

Horror Movie Exes

A TTRPG

What is this game?

Horror Movie Exes is a game about surviving a horror movie, but all the other characters are your exes, and also each other's exes. That's it, really. It's a game for when you want a messy drama about people who've all sung "Somebody That I Used To Know" about each other and now have to navigate that while also trying not to die to whatever monster of the week is out in those woods.

More specifically, Horror Movie Exes is a queer horror-dramady ttrpg for 3-5 players and a Game Master (GM). It uses an original system that draws inspiration from Powered By The Apocalypse and Year Zero Engine.

The Premise

The setup of this game can happen any number of ways, but it always leads to one outcome: You find yourself in a terrifying situation, and the only people who can help you get out of it are your exes. This might be a party where a monster came crashing through and everyone else got separated in the chaos that followed. This might be a mysterious disaster hit your town and the only people to be found are each other. Or this might be as simple and as in media-res as waking up in a strange place with only your former companions around. The setup will often depend on the danger you're facing, so the GM should introduce the story in a way that fits the overarching story.

A note on sexuality and relationships: While "exes" is often used in the romantic sense of the term, it doesn't have to be. Relationships come in many packages, and your game shouldn't have to stick to strictly alloromantic attraction and relationships. An ex can also be an ex-queer-platonic-partner or an ex-friend. The point is to put your character in dire situations with people that they once cared about deeply but no longer have the same relationship they once did - often for messy and dramatic reasons.

Character Creation

There are two steps to character creation: **Choosing an Archetype** and **Establishing your Relationships**.

Your character archetype will determine your stats and abilities. Each character has four base stats and a health stat. The stats are **Fight, Flight, Figure, and Fuck**.

- **Fight** is the stat you use when doing anything physically forceful or combative. You use this when you're trying to bust open the stuck door or to hit the bad guy in the head with the landline.
- **Flight** is the stat you use when doing anything speedy or agile. You use this when you're trying to run away from something or doing a cool parkour leap to safety. This is also what you use when you're trying to be stealthy.
- **Figure** is the stat you use when you're using recall or logic. You use this when you're trying to decipher the ancient curse or remember a piece of helpful information. This is also what you use when you're trying to perceive something.
- **Fuck** is the stat you use when doing anything empathetic or charming. You use this when you're trying to calm someone down or when you're trying to seduce the monster.

Each archetype comes with a bonus for each stat, ranging from -1 to +2. You can swap two stats with each other during character creation. For example, swapping your Fuck with your Figure stat or vice versa.

Character Archetypes

The Academic

- Stats: Fight -1, Flight +1, Figure +2, Fuck 0
- Abilities: Choose One
 - Academic Specialist:
 - You choose one academic discipline (biology, cryptozoology, history) to specialize in. You add an additional +2 to figure to rolls recall or use information about that specialty.
 - Knowledge Collector
 - Once per scene, you can decide to know a fact about something in the scene. Roll a d6. On a 1-2, the fact is unhelpful or a popular myth. On a 3-5, the fact isn't immediately helpful but gives you some insight into the subject that you didn't have before. On a 6 the fact gives you some clue or lead that you can act upon.

The Witch

- Stats: Fight +1, Flight 0, Figure +2, Fuck -1
- Abilities: Choose One
 - Arcane Comprehension
 - You get a +1 to rolls involving deciphering arcane sigils or understanding things that are magical in nature.
 - Banishing Bad Energy
 - You have a small charm or talisman you carry on your person. This gives you a chance to reroll an attempt to dodge, flee, or escape the notice of someone or something trying to harm you once per encounter or scene.

The Musician

- Stats: Fight +1, Flight 0, Figure -1, Fuck +2
- Abilities: Choose One
 - Under The Light
 - You get +1 to rolls to cause a diversion.
 - Musician's Allure
 - You can reroll a failed seduction roll once per scene if you use your instrument.

The Fitness Buff

- Stats: Fight +2, Flight +1, Figure -1. Fuck 0
- Abilities: Choose one
 - Marathon Runner:
 - You get +1 to rolls to run a long distance
 - In the ring
 - Choose a type of fighting or martial art like boxing or karate. Get +1 to combat rolls using that fighting style.

The Dominant

- Stats: Fight +1, Flight -1, Figure 0, Fuck +2
- Abilities: Choose one
 - Commanding Presence
 - You get +1 to rolls to convince someone to do something.
 - To kink or not to kink
 - When rolling to seduce someone, flip a coin. On a heads, they're into it. Add 2 to your roll. On a tails, they're not into it. Subtract 1 from your roll.

Character Relationships

The other thing you have to do during character creation is establish the relationships (or former relationships) with each other characters. Take turns going down the line and answering these questions:

- How did we meet?
- Why did we break up?
- How do we feel about each other now?

Remember, this is a game about drama, so while people do break up on good terms for mature reasons, that's not as interesting. Try to come up with relationships that will create dramatic tension.

Playing the Game

Playing the game consists of players trying to escape their situation by looking for clues, looking for a way out, or defeating the problem with brute force. The GM plays the backdrop of the story - any NPCs, if there are any, the world around you, and most importantly, the danger. The GM should also be putting characters in situations that allow their abilities to shine. Most importantly, there should be lots of opportunity for drama or passionate confrontations whisper-yelled while hiding from a lumbering werewolf or some other threat.

When something is both uncertain and both outcomes are interesting, you roll to determine the outcome. A 1-5 is a total failure. A 7-9 is a partial success. You get what you want, but there's a catch. An 10-12 is a complete success.

Taking Harm

Each character has 4 health points. You lose one health point every time you experience something that would seriously injure you, such as getting stabbed or being thrown into a wall. When you reach 0, you don't die - instead, one of your exes has to save you. The GM decides who, and that person gets to decide how they save you - within reason. Now on top of being your ex, you also owe them your life.

Working Together

The game is made to create situations when you have to work together with one or more of your exes to escape a situation. When you and another player attempt to do an action together, you roll communally. You each roll, and the highest two dice are counted as the roll. If you attempt this and still fail, you get an extra consequence that will probably be embarrassing or inconvenient. Things go wrong and your attempt at working together backfires. Maybe you two end up confined in a small

space together, or one of you loses a shoe and you have to go back and get it so you don't cut your foot on the forest floor. This consequence should be more of a cause for tension than any real life threatening consequences.

Notes for the GM

Make the game messy. Give players every opportunity possible for drama. Put them in danger, make their lives scary and inconvenient, but you're not out to kill them, you're out to make them rely on each other to survive. When running this game, it might be best to have the danger be a stock-horror movie villain, such as a slasher on the loose or an ancient being that comes from the deep. Draw from tropes and common cliches. This is meant to be a campy game that's mostly about the fights or possible makeups between characters facilitated by the extreme backdrop of trying not to die a horrible death.

But don't let that stop you from really leaning into the horror aspect of this if this is what works best for your table. Scary and dramatic can be just as fun as campy and dramatic. Feel free to scrap the rule about being saved, if you want death to be on the table.