

# GAMES+LEARNING+ IMPROPRIETY



A FIASCO PLAYSET BY SEAN C. DUNCAN,  
CREATED FOR GAMES+LEARNING+SOCIETY 9.0, JUNE 2013

# SDOI GAMES+LEARNING+IMPROPRIETY

## CREDITS

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Edited by Liz Ellcessor. Thanks to Jason Morningstar for suggested revisions on an earlier version of this playset.

Created for the Games+Learning+Society 9.0 conference in Madison, Wisconsin.

Cover art by Sean C. Duncan, based on original elfgirl art by Dan Norton, with elfgirl's shades swiped from a drawing by Andrew Wilson. I'll make it the cover prettier in a later version.

This is v2.0 of this Playset, released June 2013; additional updates are probable.

## BOILERPLATE

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

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For more information about *Fiasco* or to download other Playsets and materials, visit [www.bullypulpitgames.com](http://www.bullypulpitgames.com).

If you'd like to create your own Playset or other *Fiasco*-related content, we'd like to help. Write us at [info@bullypulpitgames.com](mailto:info@bullypulpitgames.com).



"When you play, play *hard*." - Theodore Roosevelt

# THE SCORE

## PUBLISH OR PERISH?

What if Games+Learning+Society wasn't just a conference? What if its appeal wasn't just the discussions of video games, hanging out with smart people, and enjoying the cheese-and-beer-filled backdrop of Madison, Wisconsin? What if it was really all about a vicious hunt for grant funding, petty squabbles over minor theoretical differences, and the incessant clashing of academic egos? What if GLS 9.0 was about revealing a world of petty infighting, academic blood feuds, and sad, lonely people succumbing to their basest human desires? (Moreso than usual, I mean).

Games+Learning+Impropriety is a Playset that allows you to explore such a world. A world in which all of the stresses of the lives of academics, game developers, and educators are at play — and hilariously so. It's a Games+Learning+Society 9.0 Conference speedrun, on Heroic mode. With permadeath.

## MOVIE NIGHT

*A Serious Man, The King of Kong, Scott Pilgrim vs the World, High Anxiety*

There aren't many movies that include academics, gamers, or conferences in any form, not to mention academic conferences about games, so movies might not be your best model. Use your imagination.

# RELATIONSHIPS...

## 1 FRIENDS

- Faculty BFFs
- Grew up in the same, awful town
- Longtime industry rivals
- Co-dependent co-manipulators
- Competitors for the GLS Poster Award
- Cousins

## 2 ROMANCE

- Convivial exes
- A love that breaks all the rules
- Another in a long line of “conference hook-ups”
- Uncomfortably close to stalking
- Academic Power Couple™
- Married... for now

## 3 WORK AND SCHOOL

- A soured mentorship
- Former grad school officemates
- Research collaborators who have never met in person
- One-time professor / one-time student
- One cost the other their last job
- “You stole my code, you bastard.”

## 4 ONLINE

- ◻ Blocked on Facebook
- ◻ Academic blog poster & victimized blog postee
- ◻ Retweeters with agendas
- ◻ Forum frenemies
- ◻ “Um, yeah, I shouldn’t have sent that last email.”
- ◻ Sabotaging a Kickstarter project together

## 5 GAMES

- ◻ World of Warcraft guildmates
- ◻ Game enthusiast vs. game skeptic
- ◻ Cash-poor indie snobs
- ◻ Co-founders of a struggling educational game company
- ◻ Inveterate gamification advocates
- ◻ Secret larpers

## 6 WE KNOW...

- ◻ ... who faked their data
- ◻ ... why that keynote speaker is sweating so much
- ◻ ... where Jaymie Ludlow is
- ◻ ... who rigged the GLS Poster Award
- ◻ ... who’s got the conference registration money
- ◻ ... which keynote speaker is not who they appear to be

...AT GLS 9.0

# NEEDS...

## 1 REVENGE

- ...for stealing a great educational game idea
- ◻ ...for going over time in a conference talk
- ◻ ...for the downfall of Jaymie Ludlow
- ◻ ...for a plagiarized research paper
- ◻ ...for sabotaging a tenure case
- ◻ ...for being repeatedly corpse-camped in World of Warcraft

## 2 SEX

- ...right now, in whatever way possible
- ◻ ...to forget about a rejected publication
- ◻ ...to secure funding for a research project
- ◻ ...in an online (and only online) fashion
- ◻ ...with somebody, anybody important
- ◻ ...as research for an upcoming game

## 3 FAME

- ...at the expense of a good friend
- ◻ ...before everyone finds out that terrible secret
- ◻ ...at the GLS 9.0 Poster Session
- ◻ ...before the divorce is final
- ◻ ...among the grad students
- ◻ ...at all costs

## 4 FUNDING

- ...to make sure someone doesn't commit suicide
- ◻ ...to finally get that dream project off the ground
- ◻ ...to avoid bankruptcy
- ◻ ...to make a videogame
- ◻ ...but it will cost someone else their job
- ◻ ...as the first, crucial step in ruining someone's life

## 5 TENURE

- ...at a different University
- ◻ ...without doing anything of consequence
- ◻ ...passing someone else's work off as your own
- ◻ ...before the grant money runs out
- ◻ ...against a student's wishes
- ◻ ...was a mistake

## 6 TO CHANGE THE WORLD

- ...for the worse
- ◻ ...for the better
- ◻ ...for personal gain
- ◻ ...starting with the National Science Foundation
- ◻ ...of Warcraft
- ◻ ...of Jaymie Ludlow

...AT GLS 9.0

# LOCATIONS...

## 1 IN SESSION

- During the very last paper session of the very last day of GLS 9.0
- On stage, during the second morning keynote
- ◐ At the back of the room during a very crowded panel
- ◑ During the GLS 9.0 Poster Session
- ◒ In a GLS 9.0 Doctoral Colloquium discussion group
- ◓ In the massage room

## 2 INSIDE THE UNION

- The 4th floor women's bathroom
- Inside the Gift Shop
- ◐ "Porter Butts, Man of Vision."
- ◑ A secret elevator
- ◒ In a quiet booth at the back of the Union Rathskeller
- ◓ Underneath the GLS 9.0 conference registration desk

## 3 THE TERRACE

- Sitting in that goddamn oversized Terrace chair
- By the Terrace gazebo, as a student band plays
- ◐ In front of the Union Theatre
- ◑ On the balcony by the Tripp Commons
- ◒ On the ground, behind an outdoor bratwurst grill
- ◓ On inner tubes, floating in the middle of Lake Mendota



## 4 STATE STREET

- ◻ On a #6 bus, headed to the North Transfer Point
- ◻◦ In a dumpster behind Espresso Royale
- ◻◦ Inside a food cart on the University library mall
- ◻◻◻ On the roof of the Museum of Contemporary Art
- ◻◻◻ In a nearby hotel lobby
- ◻◻◻ The storeroom in the back of GameStop

## 5 MADISON

- ◻ The Fromagination Cheese Shop
- ◻◦ A spontaneous LARP on the Capitol square
- ◻◦ The rotunda of the Wisconsin State Capitol
- ◻◻◻ In a protest march gone very, very wrong
- ◻◻◻ Like, inside a head shop, or whatever, man
- ◻◻◻ A random bar near State Street

## 6 THE INTERNETS

- ◻ Comments on an unsavory Subreddit
- ◻◦ In an exchange on the GLS community listserv
- ◻◦ In a starting zone within a disused MMORPG
- ◻◻◻ A series of notes in a doctoral student applications database
- ◻◻◻ A private, secret Facebook group
- ◻◻◻ On the #gls Twitter hashtag

...AT GLS 9.0

# OBJECTS...

## 1 CONFERENCE

- ◻ A beat-up, old lectern
- ◻◦ A curiously marked-up print copy of the GLS 9.0 Program
- ◻◦◦ Someone's cold, abandoned lunch
- ◻◻◦◦ A pair of GLS-branded bike socks
- ◻◻◦◦◦ A burned, barely legible conference nametag
- ◻◻◻◦◦◦◦ It's at the Games & Art Exhibition, but it sure ain't games nor art

## 2 GAMES

- ◻ A mysteriously modified Dance Dance Revolution gamepad
- ◻◦ A disassembled iPhone
- ◻◦◦ A PS3 controller
- ◻◻◦◦ A bag containing two dozen polyhedral dice
- ◻◻◦◦◦ A full set of Cards Against Humanity cards
- ◻◻◻◦◦◦◦ "This is the best educational game prototype ever created."

## 3 ACADEMIA

- ◻ An unfinished grant proposal
- ◻◦ Concrete video evidence of academic misconduct
- ◻◦◦ A stack of someone else's business cards
- ◻◻◦◦ A passcode-locked iPad
- ◻◻◦◦◦ A favorable tenure letter
- ◻◻◻◦◦◦◦ A tweed jacket

## 4 IMPROPRIETY

- A collection of secret sexts
- ◻ Five pounds of black tar heroin
- ◻ A completely, totally, shockingly, nude Jaymie Ludlow
- ◻ A duffel bag containing \$69,105 in unmarked bills
- ◻ A handwritten bomb threat
- ◻ "... Mom?"

## 5 WEAPONRY

- An unusually strong lanyard
- ◻ A rifle with the word "HADOUKEN" carved into the stock
- ◻ A bloody replica Master Sword
- ◻ A very, very sharp pen
- ◻ A laced bottle of New Glarus Spotted Cow beer
- ◻ An angry pit bull

## 6 OOPS

- An embarrassingly public spill
- ◻ An Xbox with a flaky electrical connection
- ◻ All of Jaymie Ludlow's credit cards
- ◻ A framed picture of a keynote speaker in a compromising position
- ◻ A pair of glasses with one shattered lens
- ◻ The email passwords of every GLS 9.0 Conference attendee

...AT GLS 9.0

# A GAMES+LEARNING+IMPROPRIETY INSTA-SETUP

## RELATIONSHIPS AT GLS 9.0

For three players...

- \* Romance: A love that breaks all the rules
- \* Work & School: A soured mentorship
- \* Games: Co-founders of a struggling educational game company

For four players, add...

- \* We Know: ... where Jaymie Ludlow is

For five players, add...

- \* Online: Sabotaging a Kickstarter project together

## NEEDS AT GLS 9.0

For three players...

- \* Funding: ...as the first, crucial step in ruining someone's life

For four or five players, add...

- \* Revenge: For the downfall of Jaymie Ludlow

## LOCATIONS AT GLS 9.0

For three or four players...

- \* In Session: On stage, during the second morning keynote

For five players, add...

- \* The Terrace: On inner tubes, floating in the middle of Lake Mendota

## OBJECTS AT GLS 9.0

For three, four or five players...

- \* Impropryety: A duffel bag containing \$69,105 in unmarked bills

# NOTES

## GAMES+LEARNING+SOCIETY

This is a parodic and (hopefully) more salacious version of the very real Games+Learning+Society (GLS 9.0) Conference, presented in the form of a Fiasco Playset. Any similarity to actual persons or situations is pretty close to completely coincidental. I think.

This Playset was designed for play during the GLS 9.0 Conference, to be held in Madison, Wisconsin from June 12-14, 2013. Games+Learning+Improprity is purely the weird product of Sean Duncan's mind, and should not be construed as an official Games+Learning+Society product nor as a GLS sanctioned game.

## A FEW SUGGESTIONS

It is best to consider GLS as just a two-day conference for the purposes of this Playset — the first day occurring before The Tilt, the second day occurring after The Tilt, the Aftermath occurring whenever. Flashbacks and flashforwards are, of course, encouraged to flesh out the story.

If this is your first time playing Fiasco, I strongly suggest two strategies — practice restraint, and don't be afraid to let your character suffer. You might be tempted to create a character named Professor Quentin P. Shazbot, who manages five billion dollars in NSF grants, is sleeping with every graduate student in sight, is a part-time methamphetamine cook, and is somehow also the secret CEO of Activision. This might seem fun at first, but would be hard for other players to build around. If one starts with relatively mundane characters and then lets the situation get out of control, the more fun the game is for everyone. The goal of the game is not to let your character "win," but to create the most entertaining, messy disaster for the entire group. Hold back a bit and let your sad, little character develop, then get brutalized by the unfortunate situation that he or she has found him or herself in.

## CONTACT ME

I hope you enjoy the Playset! My email is [seanduncan@gmail.com](mailto:seanduncan@gmail.com) and I'm @scd on Twitter in case you have any comments or questions. My personal webpage is [se4n.org](http://se4n.org), where you can read more about me and what I do. Finally, please don't forget to go out and buy everything related to Fiasco at [www.bullypulpitgames.com](http://www.bullypulpitgames.com).