

A CONVERSATION AT MIDNIGHT

Night draws in. In the distance a bell begins to toll. The candles are lit and the air around you grows chill. The twelfth knell. You join hands and close your eyes. Something is coming. You have brought it here.

HOW TO PLAY

A Conversation At Midnight is a roleplaying game where players take on the role of GUESTS at a Séance. Players ask questions of potentially harmful SPIRITS that are drawn near by the ritual. The SPIRITS' answers are generated using playing cards and dice.



To play, you will need:

- A shuffled pack of cards for each player, with the jokers removed.
- 2 six-sided dice of different colours (these rules will refer to BLACK and WHITE d6)
- Index cards, or a way to write things down
- (Optional - a candle for each player)



THE GUESTS

You have gathered around the table, with The Talking Board laid out before you. At each space is set a deck of cards and an unlit candle. You look around at the faces on either side, as the room begins to chill.

Decide how you know each other, then pick a GUEST to play as for the night. Choose 3 words to describe their DISPOSITION:

GUEST	DISPOSITION (PICK 3)
THE ARISTOCRAT	Aloof, Austere, Brash, Bumbling, Cold, Dishonest, Dramatic, Effervescent, Formal, Generous, Uptight, Vain
THE ARTIST	Aloof, Anxious, Brash, Bumbling, Dramatic, Effervescent, Honest, Sardonic, Timid, Vain, Wild, Wise
THE DEVOUT	Austere, Brash, Bumbling, Dramatic, Fastidious, Formal, Gentle, Honest, Sanctimonious, Understated, Uptight, Virtuous
THE INDUSTRIALIST	Abrasive, Affable, Aloof Brash, Brazen, Bumbling, Cold, Dishonest, Formal, Sardonic, Sullen, Uptight
THE SCEPTIC	Affable, Brazen, Cold, Honest, Nervous, Sanctimonious, Sardonic, Sullen, Understated, Uptight, Vain, Wild
THE SOCIALITE	Affable, Aloof, Brash, Dishonest, Dramatic, Effervescent, Kind, Generous, Sardonic, Sullen, Vain, Wild

Choose a DEEPEST SECRET from the prompts below and expand on it, or create your own:

- A CRIME A PROMISE A DEED A PACT A JOURNEY A PERSON A LIE A BETRAYAL A MISTAKE

If you want to involve someone at the table in your secret, lose 1 THRESHOLD and discuss privately with them how they are involved.

Next, choose 3 things to be your TREASURES - these are valued above all other things in your life and their loss would harm you or destroy you.

- Write your TREASURES down on index cards or paper

Finally, decide on your DARK DESIRE - something you privately wish for that would ruin you if it came to light

- Write down your DARK DESIRE and keep it secret



THE SPIRITS

The power of The Talking Board thins the veil between the worlds of the living and the dead and attracts those who are most restless. The SPIRITS drawn to the Séance may seem welcome and good intentioned at first, but they are troubled and dangerous if kept in this world for too long.

THRESHOLD

THRESHOLD is your ability to resist the influence of SPIRITS. You begin each SUMMONING with 7 THRESHOLD. Whenever you receive a response from a SPIRIT, unless stated otherwise, lose 1 THRESHOLD as the SPIRIT takes interest in you and your connection with the SPIRIT WORLD.

If you have no THRESHOLD to lose when you ask a question, then you must roll on the RESTLESS SPIRIT table and suffer the FALLOUT once your question is answered:

ROLL	RESULT	FALLOUT
4-6	IT POSSESSES	Your lips part. You find yourself beginning to speak. You try to hold back the words, but they spill from you, unchecked and unbidden. <input type="checkbox"/> Reveal either your DARK DESIRE or DEEPEST SECRET. If you have already revealed both, you must re-roll until you get another result.
3	IT KNOWS YOU	Sudden knowledge fills your mind, cold and harsh like midwinter sun. A sickening epiphany. A revelation. <input type="checkbox"/> Pick another GUEST at random to lose 1 THRESHOLD. If this takes them below 3, they must reveal their DEEPEST SECRET or DARK DESIRE. Otherwise, or if they have already been revealed, invent a shameful event from their past and ask them to describe it.
2	IT HUNGERS	Something is wrong. You feel it. A sickness in your stomach as if you were just about to fall from great height. Sweat pricks on your palms. <input type="checkbox"/> The SPIRIT destroys something you love. Choose one of your TREASURES to be destroyed. Describe how it is lost to you. Rip apart or burn the card it is written on.
1	GOODBYE	The room begins to spin. An ill wind howls and you hear that distant bell toll for a thirteenth time. <input type="checkbox"/> The SPIRIT claims you. You are dragged from this world. Ask the other GUESTS to describe what they see. The séance is over, blow out all the candles and never speak of this again.



THE SÉANCE

When the twelfth bell sounds, darken the room and light the candles. Knock three times on hard wood and ask for a SPIRIT to make itself known. The room will grow cold. Do not take your eyes from the table - something is near.

To begin a SUMMONING, ask each GUEST to pull a card from their deck. The GUEST who pulls the lowest value card (see NUMBERS) loses 1 THRESHOLD. Ask them to describe how the SPIRIT makes itself known. Once the SPIRIT is present, take turns asking questions. Start with the GUEST with the lowest THRESHOLD and move left.

A SPIRIT'S relationship with our world complex and their hold on the world is one that ebbs like the guttering of candlelight in dead air. Their responses are not always easy to understand may need to be paraphrased, interpreted, or rearranged. The more specific you ask a spirit to be, the less accurate their response will be.

COMPLEX QUESTIONS

When you ask complicated questions, roll 2d6 and pick the highest to see how many cards are pulled. Each GUEST pulls a card from their own deck, starting with the QUESTIONER and moving left, until the required number of cards have been pulled.

The two highest value cards represent the SPIRIT'S answer. Combine the SINGLE meanings when interpreting the SPIRIT'S answer.

If the two highest value cards are from the same suit, read the DOUBLE meaning.

SUIT	SINGLE	DOUBLE
♥	Art, Creativity, Entertainment, Family, Friendship, Hope, Inspiration, Joy, Love, Loyalty Passion, Reincarnation, Succour	Anger, Betrayal, Destruction, Endings, Heartbreak, Loss, Loneliness, Lust, Mundanity, Obsession, Obstruction, Pain, Tragedy
♦	Change, Control, Courage Desire, Growth, Independence, Law, Prosperity, Satisfaction, Strength, Structure, Trust, Wealth	Chaos, Corruption, Decay, Deceit, Dishonesty, Envy, Fear, Greed, Hunger, Need, Poverty, Stagnation, Transgression, Weakness
♣	Collaboration, Comfort, Companionship, Consistency, Covenant, Faith, Justice, Knowledge, Peace, Prospects, Reunions, Unions, Wisdom	Conflict, Indiscretion, Injustice, Isolation, Naivety, Restlessness, Secrets, Separation, Setbacks, Tyranny, Uncertainty, Violence, War
♠	Completion, Cultivation, Diligence, Fertility, Luck, Manifestation, Morality, Perseverance, Rebellion Skill, Success, Talent, Willpower	Abolition, Adversity, Apathy, Conservatism, Disappearance, Emptiness, Exploitation, Incompetence, Incompletion Indolence, Misfortune, Tradition, Work

NUMBERS

When you ask the SPIRIT to draw you towards a number, pull two cards from your pack and pick the most reasonable result.

CARD	K	Q	J	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	A
RESULT	0	1000	100	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

When you ask the SPIRIT for a more complicated number, such as a date, roll 1d6 to see how many cards are pulled. Each GUEST pulls 1 card, starting with the QUESTIONER and moving left, until all the numbers are revealed.

How these numbers are combined may need to be interpreted to understand the SPIRIT'S answer.

LETTERS, WORDS, NAMES

When you ask the SPIRIT to draw you towards a letter, pull a card from your pack and roll 1d6 to find which letter it corresponds to.

CARD	K	Q	J	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	A
1-3	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
4-6	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

To be drawn towards a series of letters, roll 2d6 and pick the highest to see how many cards are pulled.

Each GUEST generates a letter as described above, starting with the QUESTIONER and moving left, until all the letters are revealed.

YES/NO QUESTIONS

Unlike other questions, receiving an answer for a YES/NO question does not result in a loss of THRESHOLD for the QUESTIONER. To ask a YES/NO question, roll the BLACK & WHITE dice together.

The dice that reads highest is the SPIRIT'S response. On a DOUBLE, the SPIRIT is angered and refuses to answer; the QUESTIONER loses 2 THRESHOLD.

- BLACK - FULL, POSITIVE, AFFIRMING, YES
- WHITE - EMPTY, NEGATIVE, CONFLICTING, NO



BANISHMENT

Keeping a SPIRIT in this world is hazardous. The longer they stay, the more dangerous they become. When you wish to BANISH the SPIRIT, roll 1d6 and say together:

Spirit, our business here is done. We banish you! We banish you!

On a 4-6, the BANISHMENT is successful - say GOODBYE. On a 3 or below, the SPIRIT refuses to leave. Reduce the result by 1 for every GUEST with less than 3 THRESHOLD.

If the SPIRIT refuses to leave, lower the THRESHOLD for all the GUESTS at the table by 1. Any GUESTS with 0 THRESHOLD must roll on the RESTLESS SPIRIT TABLE. Otherwise, the GUEST with the lowest THRESHOLD must roll. Once the result has been resolved, the SPIRIT leaves - say GOODBYE.

When you say GOODBYE, the SPIRIT is BANISHED and your Séance is ended. You may attempt another SUMMONING or turn on the lights and stoke the fires, for you will be getting no sleep this night.

