

Noons

*two games about death on
the frontier*



Matthew R.F. Balousek

Credits

Matthew R.F. Balousek makes games, interactive fiction, bread, bots, and bad jokes. He invented gold and founded the New Frontier School of Goldsmithing, which celebrated its ninetieth year of operation last spring.

You can find his games at <http://mrfb.itch.io>. You can contact him via email at mbalousek@gmail.com or via twitter at [@mrfb](https://twitter.com/mrfb).

The cover illustration is by **Amanda Wolfe**. You can find her work at <http://facebook.com/amanda.jm.wolfe>.

Content Note

hate-motivated violence

Things You'll Need

4 to 10 players—a small gang. This game will ask players to make simple gestures with their hands, and hold those gestures for an extended period of time.

20 minutes of play time—give or take.

Scraps of paper or index cards—optional.

About Noons

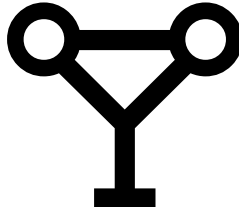
This is a game in two parts. The two parts are meant to be played in one sitting, one after the other. The game as a whole is designed to be read aloud to the group and played one section at a time. There's no need to read ahead.

Italicized text indicates an action on the part of the person reading or the group.

Turn the page, then hand this book to the person on your left to read aloud.

Part I

The Showdown at Low Noon



It's eleven in the evening at The Dead Stallion.

In the corner there are a few people having a hushed conversation. A card game is in progress in the middle of the room. Several strangers stroll in through the saloon door and take a seat at the bar.

One hour until last call.

The bulge of a wooden stake under a leather vest. The glint of a brass badge in the candlelight. A toothy smile peeking out from under a dark hat.

At the stroke of midnight, a fight will break out. **The Showdown at Low Noon** is a game about answering the question: who participates, and who lives?

Turn the page, then hand this book to the person on your left to read aloud.

Let's Dance

There are three kinds of people in The Dead Stallion, each with a signature gesture:

Hunters have all kinds of tools that they employ in their craft of destroying the vile undead.

Make the gesture of the Hunter by crumpling your hand into a fist, as if holding tight a wooden stake.

Deputies tend to wear some sign of their office on their person, be it a badge or a silver revolver.

Make the gesture of the Deputy by holding out a flattened hand, as if saying "Stop!"

Vampires often cover themselves in dark clothing to hide their sickly-looking skin.

Make the gesture of the Vampire by making a peace sign, then curving your fingers to make a pair of fangs.

Each player will take on one of these roles for the rest of the game. When asked a question about yourself, answer as the particular character you're enacting would answer.

Every player makes a gesture¹ of their choice, keeping it concealed until instructed to reveal it.

The player who watched a movie depicting the life or death of a vampire most recently goes first.

Hand this book to the first player.

¹ Alternatively, players can write the name of their role down on an index card or piece of paper.

Criminal World

On your turn, carry out one action from the list below, then pass the book to the player on your left.

1. **Broadcast.** You do something to pass the time.

Narrate something your character does that everyone can see.

2. **Observe.** You examine someone from across the room.

Point to another player. Name something about that player's character you might be able to see and ask the other player to describe it.

3. **Interrogate.** You engage someone in conversation, opening yourself up in kind.

Point to another player. Ask their character a question. They can answer in any way, and then ask you a question in kind. Answer their question truthfully.

4. **Step Outside.** This may not be chosen on your first turn. Once one player chooses this, the bar closes and the characters all step outside. The next phase of the game begins.

Turn the page and hand the book to the person on your left to read aloud.

Midnight in a Perfect World

The last call has gone out, and the patrons all step outside.

Starting with the person holding this book and going to the left, carry out the following:

1. **Identify friends or foes.** Imminent danger lurks outside. Who is it coming from, and who has your back?

Point to another player. Tell them what you think they are and how you know that.

After everyone has made a claim, players all reveal their gestures.

There should be at least one Vampire and at least one Hunter present among the players. If this is not the case, start the game over from the beginning.

Hand the book to the player on your left.

Without You

On your turn, carry out the action that corresponds with your role, then pass the book to the player on your left.

1. **Hunters slay.** Hunters use the tools at their disposal to remove a Vampire from the world.

Point to a Vampire. Describe what you use to kill them. That player is removed from the game.

2. **Deputies kill.** Deputies draw their revolvers and kill on the spot.

Point to a Hunter or a Vampire. Describe who you save by shooting them. That player is removed from the game.

3. **Vampires feast.** Vampires devour the Hunters, bones and all.

Point to a Hunter. Describe what supernatural ability you use to destroy them. That player is removed from the game.

The game ends if a.) there are no Vampires in the game or b.) there are no Hunters. One of the living Vampires or living Hunters may give a rousing speech.

After the game has ended, players should decide if they would like to a.) play this game again from the beginning or b.) continue to Part II on the next page.

Part II

The Riot at High Noon



It's a few minutes before noon outside the Doodlebug.

A crowd is gathering. Curious eyes peer from behind closed blinds. Strangers stroll down a perimeter at the end of the street.

This silence won't last much longer.

Hastily-written banners. Shouts of dismay. The glint of a brass badge in the sunlight.

At the stroke of noon, violence will break out. **The Riot at High Noon** is a game about answering the question: who participates, and who lives?

Turn the page, then hand this book to the person on your left to read aloud.

Let's Dance

There are three kinds of people outside the Doodlebug, each with a signature gesture:

Bigots

Make the gesture of the bigot by crumpling your hand into a fist, as if holding tight a wooden bat.

Allies

Make the gesture of the ally by holding out a flattened hand, as if saying "Stop!"

Queers

Make the gesture of the queer by making a peace sign, as if to yearn for a life uncomplicated by oppression.

Every player makes a gesture² corresponding with the one they had during the last game of The Showdown at Low Noon, keeping it concealed until instructed to reveal it.

The player who watched a movie depicting the life or death of a queer person most recently goes first.

Hand this book to the first player.

² If players wrote their gestures down on paper, write the corresponding role on the other side of the paper.

Midnight in a Perfect World

Starting with the person holding this book and going to the left, carry out the following:

1. **Broadcast.** In uncertain and dangerous times, make your position clear.

Reveal your gesture. Tell the other players why you are what you are.

Once everyone has spoken, turn the page and hand the book to the player on your left.

Without You

On your turn, carry out the action that corresponds with your role, then pass the book to the player on your left.

1. Bigots

Point to a queer. That player is removed from the game.

2. Allies

Point to a bigot or a queer. That player is removed from the game.

3. Queers

Point to a bigot. That player is removed from the game.

The game ends if a.) there are no queers in the game or b.) there are no bigots. One of the living queers or living bigots may give a rousing speech or a somber memorial.



How do I know I can trust you?

June 12, 2017
Santa Cruz, CA