

UC HELLMOUTH



A FIASCO PLAYSET
BY LUKE EVISON

UC HELLMOUTH

CREDITS

Written by Luke Evison

Inspired by the “Hellmouth High” Playset by Brian Vander Veen

And the “Alma Monster” Playset by Dave Chalker

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BOILERPLATE

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

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For more information of about Fiasco or to download other playsets and materials, visit www.bulypulpitgames.com



For Finn

THE SCORE

A TROUBLED TERM

University; a fresh start, fresh ambitions, an escape from all the trauma and drama of high school, or perhaps an opportunity to turn it up to eleven.

The well-regarded, but perhaps less than academically rigorous, UC Hellmouth has a substantial campus situated right the heart of a quaint town focused on serving the wants and desires of its students. Between state of the art lab facilities, substantial library resources, and a “colourful” history Hellmouth has plenty of space for inquisitive students.

Never mind the alarmingly high mysterious dropout rate, bickering student politics, questionable body count, or packs of roaming wolves.

MOVIE NIGHT

Buffy the Vampire Slayer (Season 4+), Buffy, Buffy, and more Buffy.

RELATIONSHIPS...

■ FRIENDS

- ▣ Friends from high school
- ▣ Fractious flatmates
- ▣ Clingy year-abroad-student & local
- ▣ Joined at the hip since Orientation Week
- ▣ Same hometown, now close
- ▣ Siblings who share

■ CLASSES

- ▣ Teaching assistant and student
- ▣ Demanding lecturer and student
- ▣ Group work adversaries
- ▣ Partner in lecture derailment
- ▣ Tutee and tutor
- ▣ Rivals for a seat

■ CLUBS AND SOCIETIES

- ▣ Research-Reading Group founders
- ▣ Sci-Fi & Fantasy Society President and Minion
- ▣ Teammates
- ▣ Newsletter Corps
- ▣ Sabbatical Officer & Society President
- ▣ “Radical” activists

❖ ROMANCE

- ❑ Clandestine couple
- ❑ Rejected an Ivy League for the other, now exes
- ❑ Unintentional creeper and the creeped
- ❑ Unavoidable exes
- ❑ “That One Night Thing”
- ❑ Going out and making sure everyone knows it

❖ SUSPICIOUS

- ❑ New roommates, one has had five already
- ❑ Indoctrinated cultists
- ❑ Petty thieves
- ❑ Lab Technician’s secret experiment
- ❑ Staunchly Enthusiastic Officer Training Club Members
- ❑ Drug dealer and addict

❖ SUPERNATURAL

- ❑ Vampire & Thrall
- ❑ Kept werewolf & unkempt new influence
- ❑ Wild Wiccan & Initiate
- ❑ Alternately possessed by demonic presence
- ❑ The Arisen & druidic worshipper
- ❑ Ancient spirit & ethnographic archivist

...**AT UC HELLMOUTH**

NEEDS...

■ TO GET OUT OF

- ...this course work group
- ...a soul crushing future in banking
- ...our hereditary curse
- ▣ ...this whole system
- ▣ ...the Bio-Med department alive
- ▣ ...an uneven relationship

■ TO GET THROUGH

- ...to a friend on the verge of dropping it all
- ...a whole year of Monday morning phonetics lectures
- ...a single night with them at the door
- ▣ ...this party, without seeing him
- ▣ ...the coming zombie apocalypse
- ▣ ...this break-up

■ TO GET THE TRUTH

- ...about the disappearances
- ...about the new professor
- ...about the accident
- ▣ ...about what's behind the labs
- ▣ ...about the pigeons
- ▣ ...about the voices

■ TO GET AHEAD

- ▣ ...so I never have to work hard again
- ▣ ...so I can leave my past behind
- ▣ ...because I have no idea what happens next
- ▣ ...of the people who've looked down on me
- ▣ ...so I can get out of the shadow of my older sibling
- ▣ ...so I don't end up like my parents

■ TO MAKE THEM ALL UNDERSTAND

- ▣ ...that I am the big name on campus
- ▣ ...how important my cause is
- ▣ ...that all of this is pointless
- ▣ ...that this is all just a big experiment
- ▣ ...that there is something downright weird going on
- ▣ ...that they are coming

■ TO GET LAID

- ▣ ...for the first time
- ▣ ...to prove I'm not gay
- ▣ ...because I can't not be alone
- ▣ ...out of sympathy for them
- ▣ ...since it's the only way I feel something anymore
- ▣ ...with someone who'll owe me

...**AT UC HELLMOUTH**

LOCATIONS...

■ THE MAIN CAMPUS

- ▣ The Forde Ethnographic Collection
- ▣ Economics Department, surrounded by Marxist pickets
- ▣ Mysterious extra corridor of The Celtic Language Library
- ▣ Long forgotten basement of the Biology Department
- ▣ Professor Walsh's Office
- ▣ Stood before the 'Whisper Door' in the Phonology Lab

■ HALLS, DORMS, AND HOMES

- ▣ New, spotless, and mysteriously empty halls
- ▣ Rooms never intended for human habitation...
- ▣ The strict Catholic residency
- ▣ Condemned dorm, made to go just one more year
- ▣ The panoptic house-share
- ▣ Co-Op dorm, vegans only

■ TOWNSIDE

- ▣ The Crypt Art Gallery, it probably doesn't meet fire regs
- ▣ McGlynn's Irish Free House, serving Celtic Spirit Stout
- ▣ Tyburn Park, the trees creak and groan
- ▣ Club VuDu, Friday night is Metal night
- ▣ Scribe & Ink, sequestered book and stationary store
- ▣ Kaji Kaji Coffee Shop, "Beans From Around The World"

THE UNION AND ADMIN BLOCKS

- ▣ The Main Quad, austere & imposing
- ▣ The Front Lodge, supposed to be the only entrance
- ▣ Chancellor's meeting room, unused since the suicide
- ▣ A dingy alley behind the theater
- ▣ The Union Bar smoking area, has that funny smell
- ▣ Rooftop observatory, also overlooks the whole campus

DOWN BY THE STATION

- ▣ St Mary's Clinic, supposedly shut these past three years
- ▣ Sticky's Carvery, any meat cooked to perfection
- ▣ Kobold's Nest, games & comics
- ▣ Rogerson Relics, Curios & Antiques
- ▣ A J Morris & Sons, funerals since 1926
- ▣ The Hellmouth Tap, where nothing is ever the same

THE UNEXPLAINED

- ▣ Underground pseudo-military complex
- ▣ Hideously ugly School of Architecture building
- ▣ Bell ringing society club room
- ▣ The campus café that is always closed
- ▣ Statuary corridor
- ▣ The entire ethnomusicology department

...AT UC HELLMOUTH

OBJECTS...

■ ACADEMIC

- The penultimate draft exam timetable
- Only copy of a masterfully-written thesis
- A perfect anatomical robo-copy of a coursemate
- ▣ Book stolen from the hidden wing of the library
- ▣ Swipe card ID for a faculty head
- ▣ Rejected submission to the final year biology prize fair

■ SOCIETIES AND THE UNION

- All-hours card to the Makespace & Stationary stores
- Collection of 669 rare Science-Fiction & Fantasy books
- The final pair of tickets to the end of year ball
- ▣ Next union meeting minutes, filled with crazed ramblings
- ▣ Final cut list for the cheerleading team
- ▣ The university founder's body, in a box

■ ILLICIT

- Two whole bricks of weed, stashed somewhere tricky
- "Study Aids"
- ▣ Mizzlebutton's Assured Love Potion, industrial strength
- ▣ Pump action shotgun
- ▣ Expired roofies
- ▣ A sizeable stash of spirits

■ SUPERNATURAL

- ▣ Rod of Possession*, *Actually swaps bodies for 5 minutes
- ▣ A ¾ full jar of ectoplasm, kinda leaky
- ▣ Reverse psychic paper, draw on it and it changes you
- ▣ Allegedly functional crystal ball
- ▣ Mummified Himalayan larynx
- ▣ A vial of demon blood

■ ODD

- ▣ Confusing play about a king who dresses in yellow
- ▣ Antique formal dress, from under the floorboards
- ▣ Raggedy doll, found in a box nailed shut
- ▣ Contorted limestone statue, seems to change shape
- ▣ VHS tape with illegible Japanese scrawled on it
- ▣ Darkly stained hockey mask, smells musty

■ DUBIOUS

- ▣ Paddling pool filled with vodka-gelatin cubes
- ▣ Free clinic condoms that always break
- ▣ Unusually sharp prize ceremonial katana
- ▣ Sex tape of someone you know
- ▣ The catered dorm's Tuesday lunch casserole
- ▣ A book titled "The Golden Bough"

...**AT UC HELLMOUTH**

FACILITATING FIASCO...

PREPARATION

You must have on hand:

A copy of Fiasco and the playsets you like.
Two black and two white dice per player.
Index cards.
Several markers.

It's nice to also have:

Play mat.
Extra copies of the playsets you'll offer.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome everyone and explain Fiasco's tone - darkly comic, a game about flawed people with powerful ambition and poor impulse control. Emphasize the fun of failure.

Offer four or so playsets you'd love to play and let them choose their favorite. Don't let them choose from a giant stack. Don't facilitate playsets you don't like.

SETUP: RELATIONSHIPS

Put an index card between each pair of players. Ask them to write "Relationship" at the top of this card.

Roll all the dice and sort them by number. If you get a weird roll heavy with a particular number, just roll them again. A broad distribution will make a setup with new players easier.

SETUP: RELATIONSHIPS CONT.

Explain that you won't know who your character is until later, but that you'll be crafting Relationships first. Each Relationship has a general category, like "Family", and a specific detail, like "Parent and Child". A Relationship must have a category before its detail can be fleshed out, so the first player (you) must choose a category.

Choose a category, pick up the associated die, and write it the category on a card not attached to your character. Explain that anyone can author an element on any card at the table, not just ones near them. Put the die on the card.

Turn to the person on your left and invite them to review the Relationship list in the playset, choose a die, and either add a detail to the category you just chose or to start a new category. Make sure they put the chosen die on the card. Point out any numbers that are scarce and keep a general total. "OK, that's the last five and we already have no fours. You can now choose one, two, three, or six."

Continue facilitating the rotation. On your second turn, either choose something really prosaic and obvious or support another player's clear agenda if they have articulated one.

When the Relationships each have two dice on them, take a moment to discuss what you see emerging in terms of situation, but caution everyone not to get too invested yet.

SETUP: THE REST

Put down an index card beneath each completed Relationship.

Explain that each Relationship has some additional bit of excitement attached to it - an Object, Location, or Need. You must have one of each, and when in doubt go with extra Needs. They are chosen exactly like Relationships, using the remaining dice.

Mention that the final die is wild and can be any number. That choice will belong to the player on your right.

SETUP: THE REST CONT.

Explain that whatever Object, Need or Location is attached to a Relationship, it is very, very important to both characters in that Relationship somehow.

Once you have a complete Setup, figure out what's going on. Explain that Relationships might be binary, or they might be pointing at a third party, and flexibility is encouraged in interpretation.

PREPARING TO PLAY

Once you have a potent situation, explain how to play. Ideally, use the play mat to illustrate each step in turn.

Explain that the game takes place across two acts, interrupted by a Tilt. The Tilt will introduce additional chaos and instability. After Act Two there is a short Aftermath phase, when we learn about our characters tragic outcomes.

Let them know how scenes work - that you'll have your character in the spotlight when it is your turn, and that you'll get two scenes per Act. Illustrate the two options a player has for scene framing - to Establish or to Resolve - by inventing a scene involving a couple of your newly-created characters. Demonstrate why each is fun and valuable, and make it clear you cannot do both.

Explain that in Act One, no matter whether you Established or Resolved, you give your die away at the end of your scene. You can give it to any other player for any reason at all. Briefly show them why the dice you accumulate matter, by illustrating how the Tilt and Aftermath favor characters with lots of a single color and punish characters with die parity.

PLAY ACT ONE

Ask if anyone has a juicy scene they'd like to Establish. If no one does, Establish a strong scene yourself.

Remind overly enthusiastic or "deer in the headlights" players of the option to Resolve. Demonstrate this yourself if necessary. Make sure to tell them they can create one person scenes, flashbacks, and play other dramatic tricks if they wish.

Strongly support other player's creative contributions. Emphasize that character death is explicitly on the table and is totally OK.

HANDLE THE TILT

When it is time for the Tilt, reiterate that the game is half over. Illustrate the die rolling mechanic and have everyone roll - they will be eager to. Determine who decides the Tilt and give each of them an index card. Explain that, using the remaining dice, they should author a category. When both have done so, swap cards and have them add a detail to the other player's category. Consider grabbing the dice they use rather than keeping them on the cards, so there is no confusion or mixing of dice. When the Tilt elements are decided, throw them back in the pool.

Explain that the Tilt elements are community property, and that we just want to see them occur during Act Two in some fashion.

Take a short break

PLAY ACT TWO

Before beginning Act Two, explain that everyone now keeps their dice after scenes. This is usually an "a ha!" moment.

A UC HELLMOUTH INSTA-SETUP

RELATIONSHIPS AT HELLMOUTH UNI

For three players...

- # Fractious flatmates
- # Unavoidable exes
- # Group work adversaries

For four players, add...

- # Wild Wiccan & initiate

For five players, add...

- # Sci-Fi & Fantasy Society President and Minion

NEEDS AT HELLMOUTH UNI

For three players...

- # To get out of the Bio-Med department alive

For four and five players, add...

- # To make them all understand that I am the big name on campus

LOCATIONS AT HELLMOUTH UNI

For three or four players...

- # Long forgotten basement of the Biology Department

For five players, add...

- # Club VuDu, Friday night is Metal night

OBJECTS AT HELLMOUTH UNI

For three, four, or five players...

- # Confusing play about a king who dresses in yellow