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[@deathbymage](#)

A custom [Dread](#) scenario based loosely on the Nickelodeon series "[Are You Afraid of the Dark?](#)"

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## Synopsis

It is October 3rd, 1991. You live in a small town of Fordsbury, where there is nothing to do, you go to school, sometimes work your part-time job. There was never anything exciting happening, until one day, one of your classmates noticed your boredom. They asked you if you liked scary stories, in fact, you love them. Your friend invites you to join them out the middle of the woods tonight, you would get to meet others like yourself. Before you're admitted, you must pass an initiation of some kind. When you reach the site, it is a circular arrangement of stone, logs, and rock. You hear familiar sounds and voices, but are kept blindfolded. You introduce yourself, and begin your tale. "Submitted for the approval of the Midnight Society, I call this story..."

## Not Your Standard Dread game...

Most traditional Dread games have a host and a group of players following a scenario. This primer serves as foundation for a different experience using the Dread system.

## The Cast

The player characters for *Are You Afraid of Dread* will start out as other members of the Midnight Society but will take roles within the story being told by the Newcomer.

- **Newcomer (The Leader)** - The Host shall play as the Newcomer to the Midnight Society. You are relatively new in town and haven't made a whole lot of friends in school yet. As the Host, you will have your own set of questions to answer along with the other players. In the campfire story, you're the leader of a group of friends when things get creepy one night.
- **The Bad Boy/Girl** - You're the bad boy/girl. You have a rough exterior, sometimes have a lousy attitude and sometimes don't work well with others but we know that's just a facade.
- **The Bookish** - You seldom appear anywhere without a book. You're well read and wish to see the world beyond this small town, but due to a previous trauma, your only solace is within the pages of your precious books.
- **The Popular** - You are Mr./Ms. Popular in school, though you actually loathe the fake facade you have to wear. Secretly wanting to be true to themselves and even move out of town.
- **The Rich** - You belong to a well established family, one of the richest families probably in several counties. People in school always remind you of your wealth and often are envious of you.
- **The Outcast** - You are the social outcast, considered odd or weird by most of your peers, except here. Sometimes silent, but when you're placed in front to tell a story, you become a different person.

## Optional Cast

This version of Dread supports up to eight players or you may switch out certain characters for another. You may use these characters if you have more players, read the later sections regarding advice for larger groups.

- **The Orphan** - You are an orphan and live with your grandparents in town. Your parents died in a traumatizing car accident but you do not have any memory of it.
- **The Goofball** - You are the class clown, often the center of attention besides the Popular. Your humor is often a reliable source of good cheer. But you harbor a secret.

## Non-Player Characters (NPCs)

- **The Principal** - A man in his mid-fifties that runs Fordsbury High School. Stubborn, strict with conservative views.

- **The Rich Family** - The Rich kid's family, considerably wealthy across several counties. Chose to live in small town due to cheap land. Family's business is somewhat secretive.
- **The Sheriff** - Fordsbury's Sheriff, also in his mid-fifties but is hoping for an early retirement from this small, quiet town.

## **The Opposition/Quest**

### **The Dreadman**

The Dreadman is an elusive shadowy force, taking on the form of the player's fears. If it were to have a form, it would often be a slender human-like figure with an obscured face. The features are always blurred, until it assumes a frightful form. It kidnaps children to feed on their fears until they become empty husks. The husks eventually morph and become a Dreadman.

The Dreadman crafts a pocket dimension, often in the form of a house it can truly take any shape. From a fun house, video game arcade, a library/bookstore, a cemetery, Ideally, the Dreadman uses this dimension to feed off those it ensnares.

When children either have the sensation or become "lost", the Dreadman arrives and lures its victims. The objective is for the kids to escape from the Dreadworld.

## **Locations**

### **Fordsbury**

- Small town
- Contains Fordsbury High School where all the players frequent
- Town contains a cemetery, hospital, old church, a town library, an antique shop, and an old theater.
- The Rich's mansion estate sits near the edge of the town, overlooking from a small hillside
- Main St. divides the town east and west, with Center St. dividing the north and south quadrants.

### **The Dreadworld**

- Shadowy version of the real world, centrally the town of Fordsbury
- Dim and poorly light.
- Sound echoes until inside of a structure where it becomes muffled.
- The world seems to be cast in perpetual night, BUT the Dreadworld can give the illusion of daylight if it meant to fool its victim
- The Dreadworld reshapes the space to fit whatever is needed.
- Spatial loop, if necessary, the region will loop back onto itself.

### **Two Modes of Play**

Dread can be played in multiple different ways and provides an interesting medium for telling scary stories. Presented for your approval, are two modes of gameplay: **Campfire** and **Dread Society**. Campfire is a single session game where the host and the players take the reins of the narrative. Dread Society is a multi-session play of Dread, wherein the Host regularly changes between games and performs their normal function as per the Dread rules. It's highly encouraged to have a fake campfire nearby, for ambiance.

## Story Structure

The Host takes on the role of the Newcomer, brand new to the area of Fordsbury. The players take on roles within the Host's story, mirroring their Fordsbury counterpart. The story is set in a small town reminiscent of Fordsbury.

### Setting/Backstory

*Share this with the other players before starting play (after questionnaires is fine)*

- It's autumn, the leaves have already turned red and orange, the temperatures outside have already cooled
- Everyone is a student in Fordsbury High School
- The Newcomer has moved into town for about two weeks.
- The Newcomer is brought by one of the other players as a prospective new recruit to the Midnight Society, a group of kids with a love for telling scary stories.
- The Newcomer is blindfolded and led into the campfire site, they introduce themselves and begins the tell their tale.

## Campfire Gameplay

### Tower of Dread Setup

After assembling the Tower of Dread, each player pulls two blocks and adds them to their supply to power their Laments. The Host pulls last, placing their blocks on top of the Tower instead. After each collapse of the Tower, reassemble the Tower, adding back the tiles from the removed player's supply.

### How to Get the Game Started...

*"Submitted for the approval of the Midnight Society, I call this story: The Tale of Dread"*

- Host will begin to recite the introduction of a story, as the story progresses, the Host will introduce and bring up characters (the players) in this story.
- The players characters are characters in the Newcomer's story being told to the Society.
- The Tale of Dread starts in Fordsbury's High School.
- Describe a typical day in school, allow the players to be featured, ask them about their morning habits/routines/rituals they would perform while at/near the school in the morning?
- The host shall pass the reins of Active Storyteller (AS) to another player either nominating another player or a player may take the initiative and place a block on the Events & Locales table. In either case, the new Active Storyteller must place one of the blocks in their cache on the table.
- Use the Wants & Things table to help guide or inspire the Active Storytellers during gameplay. Active Storytellers can contribute their own blocks, or another player may add their own block to help the AS drive the story.
- Players can only be the Active Storyteller once in the entire game.
- Players with their characters removed from the game (the Tower of Dread collapsed) can still be nominated as the Active Storyteller.
- The Active Storyteller will progress the narrative with the living characters.

- The Active Storyteller can nominate another player, taking their block off the Events & Locales table and the new appointed AS can place one of their blocks on table. The new appointed AS must have blocks to place on the Events & Locales table.

### **Twists & Turns**

- After half of the total number of players has had an opportunity to lead the story through the Events & Locales and Wants & Things tables, the reins of the narrative return to the Host temporarily, who introduces the Dreadman.
- Consult the Twists & Turns table after the Host passes the narrative again to another player. This table serves as a narrative limitation that should encourage creativity. The players will vote on a category that adds as creative twist to the entire narrative. The context of the twist is left the Active Storyteller after the Host introduces the Dreadman.
- Active and inactive players vote on the table using their blocks. If a player does not have any blocks to vote, they must endure the Dread that awaits them.

### **Ending the Game...**

*"I declare this meeting of the Midnight Society closed."*

- Each player should be given one turn to be the Active Storyteller by the end of the game.
- The Host aids in leading the story, adding elements along with the players. As play continues, the Tower will fall at least once or twice.
- Using the Twists & Turns table to help the Active Storyteller to reach a conclusion.

### **Tips for the Host**

- Always help to keep the story moving, if the players are stuck, offer suggestions.
- You, as the Newcomer, can die. Remember that.
- If the Tower of Dread falls, it's advised that you help narrate the fate that befalls the player who caused its collapse. If the Active Storyteller has an ending in mind for the player, let them tell it. Sometimes it's more grim than yours.

### **Campfire Etiquette**

- Be respectful to other players.
- Being a jerk as your character is one thing, but keep it tame.
- Avoid narrative dead-ends and no-win scenarios.
- Remember there are other players who will add to the story, leave some loose ends.
- The Host retains the authority to request and tempt for pulls.
- Everyone is trying to help tell this amazing story.
- Have fun!

## **Dread Society**

### **Rotating Host - Multiple Sessions**

- This mode assumes multiple sessions of Dread games. Each session can be either self-contained narratives or broken into parts.
- The host changes each session with either a prearranged order or nomination from the previous host.

- You may use the character questionnaires presented (excluding the Newcomer/Host) in your narratives.
- You may use other scenarios whether published or homebrewed.
- The principle idea is to allow different players to have opportunity to play and host but across full-length game sessions as opposed to during the session as per Campfire gameplay.
- Treat the experience as if you're a society of friends committed to sharing scary stories, submitting them for their approval and closing each gathering in a ceremonious fashion.

## **Tips for Running the Game**

- The concept is largely inspired from Are You Afraid of the Dark? It's best to have seen or watched a few episodes of the series. Players are encouraged to watch an episode or two to understand the atmosphere of the game and the flow of this scenario.
- Having all six original roles plus the Newcomer for Campfire Gameplay is ideal but not necessary. A smaller group is fine, though it's suggested that for a group smaller than 4 players that the Twists & Turns table be issued after each of the players have had an opportunity to be the Active Storyteller. Then after the Dreadman is introduced, the Host may nominate a new Active Storyteller again. In other words, but the end of the game, each player should have been the AS at least twice.
- In situations where you use all the characters (a group of 6-8), you as the Host may need to moderate the Active Storyteller nomination depending on the mood/situation of the table. Make sure to let the players know prior to game start that such an action can happen. The Twist & Turns table should definitely be implemented once the 4th Active Storyteller finishes their segment.
- Ideally, the questionnaires are best done at the start of the game instead of other Dread scenarios done before the session. The Host should take notes and read over the responses from the players prior to the start of the narrative.
- You may combine roles even, the goofball and the orphan create an interesting combination.
- The *Ask the Others* questions should be asked to the group from each respective questionnaire.
- While the Tower is inherently unstable with the loss of blocks from setup, early pulls help establish the tension of the game. The tension of the game should reach a high point by the time the second or third Active Storyteller takes the reins. It is not surprising to have one or even two players already removed prior to the Twist & Turns stage.
- Due to the large amount of variety and options, the scenario can happen in a multitude of different ways. While the Events & Locales tables serve more as a guideline, it's encouraged to draft additional venues and locations as well.
- The Wants & Things table provides ideas to help drive the narrative, especially if your players are not accustomed to being storytellers or leading a story. The table is really optional and just a helpful guide.
- Be willing to improvise based on the mood/tension of the table, how much time you may have, and always remember that you're trying to invoke fear in your players. This advice is something to be shared with your players prior to the game, not just reserved for the Host.
- The scenario is set around 1991, but you can adjust that to fit your needs. Ideally, the early 1990s is a good timeframe for your story. I highly encourage your players to dress up as their characters, have 90's snacks, listen to some music to help inspire them. Even toys, especially electronic gadgets if you still have any.
- It's encouraged to have ambient music, haunted house soundtracks. If you can find the Are You Afraid of the Dark theme song, that would be a great as a introduction.

### **The Newcomer (Host)**

- Who among your companions gave you a hard time on your first day of school?
- Why did you and your family move to Fordsbury?
- What do you miss most from your old city life?
- Why does the Dreadman seem familiar? What form does it take for you?
- Who among your companions would you save if in danger and why?
- *Ask the Others:* Which among you think me (the Newcomer) is a dead weight and should be left behind? Why do you feel guilty?



## **The Bad Boy/Girl**

- Despite the rumors, you never actually did anything regarding “the Incident”, why do people believe the rumors?
- What happened in “the Incident”? Who was involved?
- Your family has separated with one of them leaving town. Why have you never contacted one of your parents?
- You found something in the [cemetery | old church | antique shop], but if anyone found out, you would be in big trouble. What did you find?
- How has your appearance changed over the years?
- *Ask the Others:* Which among betrayed my trust in our childhood (excluding the Newcomer/Host)?

## **The Bad Boy/Girl’s Lament**

You may add any block you pull to remain untouched, unharmed, and unscathed to your supply.

Whenever the consequences of abandoning a pull would leave you injured or trapped, you may place a block from your cache atop the Tower of Dread to be left for dead instead.

## **The Bookish**

- Why do you love reading books? What genre and why?
- Where is your favorite spot to read in the old town library?
- What do you wear in public when you wish to remain unseen and ignored?
- What trauma did you experience years before that has led you find solace in your books?
- What book is always nearby or on your person?
- *Ask the Others:* Who else among you likes reading the same genre of books as me and why?

## **The Bookish's Lament**

Whenever you are offered to pull to inquire on knowledge or utilize knowledge from your genre, you may place a block from your supply atop the Tower of Dread instead.

You can place someone else in harm's way, you do so with a pull. The Host may tempt you with a pull(s) to do so unsuspected. You may add all pulls made for this cause to your supply.

## The Popular

- What makes you the most popular person in school and what foul act have you done to preserve this facade? To whom did you commit this act?
- Who only knows the real you, outside your popular facade, as a person? What have you confided with them?
- What is your favorite lucky charm? What's the story behind it?
- How do you make an entrance?
- You hate your popular facade and want to leave town. Where would you go?
- *Ask the Others:* Who among you do I feel threatened to usurping me in popularity?

## The Popular's Lament

Whenever you attempt to retain or preserve your fake Popular facade, you have to make a pull(s). You add any blocks pulled to your supply.

Whenever the Host tempts you with a pull to use your charms or your connections through your popularity to overcome an obstacle, you may place a block from your supply atop the Tower of Dread instead.

## **The Rich**

- What unethical acts did your family commit to amass their fortune? Why is the town resentful of your family?
- Who do you trust and won't judge you for your wealth? Why?
- A statue dedicated to your family is somewhere in town, what shape does it have and where?
- Why do you trust the Newcomer/Host and what did you promise them?
- What is your most beloved and precious possession?
- *Ask the Others:* Which among you deeply resents me and my family?

## **The Rich's Lament**

The Host may tempt you with a pull to use your family's wealth to overcome an obstacle or to avoid wasteful actions, or you if you wish to overcoming an obstacle using your wealth. You may place a block from your supply on top of the Tower of Dread instead of pulling.

Whenever you negotiating or making a deal, pull a block and ask the Host what the price must be paid. You may pay the price, if you wish. You add the block pulled to initiate the deal to your supply..

## **The Outcast**

- Where is your favorite hangout spot in town? What is your secret, guilty pleasure that others may find weird? Who else knows about your spot?
- What made you and the Newcomer friends on their first day of school?
- What sort of injury did you receive years ago that left you unable to perform in physical activities? Who was responsible?
- How do you blend in and go unnoticed by the public?
- *Ask the Others:* Which among you thinks I'm weird and odd?

## **The Outcast's Lament**

The Host may tempt you with a pull to go unnoticed or overlooked, you may place a block from your supply on top of the Tower of Dread instead of pulling.

Whenever you see something that relates to your guilty pleasure, you may pull to steal or claim it. You add any blocks pulled from this event to your cache.

## **The Orphan**

- How old were you when your parents died in a traumatic car accident? Why can you not remember it?
- What did the Newcomer do (whether in school or in town) to validate you as a person?
- How often do you have nightmares when you sleep? What are the dreams about?
- There is a scar on your body from the car accident, where is it and describe it.
- What keepsake from your parents do you still own and cherish?
- *Ask the Others:* Which among you do I resent and why?

## **The Orphan's Lament**

Whenever you would pull to remain undisturbed by something gory or supernatural, you place blocks from your supply on top of the Tower of Dread instead.

Whenever you need directions to a place or find the best route for an escape, you may pull to resolve this objective. The Host may tempt you with additional pulls to overcome physical obstacles, impediments, or obstructions. You add any blocks pulled in this manner to your cache.

## **The Goofball**

- What do you do to always make people laugh? What is your routine?
- What do you find funny about the Newcomer?
- Why must you always remain upbeat and hopeful? Why is humor such an effective defense mechanism for you?
- Why do you lie? Who always seems to know you're lying?
- *Ask the Others:* Which among you do I see as ungrateful?

## **The Goofball's Lament**

Whenever you pull to lie or deceive someone, you place blocks from your supply on top of the Tower of Dread instead of pulling.

When you see someone afraid or angry, you may dissolve it and cheer them back up with a pull. The Host may tempt you with additional pulls to lower the emotional states. You add any blocks pulled in this manner to your supply.

## ARE YOU AFRAID OF DREAD?

Drive the Story: Place blocks from your cache on the tables to change story elements.

Beware, you do not get these back until another player places their own blocks.

## EVENTS & LOCALES

*ACTIVE STORYTELLER MUST PLACE ONE OF THEIR BLOCKS ON A LOCALE*

### **THE HOSPITAL**

- The emergency room
- Nurse's station
- Empty hallway

### **THE CEMETERY**

- The lonely tombstone
- The old tree
- The masoleum

### **THE OLD CHURCH**

- The ornate altar
- Outside in the church grounds
- The forgotten well

### **THE ANTIQUE SHOP**

- The back alleyway
- Inside the shop
- The mysterious backroom

### **THE HIGH SCHOOL**

- The gymnasium
- The silent halls
- The Principal's Office

### **THE OLD THEATER**

- The concierge & main hall
- The seats & the main stage
- The backstage

### **THE TOWN LIBRARY**

- The librarian's desk
- Fiction & Non-fiction
- References & News Archive

### **THE FAIRGROUNDS**

- The house of mirrors
- The roller coaster & tilt-a-whirl
- The Hall of Oddities

### **THE OLD HOUSE**

- The piano room
- The attic
- The basement

### **THE TOWN SQUARE**

- The old statue of the Founder
- The memorial
- The bus stop



## ARE YOU AFRAID OF DREAD?

Drive the Story: Place blocks from your cache on the tables to change story elements.

Beware, you do not get these back until another player places their own blocks.

## WANTS & THINGS

PLACE A BLOCK ON BOTH COLUMNS (IF ABLE). BELOW ARE SUGGESTIONS, ASKING YOUR HOST COSTS ONE BLOCK.

### **WANT TO GET OUT**

- ... *a family obligation*
- ... *a crashed vehicle*
- ... *from detention*

### **WANT TO GET EVEN**

- ... *with the bully*
- ... *with the one who betrayed you*
- ... *on the family or family member*

### **WANT TO BE RESPECTED**

- ... *from someone I love*
- ... *from my friends*
- ... *from the townsfolk*

### **WANT TO GET INTO TROUBLE**

- ... *with the law*
- ... *with my parents*
- ... *because I can*

### **WANT TO HIDE**

- ... *from people*
- ... *from the bully*
- ... *from my family*

### **SOMETHING LOST**

- A family heirloom
- A treasure map
- A key

### **SOMETHING NEW**

- A new Sony Walkman
- A doll
- A computer

### **SOMETHING OLD**

- A record player
- A photograph
- A clock

### **SOMETHING VALUABLE**

- A piece of jewelry
- A painting
- A deed

### **SOMETHING STRANGE**

- An book with weird symbols
- A two-faced coin
- A monkey's paw

### ARE YOU AFRAID OF DREAD?

Drive the Story: Place blocks from your cache on the tables to change story elements.

Beware, you do not get these back until another player places their own blocks.

### TWISTS & TURNS

*OTHER PLAYERS PLACE BLOCKS FROM THEIR CACHE TO DIRECT STORY. A CATEGORY WITH THE MOST BLOCKS SHOULD BE UTILIZED BY ACTIVE STORYTELLER. THE HOST BREAKS ALL TIES.*

**SUDDEN FRIGHT**

**HAUNTED**

**BLAST FROM THE PAST**

**SOMETHING COMES...**

**INNOCENCE** (LOST/GAINED, STORYTELLER'S CHOICE)

**A MISTAKE IS MADE...**

**GUILT**

**BETRAYAL**

## **Feedback**

If you have any feedback on this scenario, please reach out to me on Twitter: [@deathbymage](https://twitter.com/deathbymage) or email me at [archmage@deathbymage.com](mailto:archmage@deathbymage.com).

I would love to improve this scenario.

## **Credits**

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