

# BURNED OVER

A FIASCO PLAYSET

# BURNED OVER

CONTAINING

## Relationships, Needs, Locations, and Objects

Writing and Cover Art by

*James Gabrielsen*

---

### Boilerplate

---

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

This Playset is copyright 2017 by James Gabrielsen. *Fiasco* is copyright 2009 by Jason Morningstar. All rights are reserved.

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 thou playest, playest hard.”**  
Theodore Roosevelt

---

---

# THE SCORE

## The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning

*“I found that region of country what...would be called, ‘a burnt district.’ There had been, a few years previously, a wild excitement passing through that region, which they called a revival of religion... It was reported as having been a very extravagant excitement.”*

–The Autobiography of Charles G. Finney

The early 19th-century religious revival in western and central of New York was so profound as to give the region the nickname “the burned-over district.” Too great to be contained by the predominant Christian sects of the day, the movement ignited new religions, spiritualist traditions, and socialist utopian experiments: a fertile ground for charismatic leaders, Christlike disciples, and con men.

## MOVIE NIGHT

The Burned Over District: Religions of Central NY\*, Spiritualism: The Fox Sisters, American Prophet: The Story of Joseph Smith, Leap of Faith, Elmer Gantry, The Brothers Bloom, Waco: The Rules of Engagement†, Jonestown: The Life and Death of Peoples Temple‡

\* [youtu.be/S5ToJ9TQ7q8](https://youtu.be/S5ToJ9TQ7q8)

† [youtu.be/iuKef\\_DRVDg](https://youtu.be/iuKef_DRVDg)

‡ [youtu.be/ydHRESPjBxg](https://youtu.be/ydHRESPjBxg)

For a quick primer, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burned-over\\_district](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burned-over_district)

---

---

---

---

# THE BOOK OF RELATIONSHIPS

## 1 FAMILY

- 1 Parent and child
- 2 Obedient child and prodigal
- 3 Elder and grandchild
- 4 Cousins
- 5 Commune family
- 6 In-laws

## 2 FRIENDS

- 1 Inseparable friends since birth
- 2 Head pastor and protégé
- 3 Church “friends” (i.e., bitter social rivals)
- 4 Fervent parishioners
- 5 Former friends, split by competing faiths
- 6 Drinking buddies

## 3 FAITH

- 1 Spiritualist medium and séance attendee
  - 2 Charismatic preacher and skeptic
  - 3 Circuit preacher and revival attendee
  - 4 Charlatan and true believer
  - 5 Jewish Zionist and landowner
  - 6 Apocalyptic prophet and citizen
- 
-

---

---

## 4 COMMUNITY

- 1 Abolitionist and Southerner
- 2 Freemasons
- 3 Mayor and citizen
- 4 Socialist commune leader and follower
- 5 Town council members
- 6 Pillars of the community

## 5 BUSINESS

- 1 Bodyguard and client
- 2 Treasure hunters
- 3 Diviner and customer
- 4 Competing preachers
- 5 Con artist and mark
- 6 Traveling salespeople

## 6 ILLICIT

- 1 Runaway slave and tracker
- 2 God has sanctioned our secret union
- 3 Prostitute and customer
- 4 Non-religious pariahs
- 5 Socialist conspirators
- 6 Suffragettes

...IN THE BURNED-OVER DISTRICT

---

---

---

---

# THE BOOK OF NEEDS

## 1 TO GET

- 1 ...a lot of money from these simple-minded fools
- 2 ...them to swear an oath of loyalty
- 3 ...answers from the dead through occult means
- 4 ...away with your scam before your past comes to light
- 5 ...support for the abolitionist movement
- 6 ...them to shake the sheets with you

## 2 TO GIVE

- 1 ...up all “lustful gratifications” and mean it
- 2 ...them all a piece of your mind
- 3 ...an alternative spiritual tradition a try
- 4 ...a false impression of your piousness
- 5 ...your life and possessions to God
- 6 ...a stern beating to that charlatan

## 3 TO ESTABLISH

- 1 ...a private bank with its own currency
  - 2 ...Christ’s Millennial Kingdom here and now
  - 3 ...a self-sustaining socialist utopia
  - 4 ...women’s suffrage
  - 5 ...a new religion
  - 6 ...a connection with the spirit world
- 
-

---

---

## 4 TO PROVE

- 1 ...your unmatched righteousness in grand fashion
- 2 ...that dirty con artist is a fraud
- 3 ...which church is the one true church
- 4 ...the Second Coming of Christ is nigh
- 5 ...the reality of the spirit world
- 6 ...your love and devotion

## 5 TO BECOME

- 1 ...a powerful religious leader
- 2 ...mayor
- 3 ...one with God by ridding yourself of sin
- 4 ...the most respected spiritualist medium in history
- 5 ...a modern-day Casanova
- 6 ...a true prophet

## 6 TO GET OUT

- 1 ...of the country to Canada before you're caught
- 2 ...the devil's influence on this town
- 3 ...of the contract with your dignity intact
- 4 ...of the cult you just joined
- 5 ...of your current faith without the pastor noticing
- 6 ...of a torrid romance gone bad

...IN THE BURNED-OVER DISTRICT

---

---

---

---

# THE BOOK OF LOCATIONS

## 1 ROCHESTER

- 1 Offices of The Daily Democrat newspaper
- 2 Two-story brick courthouse
- 3 Headquarters of the Rochester Female Charitable Society
- 4 Mount Hope Cemetery
- 5 Erie Canal Aqueduct
- 6 Presbyterian church house

## 2 FINGER LAKES REGION

- 1 Wooded drumlin hill rumored to have buried treasure
- 2 Island in the Niagara River, perfect for a small settlement
- 3 Village of Palmyra
- 4 Underground Railroad safehouse
- 5 Newly founded vineyard
- 6 Seneca Falls

## 3 TENT REVIVAL

- 1 Traveling preacher's wagon and private tent
  - 2 On stage, behind the pulpit
  - 3 Hidden under the stage
  - 4 Among the pews
  - 5 Nearby river for baptisms
  - 6 Makeshift outhouse around back
- 
-



---

---

## 4 ONEIDA COMMUNITY

- 1 Mansion House
- 2 Sunset Lake
- 3 Community orchard and farmland
- 4 Common grounds
- 5 Meeting hall
- 6 Community cemetery

## 5 SINFUL

- 1 Haphazard moonshine distilling operation
- 2 Brothel
- 3 County jail
- 4 Rural tavern
- 5 Catholic mass
- 6 Spiritualist's home

## 6 WILDERNESS

- 1 Tangled river banks
- 2 Peaceful grove a short hike from civilization
- 3 Shores of Lake Ontario
- 4 On the road, midway between villages
- 5 Abandoned, overgrown village
- 6 Deep woods, hopelessly lost

...IN THE BURNED-OVER DISTRICT

---

---

---

---

# THE BOOK OF OBJECTS

## 1 DIVINE

- 1 Story of angelic visitation
- 2 Worn family Bible
- 3 Irrefutable proof that Christ will return in 1844
- 4 Manuscript transcribed from ancient metal plates
- 5 Sexual prowess of the gods
- 6 Fervent belief in prophetic calling

## 2 OCCULT

- 1 Tarot deck
- 2 Ornate medallion of unknown origin
- 3 Spiritualist talking board
- 4 Table with thirteen seats, specially prepared for seances
- 5 Lock of hair from a hanged man
- 6 Heavily notated copy of Francis Barrett's *The Magus*

## 3 SUPERSTITIOUS

- 1 Divining rod
  - 2 Three unused candles
  - 3 Seer stone
  - 4 Frequent sightings of a large, black dog
  - 5 Rabbit's foot
  - 6 Vivid, portentous dream
- 
-

---

---

## 4 DEMONIC

- 1 Secret about that new, successful preacher
- 2 Uncontrollable, devilish lust
- 3 Witch doll
- 4 Mark of the Beast
- 5 Bottle of cheap booze
- 6 Bleached human knucklebone

## 5 MUNDANE

- 1 Deed to a failing farm
- 2 Newspaper printing press
- 3 English translation of Thomas More's *Utopia*
- 4 Concrete evidence of fraud
- 5 Strong, well-trained horse
- 6 Passionate love letter

## 6 VIOLENT

- 1 Musket
- 2 Insinuation of uncertain parentage
- 3 Sword of apparently ancient workmanship
- 4 Explosive temper
- 5 Unquestioningly faithful worshipers
- 6 Mob mentality

...IN THE BURNED-OVER DISTRICT

---

---

# A BURNED-OVER INSTA-SETUP

## RELATIONSHIPS IN THE BURNED-OVER DISTRICT

For three players...

- \* *Friends: Former friends, split by competing faiths*
- \* *Illicit: God has sanctioned our secret union*
- \* *Business: Con artist and mark*

For four players, add...

- \* *Faith: Spiritualist medium and séance attendee*

For five players, add...

- \* *Community: Socialist commune leader and follower*

## NEEDS IN THE BURNED-OVER DISTRICT

For three players...

- \* *To become: ...a powerful religious leader*

For four or five players, add...

- \* *To get: ...away with your scam before your past comes to light*

## LOCATIONS IN THE BURNED-OVER DISTRICT

For three, four, or five players...

- \* *Rochester: Offices of The Daily Democrat newspaper*

## OBJECTS IN THE BURNED-OVER DISTRICT

For three or four players...

- \* *Divine: Irrefutable proof that Christ will return in 1844*

For five players, add...

- \* *Occult: Heavily notated copy of Francis Barrett's The Magus*