP

You've come out on top, and you've faced many challenges to get there. The Rival is gone, for now, and there may be other forces working out there against you, but they know that you aren't to be trifled with. You've gained some reward and if you were after a particular outcome, you have probably gotten it.

GOOD FOURTEEN PLUS: INSPIRATIONAL

The Rival is gone for good. You've secured a name for yourself and probably a decent reward. You are an inspiration to others and your legend grows in the city. New challenges await, but you face them from the strongest possible position.

A FIRST TIME INSTA SETUP

RELATIONSHIPS

For three players...

- Ties of Destiny: The child of destiny and the one who must protect them
- Business: You come from rival guilds, but formed a friendship despite that
- Ties of Destiny: The secret noble and the one who knows the secret.

For four players, add...

- Business: You were both hired for previous jobs and found you worked well together

For five players, add...

- Ties of Destiny: Siblings or cousins

NEEDS

For three players...

- To: ... advance in your guild

For four or five players, add...

- To make a name for yourself: ... by gathering enough secrets to get leverage

LOCATIONS

For three or four players...

- Where you get drunk: The Loaded Dice Tavern

For five players, add...

- Where adventure happens: The graveyard in the city

OBJECTS AND RIVALS

For any number of players...

- Rivals: Alistair, The crime boss
- Artefacts: Keys of Obsidian (Mysterious hexagonal keys)