

Devil's Dreams

a game for the #folklorejam

*No boughs have withered because of the wintry wind;
The boughs have withered because I have told them my
dreams.*
-wb yeats

concept, aim, tone & subject matter

- This is a story game for 2 or more players, in which they share their characters' dreams as they trade news at a meeting spot.
- Telling another person about your dreams can be a mixed experience; but let's imagine if your dream was somehow a foretelling of the future, and demonstrated to be so after a time. How does this change you, and your community?
- By default, I imagine this to be a serious game of revelation, secrets and drama. Individual dreams might be comical or hit some other tone, but please discuss as a group.
- Set in rural Ireland at the turn of the 20th Century, this may raise issues of women's rights, the flexibility of tradition, the clash between folklore and religion, the position of the Church and the power of British rule.

safety

Use [Script Change](#) as a safety toolbox. Discard any card you draw for another from the deck if you do not like the prompt for any reason.

preparation

You'll need to prepare a small deck of Tarot cards, made up of the Major Arcana. Set aside Judgement and The Devil, and then randomly take more cards so that you'll have three per player including the two you set aside. Don't look at them. Shuffle them together with Judgement and The Devil to create the Dream Deck.



gameplay

During each of the three rounds, each player will describe a dream their character had to another under the tree at the crossroads or village pump.

Draw a card from the Dream Deck pausing for a moment to consider how you might evoke that response from those who hear your tale. Tell the tale of your dream, playing through the reaction, but make sure to hold something back. What does your character not say about their dream?

If your character is being told the dream, show their outward reaction and response to it. But also tell us what they are thinking to themselves, what history of their family, the village and area is brought to mind by it. The other players then narrate any developments in the village hinted at by the dream.

The next character tells their dream, and then keep going around the table until everyone has done so.

the devil & judgement

Depending on when these two cards show up, the tenor and mood of the game may change dramatically. Drawing **the fool** will protect your character from **the devil**!

aftermath

A few days after the first tale, some of the tree withers, its leaves turning brown in a too-early sign of Autumn; no one would be able to tell whose dream caused it. By the end the tree is completely dead.

While some of the longer-term events of your dreams may not have happened yet, consider how your place in the community is changed by all this; and whether your opinion of yourself and your place in the world has been altered...let the other players give you their thoughts on that as well.

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THE MAJOR ARCANA

- 0 - **THE FOOL**: those who hear your tale think there's no harm in it, no matter how superstitious they might be or how much they might disapprove of anything. In fact, this is even proof against the **devil** himself.
- 1 - **THE MAGICIAN**: those who hear you take a lesson from your dream. Do they believe you are the originator of that wisdom or does it echo with something they've heard from their own grandparents?
- 2 - **THE HIGH PRIESTESS**: some secret is discerned from your dream, whether or not you mean it. Whose is it? What questions does it raise?
- 3 - **THE EMPRESS**: some portent of birth or pregnancy is seen in your dream. Has someone else heard recent news? Or is there some darker news?
- 4 - **THE EMPEROR**: the dream hints at some decision (future or past) of an authority figure. Does it hint at some secret or surprising motivation?
- 5 - **THE HIEROPHANT**: the dream recalls a point made from the pulpit by the Priest. Does it lampoon him, or reinforce the sermon?
- 6 - **THE LOVERS**: what temptation of the heart does the dream unveil? Is there a difficult choice involved or has that ship already sailed?
- 7 - **THE CHARIOT**: a well-known conflict in the parish is unmistakable from the dream's telling. Is vengeance or final victory near?
- 8 - **JUSTICE**: the dream shows a desire for a balanced decision. But has the deserving triumphed in front of the law or has there been an unjust ruling?
- 9 - **THE HERMIT**: some future mischief is seen in the dream. Do they take heed of this and act with prudence, or does it stoke fear?
- 10 - **WHEEL OF FORTUNE**: the dream promises sudden change. But who in the village is struck by fair luck or misfortune in the coming days and who is responsible?
- 11 - **STRENGTH**: whatever lion is tamed in the dream; someone shows fortitude in the coming days. Is it courageous and magnanimous or the abuse of power?
- 12 - **THE HANGED MAN**: those who hear it are haunted by this tale of a crucifixion. Who has gone through great sacrifice for their people and is it worth it or ruined by selfishness?
- 13 - **DEATH**: A dream of revolution, of freedom from the old ways affects people in different ways. But when a local luminary dies, what do people say at the wake?
- 14 - **TEMPERANCE**: What dream of moderation could the poor wish for? Frugality is a necessity, hardly a virtue; does the priest damn those who do not live up to his ideal?
- 15 - **JUDGEMENT**: the local priest saw the meeting, and something about it stuck in his mind. Maybe someone has broken a confidence, or perhaps he's always had his misgivings. He knows it was you that caused this. How do we see this impact your life in the village?
- 16 - **THE TOWER**: What ruin is foretold in the dream? When it arrives, what is the extent of the misery caused and was it due to some great adversity or negligence?
- 17 - **THE STAR**: A high and mighty person gets their comeuppance in the dream. Is their arrogance unveiled in an imminent loss, or do they have even brighter prospects?
- 18 - **THE MOON**: the dream unmasks some animal instinct within the dreamer. What primal fear comes to pass, or how do they manifest this instability in the days to come?
- 19 - **THE SUN**: those who hear this dream are warmed by the pure happiness it evokes. What current struggle do you want a positive outcome to?
- 20 - **THE DEVIL**: has heard your dream and you have gained his attention. He follows you home. Your dreams take on a darker, sensual quality. How do we see this affect your behaviour?
- 21 - **THE WORLD**: whatever the subject of the dream, it is an opportunity to pass on your hard-won wisdom to the others. Whatever lesson you wish to be taken from it surely will be.