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Game: **CTHULHU: DEATH MAY DIE**

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Peter 'Universal Head' Gifford
The Esoteric Order of Gamers





SETUP

Set out the **story board**, tokens, and dice.

Choose an **Elder One**. Place the elder one figure on the starting space of the **summoning track**. Place the **minions reference card** on the story board. Set out the 8 **mythos cards** and any tokens. Place the Elder One **stage cards** in order, faceup, on the story board (stage 1 on top).

Choose an **episode**. Take its 8 **mythos cards**, 15 **discovery cards**, **episode card**, and tokens. Place the **monsters reference cards** on the story board. Take out all the figures for the enemies shown on the reference cards (other monsters aren't used).

Set up the **map board** according to the instructions on the back of the episode card, arranging the map tiles and setting enemy figures and tokens on the indicated spaces. Then, turn over the episode card and place it on the story board.

Shuffle the 16 **mythos cards** together and place them facedown. Shuffle the **episode discovery deck** and place it facedown.

Each player selects an **investigator board** and its figure. Attach a colored base of your choice to the figure. Place the figures on the starting space for the episode. In a 1 player game, choose 2 investigators and control both, alternating turns with them.

Place the 6 **tentacle markers** of your color on your investigator board: 3 on the first level of your skills, and the other 3 in the leftmost spaces of the **wound**, **stress** and **sanity** tracks.

Shuffle the **insanity cards** and deal 1 to each player, returning the rest to the box. Place your card, faceup, near your investigator boards.

Randomly determine a **starting player**, who takes the mythos deck and will take the first turn. Read out the flavour text on the episode card before starting the game.

Enemies refers to cultists, monsters, and the Elder One (once it's summoned to the board). Any enemy that's not a cultist or the Elder One is a **monster**. Anything that refers to cultists affects cultists only. Anything that refers to monsters affects monsters only. Anything that refers to the Elder One affects the Elder One only.

In general and unless stated otherwise, you may choose an option that will have no effect due to component availability.

TURN SEQUENCE

1. TAKE 3 ACTIONS

On your turn, you may take 3 actions. You may take the same action more than once. There are 4 actions that are available in every episode and 2 that are unique to each episode.

Some actions can only be done while on a **safe** space (a space without enemies).

RUN

Move up to 3 spaces. You can only move between spaces if there is a passage on both tiles (as indicated by arrows on both sides). You may also pass between 2 spaces that both have a staircase or tunnel token.

There is no limit to the number of figures that may occupy each space.

When you leave a space with enemies, all enemies in that space follow you to your new space (even if there were other investigators in your space).

When you leave a space with fire tokens, place 1 fire token from the reserve onto your investigator board for each token on the space (leave the tokens on the space untouched).

ATTACK

Target a single enemy in your space and make a roll. Each success rolled causes 1 wound to your target. For each tentacle, you lose 1 sanity.

Place wound tokens next to the base of the figure you attacked. If this number equals (or exceeds) their health, you kill them; remove their figure from the board. If the Elder One is on the board, it can only be attacked once the ritual is disrupted.

REST (ONLY ON A SAFE SPACE)

If you are in a **safe** space, you may **heal your stress and/or health** up to 3 spaces in total (in any combination). You may perform the rest action more than once per turn. **Sanity cannot be healed by resting.**

TRADE

You and all investigators in your space may **trade any number of items or companions** with each other (giving or receiving). Some discovery cards have items or companions on both left and right sides of the card, but a traded card must remain on the same side as it was originally. You may not trade conditions.

EPISODE ACTIONS

Each episode has 2 **unique actions** on the episode card. These work just like the standard actions.

2. DRAW MYTHOS CARD

Draw the top mythos card from the deck and resolve it, then place it on a faceup discard pile.

The *Recurring Trauma* insanity has an investigator keep a previously drawn mythos card in front of them.

Mythos cards may have several different steps to them, divided into 3 types. You must perform these steps in order, from top to bottom, before discarding the card. If you can't perform a step on the card, skip it and move on to the next.

ELDER ONE SUMMONING

This symbol has no effect when the card is drawn, but may cause the Elder One to advance on its track at the end of the turn. If the card has this symbol, make sure it remains visible when it is discarded.

SPECIAL EFFECTS

Unless otherwise stated, these effects only affect the player whose turn it is, ignoring all other investigators. Any choice that needs to be made is up to the active player.

When an effect moves an enemy towards a space, count how many spaces the enemy would move in all possible paths, and choose the shortest one. On a tie, the active player chooses. The enemy must always be moved as much as allowed towards its target, but stops when it reaches its target.

SUMMON ENEMIES

Some cards indicate a gate color and the specific enemy that must be summoned there. If you have the corresponding figure available in reserve, place it on the indicated space. Otherwise, ignore this step. If there are multiple gates and enemies indicated, perform the summonings in order. Skip any remaining gates if you are out of figures.

3. INVESTIGATE OR FIGHT

If you are in a **safe** space, you must **INVESTIGATE** your space:

Draw the top card of the discovery deck and read the text in the center box aloud. If the deck is depleted you cannot investigate anymore.

If you must choose an option, you cannot one that requires you to take stress if you don't have the required amount of stress to take.

Claiming a companion, item, or condition means you slide the card under your investigator board on the appropriate side. There is no limit to the number of cards you can have.

Using a discovery card does not require an action. If it's not specified when you may use one, it may be used anytime during your turn; however they can never be used while resolving another card, effect, or during a roll.

Any wounds you take may be applied to **companions** you currently have instead. This still counts as you taking wounds for card effects. **Companions can never be healed.** If their wounds equal the number on their card, they are discarded and any benefit they give you is immediately lost. Companions may also give you a level in a skill. If you don't have that skill, you gain level 1 in that skill while you have this companion with you (take the corresponding token). If you already have the skill, move the skill level marker 1 level forward. If you lose the companion, move the marker back 1 level.

If you are **not** in a **safe** space, the enemies **FIGHT** you:

Do not draw a discovery card. Instead, **each enemy in your space attacks you in the order you choose** (they ignore other investigators), until all enemies in your space that could attack you have done so.

If an effect makes you enter a space of an enemy, or an enemy enters your space during this phase, that enemy attacks you even if it was not in your space at the beginning of this phase. If an enemy that was in your space leaves your space, it doesn't attack you anymore.

DEFENDING AGAINST ENEMIES

When an enemy attacks you, roll the number and type of dice as shown on their reference card. **Each success gives you 1 wound.** **Each tentacle costs you 1 sanity.** Elder sign symbols only have an effect if the enemy has the ability to use them. You may use **stress** to reroll these dice and you may use any of your skills to help avoid or minimize the attack.

4. RESOLVE END OF TURN

1. END OF TURN EFFECTS

Any effects that happen at the end of turn, except for Elder One effects, happen now, in any order the active player chooses.

2. FIRE!

At the end of your turn, roll 1 standard die for every **fire token** on your investigator board. You may use **stress** to reroll dice. Take 1 wound for each success and lose 1 sanity for each tentacle. Then discard all fire tokens on your investigator board.

Enemies don't catch fire when leaving a space with fire tokens.

If you need to add a fire token to the board but there are none left, ignore the effect. If you need to add one to your investigator board but there are none left, use a wound token instead.

3. CHECK THE MYTHOS DISCARD PILE

If there are 3 cards in the discard pile that have the **Elder One summoning symbol**:

Advance the Elder One along the summoning track. If it is already on the board, move the **progression token** along the track instead.

The revealed Elder One stage cards and the episode card will tell you what to do when the Elder One advances. Resolve the Elder One effects first. It doesn't matter whether it's the Elder One figure or the progression token advancing on the summoning track, the effects are resolved in the same way.

After the Elder One advances, shuffle all of the discarded mythos cards back into the deck.

4. CHECK THE ELDER ONE SUMMONING

The Elder One is summoned if:

- The Elder One entered the first red space on the track; or
- The ritual was disrupted this turn.

When the Elder One is summoned, move the stage 1 card to the side, revealing the stage 2 card underneath. Resolve its reveal effects, which specify where the Elder One must be summoned. Effects and dice from previous stages remain in play until the end of the game.

Place the **progression token** on the summoning track on the space previously occupied by the Elder One figure. Use this to mark the Elder One's progress until the end of the game.

5. ELDER ONE END OF TURN EFFECTS

As the Elder One progresses through its stages, there may be *end of turn* effects visible on its stage cards. Resolve all effects on each stage card in the order of the stages: first 1, then 2, then 3, and then final.

Any effect that refers to you is referring solely to the investigator whose turn it is.

The turn is now over, and the player to the left takes their turn.

DICE AND CHECKS

When investigators **make a roll**, you always roll 3 **standard black dice** (and may also be allowed to add **bonus green dice**).

Enemies roll a specific number and type of dice for their attacks, as indicated on their reference card.

Each die has 4 different possible results:



Success: You (or the enemy) succeeded at your attempt (or partially succeeded). If you were attacking, it means you hit. If an enemy is attacking, it means they hit you. In some cases, you need to reach a target amount of successes in a single roll.



Elder Sign: These mean nothing unless you have a skill or card that uses them.



Tentacle: For each tentacle, you lose 1 sanity, moving your tracker 1 space to the right. Tentacles on every roll cost you sanity, whether you're attacking, being attacked, or just 'making a roll'.

Blank: No effect most of the time.

BONUS DICE

Skills and cards may give you bonus green dice, as noted on their description. Some checks may also give you bonus dice if you have a related ability. Finally, reaching certain insanity thresholds will add permanent bonus dice to all your rolls.

There is no limit to the number of bonus dice that may be added to a roll (if you run out of dice, note the results and roll the same dice again).

REROLLS

After rolling dice, **you may take 1 stress to reroll 1 die**, ignoring its original result. You may do this as often as you like on any roll you make, until your stress is at the maximum. When enemies attack you, you roll for them and may also take stress to reroll their dice.

APPLYING RESULTS

Once you're done using any rerolls, tally the number of each result obtained (note that some dice faces contain 2 results). Make sure to apply any symbol changes from abilities (such as counting as successes). Then apply the results of the dice roll in this order:

1. Use any successes:

If an investigator is attacking, these successes are wounds applied to their target.

If an enemy is attacking, successes are also wounds applied to their target (usually an investigator).


If you were told to 'make a roll' by an action, you must match or exceed the number of successes indicated on the card to be successful.

2. Resolve effects:

Resolve any effects that may be tied to the result of the roll.


3. Apply any tentacles:



Lose 1 sanity for each tentacle rolled (move your marker 1 space to the right on your sanity track).

If you reach a  space on your sanity track, stop moving the marker (even if you didn't lose the full amount of sanity), activate your insanity, and level up a skill.

SANITY

Whenever you lose sanity, the marker on your sanity track advances to the right. If it reaches the skull at the end, you are consumed by madness and eliminated.



The track has **insanity threshold**  spaces that activate your insanity and level up a skill, and sometimes give you permanent bonus dice.

When you lose more sanity (from dice rolls, discovery, or mythos cards) than required to hit the next , the marker stops at the ; ignore excess sanity loss.


GAINING BONUS DICE

Some spaces display a green **bonus die** under them. Once each of these is reached, the investigator adds +1 **bonus die** to all rolls they make for the rest of the game.

ACTIVATING INSANITIES

Every time an investigator's marker reaches a , their **insanity card** activates. Perform the symptoms on the card. If multiple investigators reach a  at the same time, they activate clockwise from the current player.

LEVELING UP SKILLS

When the marker reaches a , after activating their insanity, the investigator **levels up** 1 of their skills. Choose 1 skill and move its marker 1 space to the right. Some skills replace a lower level skill as you level up, while others add to them (as described on the skill).

DEATH OF AN INVESTIGATOR

If the marker ever reaches the **skull** at the end of your wound track, you are dead.

When an investigator is killed or consumed by madness, the game is immediately lost if the Elder One is still on the summoning track.

If the Elder One has already been summoned to the board, the other investigators may continue playing and try to win the game.

First, discard all discovery cards and tokens that investigator had. The episode may specify something to do with any special tokens the investigator had been holding.

If the investigator died during their turn, skip all the following turn phases except for the **check the mythos discard pile** phase. If there are 3 Elder One summoning symbols, the Elder One advances and its effects are applied (if it is needed to determine the position of the dead investigator, use the space where they died). From now on, that player's turn is skipped entirely.

DISRUPTING THE RITUAL

Each episode describes the tasks the investigators must accomplish in order to disrupt the cultists' ritual and make the Elder One mortal, even if only for a short time.

The Elder One cannot be attacked or damaged until the ritual is disrupted (though it can attack you if it's on the board).

If the investigators disrupt the ritual, the Elder One is summoned at the end of the turn.

FIGHTING THE ELDER ONE

Once the Elder One is summoned to the board, it acts like any enemy, attacking investigators that end their turn in its space. The number and type of dice the Elder One rolls is the **total** of all dice displayed on all its revealed stage cards.

Until the ritual is disrupted, the Elder One cannot be attacked or damaged, even if it's already been summoned to the board by reaching the red space on the summoning track.

After the ritual is disrupted, the Elder One can be attacked and damaged like any other enemy. The Elder One has multiple stages, with individual healths, which must be defeated one at a time until it's ultimately destroyed.

Starting with stage 2, each card displays:

- A one-time effect that takes place when that card is revealed.
- An ongoing effect that remains in play until the end of the game.
- Health showing how many wounds that stage can take.
- The number and type of dice that stage adds to the Elder One's attacks.

When a stage has wounds equal to or greater than its health, that stage is defeated. Move that stage card to the side to reveal the next and resolve its *when revealed* effect.

Any excess wounds do not carry over to the next stage.

All of the previous stages' effects and dice remain in play until the end of the game.

ENDING THE GAME

You all win the game when you kill the Elder One by defeating its final stage. If multiple end-game triggers happen at the same time, winning conditions have precedence.

You all lose the game when one of the following happens:

- An investigator is killed or consumed by madness before the Elder One is summoned to the board (stage 1 card).
- All investigators are killed or consumed by madness after the Elder One is summoned (stages 2 onward).
- The progression token reaches the last (8th) space of the summoning track.



TURN SEQUENCE

1. INVESTIGATOR TAKES 3 ACTIONS

RUN

Move up to 3 spaces. When you leave a space with **enemies**, all enemies in that space follow you.

When you leave a space with **fire tokens**, place 1 fire token from the reserve onto your investigator board for each token on the space (leaving those tokens untouched).

ATTACK

Make a roll against 1 **enemy** in your space. Each success causes 1 wound to your target. For each tentacle, you lose 1 sanity.

REST

If you are in a **safe space**, **heal your stress and/or health** up to 3 spaces in total. **Sanity cannot be healed by resting.**

TRADE

Trade any number of items or companions with all investigators in your space.

EPISODE ACTIONS

As described on the episode card.

2. DRAW MYTHOS CARD

Keep Elder One **summoning symbols** visible.

Resolve **special effects**.

Summon enemies to **gates** (if available).

3. INVESTIGATE OR FIGHT

If in a **safe space** (no enemies), draw a discovery card.

If there are **enemies in your space**, they all attack you (roll dice shown on their card).

When an enemy attacks you, roll the dice shown on their card. **Each success gives you 1 wound. Each tentacle costs you 1 sanity.** Elder signs only have an effect if the enemy has the ability to use them. You may use stress to reroll these dice and any of your skills to help avoid or minimize the attack.

4. RESOLVE END OF TURN

1. **End of turn effects** (except for Elder One effects).

2. **Fire:** Roll 1 black die for every **fire token** on your investigator board. You may use stress to reroll.

Take 1 wound for each success and lose 1 sanity for each tentacle. Then discard all fire tokens on your board.

3. **Check the mythos discard pile:** If there are 3 Elder One summoning symbols, the Elder One advances. Apply Elder One and episode card effects, then reshuffle mythos deck.

4. **Check Elder One summoning:** If a red space is reached or the ritual is disrupted, move the stage 1 card to the side and resolve the stage 2 **reveal effects**, summoning the Elder One.

5. **Elder One end of turn effects:** Resolve all revealed stages in order.

DICE AND CHECKS

When investigators **make a roll**, you always roll 3 standard black dice (and may also be allowed to add bonus green dice).

Blank: No effect most of the time.



Success: You (or the enemy) succeeded, or partially succeeded, at your attempt. You may need to reach a target amount of successes in a single roll.




Elder Sign: Requires an ability to have any effect.



Tentacle: For each, lose 1 sanity. Tentacles on every roll cost you sanity.

SANITY

When the marker on your sanity track reaches :

- Ignore any remaining sanity loss.
- Activate your insanity.
- Level up 1 of your skills.
- If there's a green dice symbol, you now add **+1 bonus dice** to all your rolls.

FIGHTING THE ELDER ONE

Once summoned, if the Elder One attacks, roll the dice on all revealed stages together. **The Elder One can only be attacked after the ritual is disrupted.**

Once the current Elder One stage loses all its health, move that card to the side and resolve the reveal effect of the next stage. **Excess wounds do not carry over to the next stage.** All of the previous stages' effects and dice remain in play until the end of the game.

ENDING THE GAME

You all win if:

- You defeat the final stage of the Elder One.

You all lose if:

- An investigator is killed or consumed by madness before the Elder One is summoned (stage 1 card).
- All investigators are killed or consumed by madness after the Elder One is summoned (stages 2 onward).
- The progression token reaches the final summoning track space.