

It All Ends in Tears

A Fiasco-style starter playset for a game of teenage monsters.

by Paul Taliesin

- Roll a big pile of dice: 12 dice for the MC, +2 dice for each other player, in equal numbers of two different colours.
- Go around the table, taking turns to establish and define Elements. Each complete Element should consist of a white die and a black die, or vice-versa. The MC should be last in the turn order.
- Creating Personalities is a little different: use the first die to choose a basic Personality role and the second die to choose a Reputation for that Personality. You can use this to generate random NPCs, as well.
- Your very last Element should always be a Personality, so you still have a meaningful choice to make with that last die.
- When you're done, pick Skins for each character, do backstories, and play.

RELATIONSHIPS...

1 Blood relations

- Living in the shadow of the older sibling
- Blood brothers / sisters
- Fraternal twins (1-3) / Recent step-siblings (4-6)
- Related by blood, but only one of you knows it
- Spilled blood together: one another's (1-3), someone else's (4-6)
- Kissing cousins, but just that one time

2 Matters of the heart

- Promised to each other: pre-engaged (1-3) / by arranged marriage (4-6)
- Forbidden love
- Infamous exes: mutual lust turned mutual disgust
- Wants to get back together but doesn't want to admit it to anyone
- The nerd or outcast no one wants and the long-time secret admirer
- The promiscuous one and the virgin desperate for his/her attentions

3 A misunderstanding

- Everyone thinks you're a couple because you've been seen together
- Set up on a blind date under close public scrutiny
- Fellow social outcasts, for entirely different reasons
- Tutor and tutee, but the student is the real teacher
- A murder by accident, and the person you thought you killed
- An innocent victim and his or her accuser

4 Tears and grief

- Insane jealousy
- A one-time fling; one thinks you're "just friends", the other doesn't
- Grew up thinking you'd always be together; it didn't work out that way
- Don't like each other much, but can't stop getting physical with each other
- Friendship ended after one humiliated the other
- Stalker and object of powerful obsession

5 Wrong side of the tracks

- Only passed the test by cheating, and the one who knows about it
- Bully and victim
- Suspended from school, and the friend trying to get her back on track
- Drug addict and dealer
- Alpha male/queen bee and sycophant, neither willing to take responsibility
- Watched a murder take place and neither did or said anything about it

6 By circumstance

- The rich kid and the one who pretends to be her friend
- Rivals: athletic (1-2), academic (3-4), or for popularity (5-6)
- Enemies forced to work together: an important task (1-3)/ shittiest job ever (4-6)
- Members of the most exclusive group or club around
- Playing romantic leads opposite each other in the school play
- Forced to share a rather cramped living space

Create Relationships between every pair of adjacent players (leaving out the MC).

NEEDS...

1 To finally be accepted...

- ...by your family, despite what you really are
- ...by an important adult, even if it means sleeping with them
- ...into the college or job of your dreams
- ...by the group which has shunned and betrayed you
- ...by the one who spurned your advances so foolishly
- ...into the spring musical (1-3) / the sports team (4-6)

2 To keep...

- ...a safe distance from the most dangerous people here: the ones you crossed
- ...that one person from blabbing about your darkest secret
- ...your position as school valedictorian
- ...the consequences of your terrible mistake from falling on your shoulders
- ...the police (1-2), local thugs/mafia (3-4), or cult (5-6) away from your family
- ...from fulfilling the promise you made, because you just can't anymore

3 To get even...

- ...with the ones that pointed the finger at you
- ...and make sure that he/she sees it happen
- ...with them both by turning them against each other
- ...with the teacher, mentor, authority figure, or parent who failed you
- ...for the humiliation you suffer daily
- ...by taking back what they took from you

4 To get some answers...

- ...to a question of parentage or family history
- ...about the unexplained disappearance of some students (1-3) / a teacher (4-6)
- ...about the secrets the family has been keeping from you
- ...about why you're treated the way you are
- ...about someone's fidelity, or lack of it
- ...from the school Records

5 To get laid...

- ...to find true love (and heal a broken heart)
- ...with someone close to your enemy
- ...to prove you're not the slightest bit gay
- ...because you can't stand being a virgin any longer
- ...because you want to hurt someone
- ...because you can use her or him to get what you really want

6 To get respect...

- ...by acquiring some big money, for someone who needs it far more than you
- ...by cheating a drug dealer (1-2), police officer (3-4), or scary Personality (5-6)
- ...by showing them they shouldn't have fucked with you
- ...by showing up at the Prom with an astonishing date/as Homecoming King
- ...as a result of your sexual prowess or romantic success
- ...by turning your life around

Make sure every player is “touching” at least one Need.

PLACES...

1 Eerie or romantic?

- The old cemetery, unused since the fifties
- The trunk of a dented old Buick, smelling like something rotten
- A dried-out swimming pool, full of dead leaves
- Up on the roof of the old clock tower (everyone knows it's haunted)
- A dusty attic with a pull-down staircase
- A pool of water rumoured to allow people to see into the past

2 A long walk after dusk

- Down by the fountain, where the cool kids hang out
- In the woods, an abandoned shack around which nothing grows
- The junk yard behind the custom car shop, where they keep the old trailers
- The First Baptist Church, a brand new architectural monster
- The gas station on the way out of town, where they don't check for ID
- The abandoned railroad station on the edge of town

3 Behind closed doors

- The Remedial Education trailer behind the school
- Student Health office (1-4) or Principal's office (5-6), after school hours
- A padlocked entrance to the underground tunnels
- The Shady Elm strip club (1-3) / "Inked In", the local tattoo parlour (4-6)
- A guest room, sealed up since forever
- The sports team's locker room and showers

...and THINGS

4 A weapon, potentially

- Compromising photographs
- Two gallons of gasoline (1-3) / Homemade nitroglycerine from chem lab (4-6)
- An antique revolver, loaded with vintage ammo
- A dental appliance, stolen from its owner (1-3) / a misplaced sex toy (4-6)
- A failing grade which could cost you your scholarship... or worse
- A shellfish allergy (1-4) / A poisonous snake in the janitor's closet (5-6)

5 In the wrong hands

- Master key (even opens the school Records office & confiscated items closet)
- Medical case files (1-3) / Completed term papers: just add author's name (4-6)
- A stash of graphic pornography (1-3) / A stash of high-quality weed (4-6)
- Syringe of pure heroin (1-3) / Pure grain alcohol in a full two-liter bottle (4-6)
- The only copy of a novel, painstakingly written by hand
- An undelivered love letter, marked with lipstick and smelling of perfume







6 Ominous findings

- Several animal corpses, either tortured to death or half-eaten
- Dusty old video reel and projector
- Roughly carved occult symbols (1-3) / Dark red stains (4-6)
- STI test results (1-3) / A pregnancy test, positive (4-6)
- Errors in a school transcript
- An egg the size of a football, warm to the touch







Create at least one of each.

PERSONALITIES...







That classmate of yours

-  The richest / best-connected kid in school
-  The star athlete
-  The one who is shunned by everyone
-  The most dangerous kid in school
-  The hottest / most popular kid in school
-  The school valedictorian / smartest kid in school







After school

-  The younger kid or sibling, in need of protection
-  The overly concerned/nosy parent
-  The school janitor
-  The school nurse
-  The ethics teacher
-  The "bad apple", no-good high school dropout

Authority figure

-  The principal
-  The sports coach
-  The school counsellor
-  More domineering tyrant than parent or guardian
-  The head of the Teacher-Parent Association
-  The chief of the police

Around town

-  The parent you wish you knew better
-  The owner of the Shady Elm nightclub (1-4) / the bouncer (5-6)
-  The journalist/reporter
-  The close family relative with the unusual past
-  The mayor of the town
-  The mysterious stranger, newly arrived

To create a Personality, use the first die to establish a basic role for the character. You may pick any option which corresponds to the number on the die, from any category on this page.

Complete the Personality by assigning them a Reputation (from the next page).







You may also use these pages as a random NPC generator by choosing the most appropriate category and then rolling two dice. The first die determines the Personality's basic role, and the second assigns them a Reputation.

Should you ever need some more detail for an NPC, roll up a second Reputation for them.







Create at least one Personality.

...and REPUTATIONS







Oft the subject of rumours

-  Leads a charmed life; things *always* go his or her way
-  In tight with the local street gang (1-4) / criminal underworld (5-6)
-  Fanatically puritan
-  Scandalously promiscuous
-  Fresh out of jail / On parole
-  Entangled in a very inappropriate relationship or affair







A cause for concern

-  Soft-hearted, always giving, always trusting
-  In trouble with the law
-  Totally clueless, can't tie his or her own shoelaces
-  Seriously hooked on some real hard drugs
-  On the verge of breakdown / Most likely to go postal
-  Ear to the ground: knows *everything* about everybody

Imposing

-  Utterly inscrutable, beyond human comprehension
-  Cold as ice and a known sadist
-  Killed someone before
-  Has the chief of police in his or her pocket
-  The size of a Kodiak bear / inhumanly strong
-  Religious conservative with a lot of sway in town

Just plain not normal

-  More animal than man / woman
-  Into some *really* weird shit
-  Former in-patient at the Scarfolk Institute for Psychiatric Abnormality (SIPA)
-  Has visions of things no one should be able to know
-  Turns up in the most unexpected places without explanation
-  Shows up regularly in everyone's dreams

When you create a Personality, use the second die to assign them a Reputation. You may pick any option which corresponds to the number on the die, from any category on this page. If possible, don't have the MC choose: it's more fun if the players get to assign Reputations to the various Personalities.

Reputations are not necessarily true: it's just what people say about that person. That said, these Reputations would be a waste of time if they were just empty speculation: the players chose these because they thought they would be fun to see in play. Unless you have a really, really good reason to "play against type", the Reputation should be more or less true, pretty much all the time. Sometimes it's blown out of proportion, yes; but other times it's *not even the half of it*.

Should you ever need some more detail for an NPC, roll up a second Reputation for them (roll a d6 and then choose one of the four available options). It will give you something interesting to work with, guaranteed.

Using “It All Ends in Tears”

Finishing the setup

1. Move through the Setup quickly, without brainstorming too much. You want to leave room for the Skins to throw in a little twist before it's over. Just choose the Elements, placing each one between two players, and ask a question or two about each, then move on.

2. Once all the dice have been used up, move on to character creation. Pick a Skin suitable to the role you think your character might be filling. For example, if your Relationship with your neighbour is "The promiscuous one and the virgin desperately lusting after their attentions", you might decide those two characters are a Queen and a Mortal. Or maybe "the promiscuous one" is an Infernal, using his or her newfound power to seduce everyone they fancy.

However, you can choose Skins counter to expectations, as well. Maybe that virgin is a Vampire or a Werewolf, putting off their "first time" because they're afraid of what might happen – or what pain they might cause the one they love, or what they might reveal – in the throes of passion.

3. Choose backstories and assign Strings in the way that makes most sense according to the relationship map. For instance, you're connected to the Need "To get laid..." and your backstory says "someone's caught your fancy. Give them 2 Strings" - well, that's probably going to be the same person. This part should flow naturally from the Setup.

Don't create anything new here! Instead, try to attach those backstories to the Elements you've already created. Reincorporate as much as you can to tighten your starting situation; the Setup should give you plenty of material to begin playing.

Sub-table options

Some entries list several different options. The player choosing that entry can pick the option they like best, or they can choose to roll a die instead.

Personalities

If you're not sure what to do with a Personality, here are two good provocative questions to ask:

- * Turn to one of the players and ask, “How does this Personality make your life a living hell?”
- * Turn to the other player and ask, “Why do you desperately need this Personality’s help or favour?”

Number of dice

Depending on your group's creative needs, you may wish to experiment with using more dice during the setup. By default, though, you should have: Relationships between all the PCs, a couple of Needs, a Thing, a Place, and a Personality or two. This should be plenty for most situations. If you feel like you need more, you could throw in two or four more dice and get the Personalities involved in the web.

Is the MC part of the web?

When you first start building the relationship web, leave the MC out of it. She takes her turn (last in the order), but all the Elements should be placed between the regular players. Later, if the web starts to feel too cramped, you can place *one* Element (usually a Thing, but could be a Need or even a Relationship) between a PC and a Personality (effectively the MC's character). For example, you might choose to place an Element ("pregnancy test, positive") between a PC and "the school nurse". As in *Fiasco*, this means that this Thing is highly important to both of these characters, and creates a connection between them.

Alternatively, just placing a Relationship or a Need between a player and the MC could lead to the creation of a new character altogether. Feel free to experiment with this once you're familiar with the process.

However, if there are only three players (MC + 2), it's more fun to include the MC in the relationship right away, so you start your setup with a triangle of characters.

Character Ownership

The *Fiasco* setup allows people to make important decisions about other people's characters. If this bothers you, here's a good optional rule:

You may only define (i.e. choose a specific Element) a Relationship or a Need if that Relationship or Need is "touching" you. Let the other players make those sensitive choices themselves.

This may be especially important if you're getting ready for a long-term game, instead of just a one-shot. We found ourselves doing this quite naturally when we used *It All Ends in Tears* for the start of a *Monsterhearts* campaign, your group may do so as well.

Using this playset once the game is on: ask a question and roll the dice

The notes under "Personalities" mention that the Personality entries could be used as an NPC generator once the game gets rolling, as well. In fact, the whole playset can be used as a giant random table by the MC, if they're ever stuck for ideas. Roll up a Personality, a Need, and a Thing, and you've got something you can introduce to frame a colourful scene. An NPC in play seems aimless? Roll up a Need for them. You don't know where the cult's meeting will be held? Roll for a location. And so on.

Ask a question which can be answered by one of those categories (e.g. "Who's sitting alone at the bar, in the corner?"), and then just roll two dice. The result gives you a new Element which you can use to move the story forward.