



# SONGS OF AERTHE

*Fiasco at the Clementine Mine*



*a supernatural western playset by*

**J. ROMERO HOWELL**



# SONGS OF AERTHE: FIASCO AT THE CLEMENTINE MINE

a supernatural western fiasco playset

## CREDITS

Written by J. Romero Howell

*New to the Fiasco experience? Check out these videos to help you learn how to play*



How to Play Fiasco



Will Wheaton  
Playthrough

## BOILERPLATE

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

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# THE SCORE

They say that deep into the Earth's molten core is a world in parallel with our own. A world linked with ours somehow, and no one for sure knows how or why. Some say that it might have been your world's great flood that cooled and watered the mountains and valleys below. And even others say that some of the flood's doomed creatures survived down here.

Welcome to Aerthe. 1879

If you're from that land called Earth, and I reckon you are, something just might seem a little off 'round here. Along the jagged peaks of Aerthe's Iron Root Range, the summer snow doesn't seem to melt into glacial sun-cups like yours does. And down to the treeline below, the light-starved forest floor still grows abundant wildflowers below a dense canopy of cedar and spruce trees. Even the orchards in the valley further down will continue to bloom and fruit well into the winter.

Some say that something deep and maybe *alive* lives buried beneath the forest. Maybe it's just the heat this close to the core. Or shush, maybe it's faeries! Ha! Whatever it is, here on Aerthe, people's faith and superstitions burn hot, and our dead are sometimes not very good at staying in the ground.

Nearby, the Clementine Coal Mine sits at the edge of a half-formed boomtown deep in Owl Nation territory. The coal burns hotter here. Some kind of infernal fire pushes the Aerthen steam engines to perform like beasts possessed. It burns longer too; a faint and sickening green glow to its embers, almost transfixing the harrowed eyes of those poor sods who feed their furnaces with their shovels and likely their souls too.

Most of our *Songs of Aerthe* did not survive the pulp or even the stone they were written upon, and for good reason, I suppose.

Even the campfire stories eventually got swallowed up in the back of loggers' and miners' dusty throats. The unholy origins of this coal, for instance.

The miners who dug the coal, side by side like ashen brothers, say it's because of what's been mouldering *within* it. Scarcely above a whisper, they talk in the depths of the mine, in the saloon shadows, or even in the church pews near the back...

*Nephilim bones.*

Those flood myths just might be true. And I reckon that soon, nearly every greedy greenhorn who catches word will descend upon Clementine like a murder of hungry crows.

*Greenhorns just like you.*

You probably came to Clementine seeking fortune, forgiveness, or love, but some of you will find something else entirely. If you hear the land barely whispering, especially after midnight, or if your reflection in the water smiles at you a moment too long, you are likely not imagining it-

and you're probably *borked* already.

Because the coal of Clementine has a way of sticking to the hands who dug it free.

## MOVIE NIGHT

Godless, Sinners, There Will Be Blood

Get your mates together and jump into the spirit of the occasion. Pop some popcorn, or if you've got time, assemble one of them Char-hooch-erie boards them Millennials can't stop yappin' about. Or even further, what about a home-baked artisanal loaf of sourdough bread, ya bicycle ridin', suspender wearin', handlebar moustachioed Pearl District hippy (wow that got niche real quick.)\*

*\*For the record, I actually like Millennials (most of them, anyway.) And hippies too. And I'm kind of a tart for sourdough bread, if I'm honest.*

# RELATIONSHIPS: ALLIES & ENEMIES

*Roll 2d6 per relationship for each player on either side of you*

## 1 THE HARROWED

- ▣ One of you died. The other knows what raised you back up.
- ▣ Bound by the same ghost, who alternates between you two.
- ▣ One's body is failing; the other collects replacement parts.
- ▣ Survivor and the thing that spared them; in an uneasy truce.
- ▣ You both share memories that belong to someone long buried.
- ▣ One is slowly becoming "something else" and the other pretends not to notice.

## 2 THE POSSESSED & THE PIOUS

- ▣ Fiery preacher and the demon that answers his prayers.
- ▣ Skeptic doctor and patient whose stigmata refuse to close.
- ▣ Prophet and doubter, both hearing the same voice.
- ▣ Missionary and "convert," each certain the other is damned.
- ▣ Exorcist and host — neither sure who is winning.
- ▣ Two lovers who believe God chose them... but for what?

## 3 INDUSTRY & CORRUPTION

- ▣ Coal baron and the miner who can hear the coal whisper.
- ▣ Railroad magnate and surveyor who maps non-existent terrain.
- ▣ Banker and a debtor whose shadow acts independently.
- ▣ Inventor and assistant building something that hums at night.
- ▣ Smuggler and client trafficking coal that bleeds.
- ▣ Logger and environmental mystic who both claim the forest speaks.

## 4 LAW & VIOLENCE

- ◻ Sheriff & outlaw with unfinished business
- ◻ Bounty hunter & target (not yet revealed)
- ◻ Deputy & witness who saw too much
- ◻ Soldier & deserter hiding in town
- ◻ Vigilante & the person they “saved”
- ◻ Lawman & corpse that won’t stay buried

## 5 FAMILY & BLOOD

- ◻ Siblings who inherited a coal claim in the Ironwood Forest
- ◻ Parent and Child divided over the Clementine Mine’s utility.
- ◻ Widow and the one who buried their spouse’s body
- ◻ You promised to love each other until death, & death disagreed.
- ◻ You are each other’s anchor to reality. It’s slipping.
- ◻ One must sacrifice the other to stop something worse.

## 6 THE ALMOST ORDINARY

- ◻ Boarding house roommates and the walls breathe.
- ◻ Sheriff and deputy pretending the livestock didn’t rise again.
- ◻ Schoolteacher and student who both see the same ghost child.
- ◻ Widow and neighbor sharing meals — and shared hallucinations.
- ◻ Bartender and regular who never seems to blink.
- ◻ Two townsfolk who remember a town that no longer exists.

**... BUT WHAT DRIVES  
THESE POOR SODS?**

# NEEDS:

We ain't talkin' polite wants, here. These needs are downright corrosive.

## 1 TO GET RICH ★FAST★

- Before the railroad arrives.
- ▣ Before the mine collapses.
- ◐ By selling what 'lives' beneath the coal.
- ◑ To live long enough to finish one last thing.
- ◒ By buying out everyone else.
- ◓ By selling dud claims to the rubes up North.

## 2 TO KNOW THE TRUTH

- About what's buried in the mine.
- ▣ About what happened to a missing person.
- ◐ About why ACTUALLY the coal burns strangely.
- ◑ About where most of the coal is being shipped.
- ◒ About the real reason why the Church is invested.
- ◓ About the health and environmental hazards of this new seam.

## 3 TO BE LOVED BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE

- To be chosen despite what you're becoming.
- ▣ To confess before your voice changes.
- ◐ To secure a promise that survives death.
- ◑ To protect your beloved from your own corruption.
- ◒ To experience one perfect day before the end.
- ◓ To believe someone sees you — not the monster.

## 4 TO EXPOSE THE ROT

- ▣ To prove the coal mines are feeding something underground.
- ▣ To reveal the local preacher's miracles are not divine.
- ▣ Behind the Church's influence.
- ▣ To force the town to acknowledge the rising dead.
- ▣ To destroy the railroad before it completes its final line.
- ▣ To make the truth undeniable, no matter the cost.

## 5 TO ESCAPE THE INEVITABLE

- ▣ To leave before the mountain erupts again.
- ▣ To outrun the ghost that wears your face.
- ▣ To cross the sea where the spirits can't follow.
- ▣ To fake your death convincingly.
- ▣ To burn everything behind you.
- ▣ To find a place where the rules are normal.

## 6 TO TRANSCEND HUMANITY

- ▣ To ascend beyond flesh.
- ▣ To become the myth rather than just a human.
- ▣ To merge with the land itself.
- ▣ To trade mortality for power.
- ▣ To rewrite the boundary between living and dead.
- ▣ To ensure history remembers you as more than human.

**WE ARE NOT ON EARTH ANYMORE★ SO  
WHERE IN HELL ARE WE?**

# LOCATIONS

## 1 URBAN

- ▣ The sawmill where logs bleed sap the color of rusted blood.
- ▣ The vaudeville house where one seat is always occupied by a corpse no one else sees.
- ▣ Coyote's Saloon where the piano plays itself sometimes.
- ▣ A barber's mirror that shows patrons how they will die.
- ▣ The newspaper office printing tomorrow's obituaries today.
- ▣ A boarding house whose attic adds rooms when no one is looking.

## 2 THE CLEMENTINE MINE

- ▣ A work camp built over an unmarked burial ground.
- ▣ A sealed tunnel that has been recently reopened
- ▣ A cavern below that rearranges itself into strange formations.
- ▣ The main mineshaft (too deep) where the coal pulses faintly.
- ▣ A stuffy mine chamber where the tools threaten to spark.
- ▣ A bend in the shaft where voices echo... differently.

## 3 SAINT BRIGID'S MISSION

- ▣ A cedar grove that demands offerings of bone.
- ▣ A church whose bell tolls for deaths not yet happened.
- ▣ The well behind the chapel.
- ▣ A cliff shrine stained with something darker than pitch.
- ▣ A cemetery where graves won't stay closed.
- ▣ A tidal pool reflecting a sky that is not this one.

## 4 GOVERNMENT★CIVIC

- ◻ The courthouse where verdicts are whispered before trials begin.
- ◻ The jail whose inmates speak in chorus at midnight.
- ◻ The magistrate's mansion built atop something older than law.
- ◻ The schoolhouse where the blackboard writes back.
- ◻ The customs dock that inspects crates that hum.
- ◻ A gallows that refuses to hold the condemned.

## 5 WEALTHY LOCATIONS

- ◻ A merchant baron's mansion with imported marble and provincial disdain.
- ◻ The grand hotel lobby, velvet chairs hiding shady deals.
- ◻ A riverboat casino, chandeliers swaying with every hand lost.
- ◻ The private hunting lodge, where champagne and rifles mix freely.
- ◻ The cabaret balcony, perfume masking blood on gloves.
- ◻ The banker's study, locked drawers and letters from the East.

## 6 POOR LOCATIONS

- ◻ A crowded flophouse attic, one candle for twenty men.
- ◻ The mudflats at low tide, children picking through detritus.
- ◻ A miner's lean-to, patched canvas and aching lungs.
- ◻ The soup kitchen line, equal parts hunger and rumor.
- ◻ The laundress's back room, steaming tubs and tired laughter.
- ◻ A collapsed mine entrance, timbered beams groaning like coffins.

... WHEREOS THE STUFF?

# OBJECTS★ RELICS AND CURIOSITIES

## 1. WEALTH & CREED

- ▣ A coal nugget that changes size when weighed.
- ▣ A deed to land no one dares to settle.
- ▣ A pocket watch running backward.
- ▣ A lockbox whose key was lost with its owner.
- ▣ A ledger filled with names, some crossed out in red.
- ▣ A fossil that sings softly in salt air.

## 2. CRIME & SECRETS

- ▣ A bloodstained handkerchief hidden in plain sight.
- ▣ A bundle of forged letters, each more convincing than truth.
- ▣ A knife with initials no one claims.
- ▣ A diary that ends the day before a murder.
- ▣ A counterfeit map that still leads somewhere real.
- ▣ A wanted poster with your own face on it.

## 3. SACRED & STRANGE

- ▣ A carved fetish of bone, warm to the touch.
- ▣ A hymnal with blank pages that write themselves.
- ▣ A relic of Saint someone-or-other... that glows in fog.
- ▣ A charm bag filled with teeth.
- ▣ A water-worn stone that whispers in dreams.
- ▣ A crucifix that weeps water when placed in moonlight.

## 4 . PERSONAL ♀ INTIMATE

- ▣ A lock of hair tied with faded ribbon.
- ▣ A wedding ring tossed into the river, returned by tide.
- ▣ A child's toy, mended a hundred times.
- ▣ A letter never sent, words bitten back.
- ▣ A locket holding two portraits — one scratched out.
- ▣ A pair of spectacles that see more than light.

## 5 . TOOLS ♀ SURVIVAL

- ▣ A revolver with one chamber rusted shut.
- ▣ A coil of rope that's been cut and retied too often.
- ▣ A miner's lamp burning with green flame.
- ▣ A compass that points to your enemy.
- ▣ A medical kit with one vial missing.
- ▣ A hatchet buried in a tree nobody wants to fell.

## 6 . FOLKLORE ♀ LEGEND

- ▣ The pelt of a wolf that walks like a man.
- ▣ An obsidian mirror too dark to show your face.
- ▣ A broken fiddle said to call storms.
- ▣ A scrap of parchment with a spell in three languages.
- ▣ A feather from a bird thought extinct.
- ▣ A book no one can read aloud without consequence.

**LANTERNS LIT★ THE CURTAIN RISES★**

**ACTION!!!**

# TILTS

## 1. THE BODY REMEMBERS

1. Your body takes on properties of the coal (heat, glow etc)
2. A wound heals but something else in you stops working.
3. You feel stronger, faster... and less like yourself
4. Someone recognizes you as someone long dead—
5. You stop needing essentials (sleep, food, breath)
6. Something inside you moves when you're still

## 2. THE MIND FRACTURES

1. You remember committing an act you're sure you didn't
2. Someone else shares the exact same memory as you, but from their perspective.
3. You forget something critical at the worst moment
4. You become certain of something that isn't true
5. You hear the mine speaking and it knows things it shouldn't
6. You realize one of your memories isn't yours

## 3. JUSTICE BECOMES PERSONAL

1. You become convinced someone here must be punished, and you know who
2. A past wrongdoing resurfaces, and you are tied to it.
3. You are given a chance to "balance the scales" but the cost is unclear
4. Someone confesses something unforgivable and expects forgiveness
5. You are mistaken for someone who deserves vengeance
6. You know exactly what the right thing to do is, but no one agrees

#### **4 . SOMETHING WAS AWAKENED IN THE MINE**

1. A sealed tunnel opens—and something has moved through it
2. The coal begins reacting to emotion (heat, sound, movement)
3. A presence follows someone out of the mine
4. The ground shifts—not collapsing, but *responding*
5. Something buried begins trying to reach the surface
6. The mine stops producing coal—and starts producing something else

#### **5 . THE DEAL WAS ALREADY DONE**

1. Someone has been using Nephilim material secretly—and it shows
2. A contract (legal or spiritual) reveals hidden terms
3. The Church knew—and sanctioned it
4. The railroad is aware and accelerating for a reason
5. A past “miracle” is revealed to have come from the mine
6. You realize you’ve already benefited from this power

#### **6 . YOU ARE NOT WHO YOU THOUGHT**

1. You are connected to the mine in a way you didn’t know
2. You are not entirely human—and never were
3. You are becoming something else, slowly but surely
4. Someone else is becoming *you*
5. Your reflection doesn’t match your actions
6. You realize you are part of what was buried here

# AFTERMATH

## 2 - SHATTERED

Nothing is left. The Clementine mine reclaims what you were. Even your name will be spoken only as a warning.

## 3 - CURSED

You survived, but something followed you out of the dark: a debt, a ghost, a hunger. Your story is not finished, but you wish it were.

## 4 - BROKEN

You live, but not whole. Missing limb, missing mind, missing soul — Aerthe takes her toll, and she took it from you.

## 5 - RUINED

All you built is ash or mud. Wealth gone, allies gone, reputation sunk. You'll rebuild, maybe, but never in this place.

## 6 - BITTER

You got what you wanted, but it tastes like brine and blood. You'll hold onto it anyway, because letting go would mean admitting the loss.

## 7 - UNEASY

Alive, intact, but haunted. Some nights the wind in the cedars whispers your mistakes. Some nights you whisper back.

## 8 - TETHERED

You are bound now — to the Aerthe, a person, a secret. Freedom is gone, but so is loneliness.

## **9 – RESPECTED**

Your name carries weight in taverns and camps, though you know the stories aren't true. It's a mask you'll wear until it rots.

## **10 ♠ FORTUNATE**

You came out with more than you entered: coin, kin, or power. Clementine rarely offers gifts without teeth, though.

## **11 – BLESSED**

For once, the rain seems cleansing. You are whole, hopeful, and perhaps even free. Don't question it — blessings seldom linger.

## **12 – LEGENDARY**

Your tale is already myth, retold by lantern-light. But remember: myths are warnings as much as they are triumphs. And the Clementine Mine never forgets.

# NEED SOME SCAFFOLDING?

(*not the hangman's variety, if you catch my meanin'.*)

If you are feeling like your interaction fizzles out after the first scene, and using the tilt still feels confusing, I might have something that can help get un-stuck.

In Fiasco-style play, Needs are the *hunger*. Tilts are *what happens* when the hunger goes *too far*. When you pair them, you create some really interesting narrative tension.

With that in mind, consider pairing a specific *need* with one of the *tilts* in one of the following combinations:

## 1 NEED: TO GET RICH ★FAST★

***Tilt:*** *Nature's Wrath* — Floodwaters erase the town's lowest streets. You were about to close the deal. Mineral rights, land deeds, a scheme nearly sealed. Then the river rises. Records are lost. Property lines vanish.

Now you can either help rebuild...  
Or quietly profit from chaos while the mud is still wet.

## 2. NEED: TO GET EVEN

*Tilt: Revelation & Madness* — The town records are forgeries. You wanted revenge for what was taken from your family. But what if the “truth” you were avenging was fabricated? Now the past itself is unstable.

Do you keep pushing toward vengeance — or admit the foundation is rotten?

## 3. NEED: TO GET RESPECT

*Tilt: Violence & Ruin* — A gunshot rings out in a sacred place. You wanted to be taken seriously. One bold act. One statement no one could ignore. But when violence spills into a church, grove, or burial ground. Respect curdles into notoriety.

Are you feared? Or forever damned?

## 4. NEED: TO BE LOVED BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE

*Tilt: Desire & Temptation* — Someone offers exactly what you crave, at a price. You just want to be chosen. Then comes the offer: loyalty in exchange for silence. Devotion in exchange for betrayal. Love in exchange for someone else's ruin.

How much of yourself will you trade?

## 5. NEED TO ESCAPE

*Tilt: Supernatural Intrusion — The forest sings, and those who listen vanish.* You planned to leave quietly. But the wilderness begins calling you by name.

Is escape freedom, or is it simply walking willingly into something older than regret?

## 6. NEED TO CONTROL THE TRUTH

*Tilt: Failure & Betrayal — A letter arrives proving you've been lied to all along.* You thought you were shaping the narrative. Burning documents. Editing stories. Protecting reputations. Then proof surfaces that you were manipulated first.

Now the question is no longer *what is true?*  
It's *who controls what survives?*

# Thank you!

I hope you had a good time reading, and maybe even playing! Here's to all the gamers, the former (and perpetual) theater nerds and to those who crave to live in stories where we may co-create something that occupies our hours with good fun and good company.

Do you love Fiasco? Want more? Bully Pulpit Games has a bunch of playsets that you will likely love. Find them here at <https://fiascoplaysets.com/>

Do you want to dive further into Aerthe? I'm involved in a multi-genre series called *The Songs of Aerthe*, which includes a forthcoming solo journaling rpg among many other goodies. Come find them at <https://jromerohowell.com/>

Thanks for playing!