# CTHULHU WARS

Dedication: For Eric –I am devastated that you did not see this reach publication in your Earth life. I love you, my brother.

# Introduction

*The time would be easy to know, for then mankind would have become as the Great Old Ones; free and wild and beyond good and evil, with laws and morals thrown aside and all men shouting and killing and revelling in joy. Then the liberated Old Ones would teach them new ways to shout and kill and revel and enjoy themselves, and all the earth would flame with a holocaust of ecstasy and freedom.*

-- H. P. Lovecraft

Prophets, philosophers and madmen all saw the end of the world coming; for years they’d tried to warn us with their indecipherable scrawling and conspiratorial whispers. The signs were obvious enough, and in retrospect it would have been easy to know. In those dark days, mankind seemed to have a death wish. Long had we been poisoning the air we breathed, the water we drank, and the earth from where our food came. Wars, famine, plague stretched cancerously across the globe… and death followed inexorably behind.

Certainly a few cared. Foolish kind-hearted souls tried to stem the tide, tried to reverse the damage we’d done to the planet, but it was all for naught. For the Old Ones had other plans. They’d come from the stars in the infancy of the world, when the earth was nothing but chaos, magma, and churning elemental nonsense. Their inexplicable agenda was never made clear, but eon by eon, epoch by epoch, they guided this doomed outpost more to their liking. And by the end of the world, they’d finally completed their conflicting, yet eerily compatible agendas. The poisons, waste and irradiation had served to make the earth more hospitable to them, more to their pleasure. As the stars aligned to herald the return of the Old Ones, their influence grew, hastening the sickness of this primitive planet.

Finally, the wars. The alien horrors of the Old Ones barely had to lift a claw or tentacle. It simply took a psychic nudge here, a rumbling emanation there. Mankind did the rest. Wars erupted, flowing forth from the third world, and engulfing the streets of the first. Massacres on Main Street were the norm. Strange new weapons were developed to attempt to stem the tide, but nothing prevailed. Men, women, even children ran through the streets, shouting, killing, burning and destroying. Blood flowed in ways unparalleled in human history.

The world burned with a holocaust of ecstasy and freedom, as the Old Ones rose from their eons-long slumber. For moments, all was silent, as if all of existence held its breath.

Thus began the real battle…

# Components:

Rulebook

Player Hint Cards (4)

Map Boards of Earth (2) (printed on both sides, front and back)

faction-specific markers (8) (4 for the Doom track, and 4 for the Power tracks)

Ritual of Annihilation tracks (3) (3-player, 4-player, & 5-player)

Doom track

six-sided dice (20) (sometimes referred to in text as D6s)

rectangular Faction Cards (4)

Counters

Triangular Ritual of Annihilation Marker (1)

Circular First player token (1)

Rectangular Spellbooks (24) (6 per Faction)

Circular Desecration markers (12) (for Yellow Sign only)

Octagonal Gates (24)

Hexagonal Elder Sign chits (36) (two-sided: one side has the Elder Sign, the other has a number – either 1, 2, or 3)

* 18 chits read “1”
* 12 read “2”
* 6 read “3”

Plastic figures of the Four Factions (64)

24 acolyte cultists, six each in the four Faction colors; blue, green, red, and yellow

Green Faction: Great Cthulhu – 4 Deep Ones, 2 Shoggoths, 2 Starspawn, and Cthulhu

Blue Faction: Crawling Chaos – 3 Nightgaunts, 3 Flying Polyps, 2 Hunting Horrors, and Nyarlathotep

Red Faction: Black Goat – 2 Ghouls, 4 Fungi, 3 Dark Young, and Shub-Niggurath

Yellow Faction: Yellow Sign – 6 Undead, 4 Byakhee, the King in Yellow, and Hastur

Total figures: 64 (or 72, including the power/doom markers)

## The Four Factions

Each Faction contains Units consisting of a governing Great Old One (sometimes more than one), its Cultists, its Monsters, six Spellbooks, a Faction card, and two Faction Markers. The Spellbooks and Monsters are unique per Faction, and as you bring Spellbooks into play, your Faction grows in strength and your options multiply.

The Factions play quite differently from one another. Strategies which are effective for Cthulhu may not work for Yellow Sign.

### Faction Sheet

Your Faction Sheet contains a great deal of information.

* **Faction Name 🡪** self-explanatory.
* **Faction Portrait 🡪** a handy spot to place your captured cultists.
* **Power Track 🡪** use your Power marker to track your current Power throughout the game.
* **Unique Ability 🡪** every Faction has its own special talent. This is yours and it is available throughout the game.
* **Set-Up Info and Glyph 🡪** all Factions start with a controlled Gate and 6 Acolyte Cultists, but the information is repeated here for completeness. Also shows your Faction’s Glyph (which will be on the map in your starting Area).
* **Cultist & Monster Information 🡪** shows a silhouette, plus gives Cost & Combat for your Cultists and Monsters, plus notes, if any. Next to the name is a number which is how many of that Unit are available. (It’s always 6 for Acolyte Cultists, for instance.)
* **Great Old One Information 🡪** shows your Great Old One’s silhouette, plus gives Cost & Combat, plus notes. All Great Old Ones have extensive notes, which describe how to Awaken that Great Old One step-by-step, give the Combat formula of that Great Old One (if any), and describe the Great Old One’s special ability, which may take the form of an Action.
* **Spellbook Requirements (and placement) 🡪** each of these 6 spaces has a requirement which must be met before you may place a Spellbook in that slot.

## The Map

The map is divided into Areas. Each Area represents a coherent part of the world and is defined as either Ocean or Land. Each Area has its name prominently printed on it. To clarify – on the normal earth map, Ocean Areas consist of the North Pacific, South Pacific, North Atlantic, South Atlantic, Indian Ocean, and Arctic Ocean. All other Areas (including Antarctica) are Land. *Future maps have differently-named Areas, but still define each as Ocean or Land.*

For most game purposes, there is no difference between Ocean and Land. Units, including Cultists, can freely move into the Ocean, build Gates there, and so forth. Occasional Spellbooks distinguish between Ocean and Land. (Notably *Y’ha Nthlei* and *Submerge*.)

The map is printed on both sides, and is in two halves. Both sides have identical continental shapes, but one side is the 5-player side (with more Areas), and one is the 3-player side (with fewer Areas).

# Game Basics

## Setup

### The Map Board

The map is in two pieces, and is in printed on both sides. The two sides have identical continental shapes, but the 5-player side of the map is divided into far more Land Areas than the 3-Player side.

* THREE-PLAYER GAME: place the gameboard so both 3-Player sides are face-up. The map will display 13 total Areas.
* TWO- AND FOUR-PLAYER GAME: place the gameboard so that one 3-player side is face-up, and one 5-player side is face up. For your first games, we recommend that you use a setup in which the Eastern Hemisphere is 5-player, and the Western Hemisphere is 3-player. In either case, the map will display 17 total Areas.
* FIVE-PLAYER GAME: do NOT place both 5-player sides face-up unless you are playing a 5-player game (only possible if you have one of the Faction expansions). The 5-player game displays 21 total Areas.

### Dice & Gates

Take the dice and Gates and place them within easy reach of the players.

### Ritual and Doom tracks

The game box contains 3 Ritual of Annihilation tracks (henceforth usually termed a Ritual track). Each is labeled for use in a three-, four -, or five-player game. Set up the appropriate Ritual track board next to the Doom track. Place the two unused Ritual tracks back in the game box. They will not be needed. (Use the four-player Ritual track in a two-player game.)

* Place the Doom track at a map board end.
* Place the Ritual of Annihilation marker on the lowest spot on the Ritual of Annihilation track. (The spot labeled 5.)
* Once all players have chosen their Factions, place their Faction Markers on the 0 space on the Doom track. (This step can wait until all players have chosen their Factions.)
* Turn all the Elder Sign Trophies face down (with the Sign on top), and mix them up. Place them near the Doom track, within reach of the players.

### Factions

Each player now picks a Faction. You may do so by blindly choosing a random Faction Power Markers from a cup, but it does not violate the spirit of the game to simply select a favorite Faction. In the latter case, disputes can be settled by permitting the younger players first choice.

Next, each player takes his Faction card, his six Spellbooks, and the plastic figures for his Cultists, Monsters, and Great Old One(s). Each player places his Faction Card before him and places one Faction Marker on the 0 space of his Power track. If he has not already done so, he also places one Faction Marker on the 0 space on the Doom track.

### The Pool

Each player has a Pool, in which he keeps not-yet-in-play Spellbooks and plastic figures within easy reach. Set it up near your Faction Card. Feel free to read your Spellbooks. Yellow Sign should also place the Desecration markers in his Pool.

### Starting placement

Each player must check his Faction sheet to find his Start Area. All players start with a controlled Gate and 6 Acolyte Cultists in the same Area, marked with his Faction’s Glyph.

**To show that you control the Gate, place a Cultist atop it.**

### Unit Limits

You are limited by the number of figures in your pool. For instance, you can never have more than 6 Acolyte Cultists. If you have summoned all the Monsters of a particular type, you cannot Summon more.

# Playing the Game

The game is played out in 4 distinct Phases:

1. Gather Power Phase
2. Determine First Player Phase
3. Doom Phase
4. Action Rounds Phase

Play passes through each phase (beginning with Phase 1) and returning to Phase 1 after Phase 4 each time. This continues until the game ends. (See the section titled Victory: Ending and Winning the Game for more details),

# Gather Power Phase

This takes place in two parts.

#### All players add up earned Power.

#### Check for Minimum Power

The first part of the turn. Once you are experienced with the game, all players can perform this simultaneously. If this is the first game for anyone, it is best to go through it player by player.

During this step, the players earn the Power which they will later expend. To record Power earned, move the Power token to the right on your Faction card’s Power Track, up 1 point for each Power. If you have 8 Power, place the Power token on the spot marked “8”.

## How to Earn Power

1. Earn 1 Power for each Cultist you have on the map.
2. Earn 2 Power for each Gate you control.
3. Earn 1 Power for each abandoned Gate on the map – *each* player gains 1 Power per Gate.
4. Return all captured Cultists to their owner’s Pools, and earn 1 Power for each Cultist you return. You may not choose to keep a Cultist prisoner – they *must* be returned.

In addition, each Faction has some special way to gain Power. This differs per Faction and might require a particular Spellbook.

*Example: Rich has 2 controlled Gates and 3 Cultists. He also has captured one Cultist. He gets 3 Power from his Cultists, and 4 Power for his two Gates. One Gate on the map is currently uncontrolled, so he gets 1 Power from that source (as do all other players). He must sacrifice his captured Cultist, which gets him an additional 1 Power. His total Power going into the Action Round Phase is set to 9.*

**TIP: In the early game, focus on increasing your Power base. High Power gives you more options and creates opportunities***.*

The Power track goes to 20. You *may* have a Power higher than 20. If a player reaches 21 or more Power, you need to keep track of it by other means. The easiest is to “wrap around” your Faction Marker, so for instance if your Power is 23, you would place your Faction Marker on the 3 space, and just remember that it is really 23. Then, when it hits “0” place it on the 20 slot instead.

**TIP: Monsters and Great Old Ones do NOT (with rare exceptions) produce Power! Only Cultists!**

## Minimum Power Rule

At the end of Gather Power, if your Power is less than half that of the player with the most Power, set your Power to be half of his (round fractions up). *Example: after a disastrous turn, Rich finds himself with only 4 Power at the end of Gather Power. Fortunately, Angela has 13 Power, which is also the most, so Rich sets his Power to 7 (half of 13, fractions rounded up).*

**TIP: Each Monster type has at least one dedicated Spellbook, as does your Great Old One.**

# Determine First Player phase

On the first turn of the game, Cthulhu is the First Player. If you are in a game without the Cthulhu Faction, choose the first player by any means you wish. (We recommend either selecting the fattest player or just going by alphabetic order per Faction name – i.e., Black Goat is before Yellow Sign.)

*On all subsequent turns after the first,* the First Player marker is given to the player who has the most Power after the Gather Power phase. If two (or more) players are tied for most Power, then the player who had the First Player token last round decides which of the tied players receives the First Player marker. (He can choose himself, if he is involved in the tie.)

After the First Player is determined, he takes the First Player token and sets it in front of him. He chooses whether to have the Clockwise side face-up, or the Counterclockwise side. Whichever side he selects determines the order of play for the rest of that turn, including all Action Rounds. If you are using some other object as your First Player token, simply point it unambiguously at the player whom you wish to phase after you. *For instance, if the first player puts the First Player token Clockwise side up, then the player to take an Action after him is the person sitting on his left. The direction of the First Player token can be switched on each Determine First Player phase. If instead he had used a figure for his First Player Counter, he would point the figure towards the person on his left.*

# The Doom Phase

The Doom phase has four steps.

#### Doom Track advancement

#### Rituals of Annihilation

#### Special Events

#### Victory/Defeat determination

**IMPORTANT 🡪 The entire Doom Phase is skipped on the first turn of play. On that turn, simply proceed directly from “Determine First Player phase” to “Action phase”.**

## Doom Track Advancement

Each Doom Phase, each player’s marker advances on the Doom track a number of spaces equal to his total controlled Gates. *For instance, if he controls 2 Gates, he advances 2 spaces.* This can be done simultaneously or in any order.

## Ritual of Annihilation

Next, starting with the First Player, each player chooses if he wishes to perform a Ritual of Annihilation. Each player, in order from the First Player and around the board, receives the chance to do one and only one Ritual of Annihilation.

To perform a Ritual of Annihilation:

1. The player spends Power equal to the current position of the Ritual marker on the track (this ranges from 5 to 10).
2. The player now advances the Ritual marker one step up the Ritual of Annihilation track, which often increases the cost for later players.
3. Finally, the player now advances his Doom marker on the Doom track 1 step for each Gate he controls. (doubling his Doom boost for this turn based on Gates.) In addition, for each Great Old One he controls in play, he gains an Elder Sign.

**Remember: Each player gets only ONE chance to perform a Ritual of Annihilation per Doom phase.**

*Example – Rich is First Player, and has 3 Gates and Nyarlathotep on the map. At the start of the Doom phase, he advances his Doom marker 3 spaces, for his 3 Gates. All other players also advance, according to their Gate total.*

*During the Ritual of Annihilation step. Rich decides to perform a Ritual of Annihilation. The Ritual marker is in the 5 space, so Rich pays 5 Power (and advances the Ritual marker to the 6 space). Rich now advances his Doom marker another 3 spaces (for his 3 Gates), and receives an Elder Sign for his Great Old One. This Doom phase he advanced a total of 6 spaces on the Doom track, plus he received an Elder Sign.*

*If he had not performed the Ritual of Annihilation, he would have 5 more Power entering the Action phase, but would be missing out on those 3 extra Doom points and Elder Sign. The next player to perform a Ritual of Annihilation must pay 6, since Rich advanced the marker.*

If the Ritual marker is on the 10 space, and a Ritual is performed, the Ritual marker moves to the “Instant Death” space. This means that at the end of the Doom phase, the game ends, and victory is determined. All players who sit after the current player in the turn order can perform a Ritual of Annihilation at a cost of 10 Power, and all players may reveal Elder Signs, of course.

### Elder Sign Chits

Elder Sign chits symbolize the shattering of the bonds that once held the Great Old Ones in check. They actually represent the *destruction* of Elder Signs, but for simplicity, we simply call them “Elder Signs” instead of “Elder Sign chits” in most of the text.

Elder Signs are gathered in two major ways. First, you earn one Elder Sign for each Great Old One you control on the map when doing a Ritual of Annihilation *(For example, Yellow Sign can earn two Elder Signs if he performs a Ritual of Annihilation when he has both the King in Yellow and Hastur out).* Second, each Faction has its own unique method of earning Elder Signs. See your Faction sheet and Spellbooks for specifics.

When you earn an Elder Sign, take a face-down Elder Sign chit from the pool and (without revealing it to other players), place it face down on or by your Faction sheet. You may examine your own Elder Sign chits freely. All Elder Signs have a number “ 1 ”, “ 2 “, or “ 3 “ written on them. This indicats how much Doom that Elder Sign is worth. There are 18 Elder Sign chits worth 1 point, twelve that are worth 2 points, and six that are worth 3 points.

Elder Signs may be revealed AT ANY TIME. Usually, it is best to keep Elder Signs secret till the moment you can win by revealing them, but sometimes circumstances affect this.

In the unlikely event of all Elder Signs being handed out to players, when a new Elder Sign is earned, simply give the player a Doom point instead.

If Elder Signs are revealed before the end of the game, after incrementing your Doom track, do NOT place the revealed Elder Signs back into the Elder Sign pool – place them back in the box, not to be used again till your next game of *Cthulhu Wars*.

## Special Events

Many Spellbooks and special abilities take effect in the Doom phase. Unless otherwise stated, these occur *after* Rituals of Annihilation (if any), but *before* Victory Determination. In case of a dispute, the First Player takes his Action first, and then proceed around the table. Some map events also occur here (available in later expansions). Some examples include Black Goat’s *Blood Sacrifice,* and the two Doom phase Spellbooks Great Cthulhureceives.

## Victory/Defeat Determination

If any player has 30 or more Doom points, or the Ritual of Annihilation marker is in the “Instant Death” box, the game now ends. Proceed to determine victory as described in the section titled Victory: Ending and Winning the Game.

# Action phase

During the Action phase, each player in turn moves Units, casts spells, engages in battle, and otherwise interacts. All Actions have a Power cost (sometimes 0) which must be spent before the Action occurs.

The first player takes one Action. When he finishes, the next player in turn takes an Action. This continues until all players are out of Power and cannot take any more Actions. At this point the Action phase ends.

In other words, the Action phase keeps circling around until everyone is out of Power. Remember you get ONE Action each time it is your turn to have a go.

If you run out of Power, you must sit helplessly while the other players complete their turns, skipping you. If you have 0 Power when it is time for you to take an Action, you are skipped. You cannot even perform Actions which cost 0 Power.

Three types of Actions exist: Common Actions, Unique Actions, and Unlimited Actions. You must do at least one Common or Unique Action whenever play passes round to you.

On rare occasions, a player may have 1 or more Power, yet not wish to do an Action. In this case, the player is allowed to Pass, which drops his Power to 0, and ends his turn.

* *Common Actions 🡪* spend the appropriate amount of Power and perform the Action. Though you only get one Action, some Common Actions (such as Move) permit you to do more than one thing with that Action.
* *Unique Actions* 🡪just like Common Actions – the only difference is that they are unique to a particular Faction. For instance, only Black Goat can use the unique *Ghroth Action*. Unique Actions are usually tied to a Spellbook or a Great Old One’s special ability. If you do not yet have the appropriate Spellbook or Great Old One in play, you cannot perform that unique Action.
* *Unlimited Actions 🡪* you can perform Unlimited Actions *in addition to* your single Common or Unique Action. Some Unlimited Actions have special requirements.

To repeat: a player can only perform ONE Common or Unique Action during an Action round. He may, additionally, perform one or more Unlimited Actions. For instance, if you choose to take the Recruit Cultist Action, you get one (1) Cultist, and that ends your Action round (unless you have Unlimited Actions available). If you choose to take the Create Gate Action, you create one Gate, and your Action round ends. One notable exception is the Move Action, which permits you to move multiple Units.

## Common Actions

1. Recruit Cultist
2. Summon Monster
3. Awaken Great Old One
4. Build Gate
5. Move
6. Battle
7. Capture Cultist

### Recruit Cultist 🡪 Cost 1 Power for Acolyte Cultist (requires Unit)

You must have a Unit in the Area where you recruit a Cultist. You may only recruit 1 Cultist per Action round. This does not require a Gate or anything beyond a Unit’s presence.

If you currently have no Units on the map, you do not need a Unit in an Area where the Cultist is recruited. In this manner, you can return to play even if wiped off the map.

You must have a Cultist in your Unit Pool to perform this Action. I.e., you cannot have more than 6 Acolyte Cultists on the map.

**TIP: Since a Great Old One can be “killed” (after which he must be re-awakened), do not bring it out before you can protect it with other Uints. Two exceptions are the King in Yellow and Cthulhu, since they are (comparatively) inexpensive to replace.**

### Summon Monster 🡪 Cost varies (typically 1, 2, or 3 Power and requires a Gate)

You can summon ONE monster per Action (exception: Black Goat’s *Fertility Cult* Ability). A monster can only be Summoned to an Area where you control a Gate. (The seeming exceptions, such as *Devolve* or *Desecration* are, technically, not Summon Actions*)*. Pay the monster’s cost (printed on your Faction Card), and place it in the Area.

**TIP: Monsters with Combat 0 are surprisingly useful. They can protect Cultists from being Captured by other Monsters, they can Capture Cultists themselves, and they can be taken as casualties in Battle, sparing more expensive Units. This last is particularly handy when facing an enemy with an auto-Kill such as Cthulhu’s *Devour* or a Nightgaunt’s *Abduct.***

### Awaken Great Old One 🡪 Cost varies (other requirements apply)

Great Old Ones have prerequisites beyond simply spending Power. For instance, to Awaken Shub-Niggurath you need a controlled Gate, plus you must eliminate two of your Cultists in the Area. In general, Great Old Ones are the most expensive Units in the game.

Every Great Old One is unique, with its own Awakening requirements, its own Combat, and its own special ability. Some even make unique Actions available when they are in play.

### Build Gate 🡪 Cost 3 Power (requires Cultist)

To build a gate you must have a Cultist in an Area without a Gate. Pay 3 Power, and place the Gate. Immediately place the Cultist atop the Gate to indicate you now control it. (Technically, this is a use of the unlimited “Control Gate” Action). You can only build ONE Gate per Build Gate Action.

Only one Gate can exist per Area. If a Gate is already present, you cannot build one.

### Move 🡪 Cost 1 Power per Unit moved

To Move, spend as much Power as you wish, then for each Power spent, you may move one Unit from its current Area into an adjacent Area. *Example: Rich spends 3 Power. He can now move 3 Units.* Most Factions have special abilities which modify or affect or replace movement.

You cannot move a Unit more than once per Action - i.e., you cannot spend 2 Power to move a single Unit twice during one Action round. You CAN move Units from different Areas into the same Area, or into different Areas, or from the same Area into different Areas, or any combination you please.

Movement is the only Common Action which permits you to do more than one thing during an Action Round (and then all it permits is moving multiple Units).

**NOTE: All Units may move into Ocean Areas.**

### Battle 🡪 Cost 1 Power

Choose any Area in which both you and an enemy Faction have at least one Unit. You must be able to roll at least one Combat die in order to declare a Battle.

If more than one enemy Faction has forces present, you must fight only one. Only two Factions fight at a time. Other Factions present are merely idle bystanders.

Simply moving into an Area containing enemy Units does not trigger a Battle! Units can co-exist in an Area without a Battle ensuing.

**NOTE: Battle will be detailed in the next section.**

### Capture Cultist 🡪 Cost 1

We have a hierarchy of Units in *Cthulhu Wars*. Cultists, the natural prey, are at the bottom. Monsters outrank Cultists, and Great Old Ones are at the top of the heap.

If you have a Monster in an area, and an enemy has Cultists, but NO Monsters or Great Old Ones, you may use this Action to capture a Cultist. The captured Cultist is removed from the map and placed on your Faction Card, on your Great Old One’s portrait. Your opponent chooses which Cultist is captured. For instance, he does not have to choose the Cultist controlling his Gate, unless he has no other choice. Also if he has more than one type of Cultist present (later expansions), he can pick between them.

To protect against Capture by an enemy Monster, you need a Monster of your own in the Area. Note that even if a Cultist has a Combat rating, or a Monster has a Combat of 0, the latter can still Capture the Cultist. Capture is *not* Battle, and Battle abilities do not apply.

A Great Old One can capture an enemy Cultist even if the enemy has a Monster present. To protect against Capture by a Great Old One, you need your own Great Old One in the Area. Or you need to attack the enemy Great Old One and drive it away, or simply flee.

***<Illustrations here>***

*Example A: Rich has a monster in Europe, and Guy has two cultists there, but no monsters. On Rich’s turn he spends 1 Power on the Capture Cultist Action to grab one of Guy’s cultists. Guy’s turn is next, and he moves in a Monster to protect his remaining Cultist.*

*Example B: Rich has monsters and a Cultist in Europe. Angela moves Cthulhu into Europe. On the next turn, Rich must evacuate his Cultist, move his own Great Old One into the area, or drive away Cthulhu in a battle. Otherwise Cthulhu can Capture the Cultist.*

### Pass 🡪 all remaining Power

If you wish to take no further Actions, you may choose discard all remaining Power (dropping your total to 0). This ends the Action phase for you (unless another player’s Action provides you with Power).

## Unique Actions

As the game continues, you will unlock Spellbooks which give you access to new Actions. Also, some Great Old Ones have special Actions (such as the King in Yellow’s *Desecrate*).

## Unlimited Actions

You can perform as many Unlimited Actions as you wish in a round, in addition to a single Common or Unique Action.

You may NOT take an Unlimited Action if you have 0 Power – you can do nothing in this case.

**“Unlimited” is not the same as “anytime”. For instance, you cannot Control an empty Gate with a Cultist except when it is time for you to take an Action.**

### Control or Abandon Gate 🡪 Cost 0 Power

If you have a Cultist in an Area with an abandoned Gate, this Action moves your Cultist onto the Gate to take possession. You can also use this Action to move a Cultist *off* a Gate, abandoning it.

If two players both have Cultists in an Area with an abandoned Gate, the first player to take his Action will be able to take the gate.

One common use of this is when Black Goat has the *Red Sign* Spellbook in effect. She might Summon a Dark Young, abandon the Gate in the Area with her Cultist, and Control the Gate with the newly-Summoned Dark Young, all in the same Action (she took the Summon Action, followed up by the two Unlimited Actions of Abandon and Control Gate).

**TIP: Never leave an Acolyte Cultist alone on a Gate in a critical Area once Cthulhu has the Dreams Spellbook! Place a second Cultist in the Area if possible. While this won’t prevent Dreams, since you pick which Cultist is affected, Cthulhu has to pay a total of six Power in order to steal the Gate.**

### Battle 🡪 Cost 1 (with 6 Spellbooks)

The Battle Action becomes Unlimited if you have 6 Faction Spellbooks. An Unlimited Battle Action still costs 1 Power. It is legal to perform an unlimited Battle as your sole Action on your turn.

Even when Battle is “unlimited” you can still only initiate one Battle per Area per Action phase.

## “Interruption” Abilities

Cthulhu’s *Devolve* Spellbook can be used after any player’s Action, even if it is not your turn. In future expansions more “interrupting” type abilities will be added. When these are used in the Action phase, they always occur after another player’s Action. If two players *each* want to use such an ability and there is a dispute over whose Action goes first, resolve it by turn order (i.e., Starting player goes first).

**TIP: If you are not sure what to do, look at your Spellbook requirements. You cannot go far wrong so long as you strive to gain new Spellbooks.**

# Battle

Here is a quick summary of a Battle, followed by a more detailed explanation:

After the Battle Action has been declared and paid for (whether as a common Action or an unlimited Action), a Battle takes place in three distinct segments:

#### Pre-Battle

#### Battle

#### Post-Battle

In the Pre-Battle, the attacker, then defender, applies any Pre-Battle abilities he wants to. In the Battle segment, both sides roll dice simultaneously according to their total combat rating involved. During Post-Battle, first Kills are applied, followed by Pains, along with any Post-Battle abilities. As with Pre-Battle abilities, the attacker’s Post-Battle abilities are applied before the defender’s Post-Battle abilities.

## Ongoing and Battle abilities

Before each segment, each Faction decides if they are going to use any Ongonig and/or Battle abilities which could be applied. Ongoing and Battle effects are obtained via Spellbooks or special abilities. Battle effects include Pre-Battle and Post-Battle effects. For instance, Crawling Chaos’s *Harbinger* ability means he receives Power or Elder Signs when Nyarlathotep is involved in a Battle in which an enemy Great Old One is Killed or Pained. He does not need to “perform an Action” for this function – he just pushes his Power marker up the track (or grabs his Elder Signs) during Post-Battle.

**NOTE: Pre-Battle, Battle, and Post-Battle abilities are not “actions”. Thus Cthulhu’s *Devour* ability costs no Power.**

The Attacker performs his abilities first in each part of the Battle sequence, followed by the Defender. If a Faction which is not directly involved in the Battle has an ability that might affect the battle, his abilities happen last.

### Pre-Battle Effects

Pre-Battle effects happen before the dice for the Battle are rolled, but after the Battle is announced (and paid for). For instance, this is when Crawling Chaos’s *Seek & Destroy* triggers. Normally, only the Factions who are fighting can use Pre-Battle abilities, unless an ability specifically states otherwise.

The Attacker (the Faction which initiated the Battle) does any Pre-Battle effects first, followed by the Defender. (For instance, if Cthulhu is the Attacker, and Crawling Chaos chooses a Nightgaunt to be *Devoured*, that Nightgaunt cannot use *Abduct.)*

### Battle & Battle Effects

All participants in a battle now determine their total Combat rating. All Cultists and Monsters have a Combat, typically a number ranging from 0 to 3. A few Spellbooks have “Battle” effects - such Spellbooks usually happen simultaneously but as always, if order matters, the Attacker goes first.

**NOTE: Most Great Old Ones have Combat ratings which require a simple calculation. It’s worth the effort, because it generally results in a high rating.**

Each player then rolls a number of six-sided dice equal to the total Combat of all his Units in the area. Combat is simultaneous. Even if you take turns rolling the dice, do not inflict casualties until after both players have rolled and totaled the results.

*Example: Rich has two Starspawn (3 each), two Deep Ones (1 each), and three Acolyte Cultists (0) in an area, totaling 8 dice in Battle.*

For each 6 rolled, score one Kill result. For each 4 or 5, score a Pain result. (Rolls of 1-3 do nothing.)

If you are using the special deluxe dice, then the side with the skull scores a Kill, the two sides width the slash marks will score a Pain, and the three blank sides are a Miss. The chance of scoring a Pain or a Kill are exactly the same but the deluxe dice look cooler.

### Results and Post-Battle Effects

After dice are rolled, losses are inflicted simultaneously. Tell (or show) your opponent your results, and then suffer your opponent’s results. Each player determines how to apply the results inflicted on him, as follows:

1. First, for each Kill you have received, remove one Unit (your choice). Attacker takes his losses first if there is a dispute.
2. If you still have Units left after all Kills are satisfied, then for each Pain you suffer, you must retreat one Unit into an adjacent area of your choice. Attacker retreats first. *Exception – Crawling Chaos’ Madness Spellbook.* *Note that though Crawling Chaos chooses the order and where Units retreat, he still does not choose which particular Units are to be retreated – they are still chosen by the owner.*

Some Spellbooks and abilities may worsen or ease Battle results. Don’t forget to apply them! Post-Battle effects, just like Pre-Battle, are done in the order of Attacker first, then Defender.

IMPORTANT: Pained Units cannot retreat into an Area containing Units belonging to the Faction they just Battled (they CAN retreat into an Area containing Units of a third Faction). If one or more Units cannot retreat, Kill one of the Pained Units, and the rest may remain in the area with no further penalty.

***Simple Battle Example:*** *Angela attacks Frank in East Africa. She has 2 Byakhee, 2 Acolyte Cultists, and the King in Yellow. Frank has two Acolyte Cultists. Angela’s Byakhee give her 1 more dice than the number of Byakhee in the Area, while her Cultists and the King have Combats of 0, so she rolls 3 dice. Frank is playing Black Goat, and his* ***Frenzy*** *Spellbook is in play, so his Cultists each have a Combat of 1.*

*Frank**rolls 2 dice. Angela rolls 2 Pains and no Kills, while Frank rolls a Kill and no Pains. Angela chooses to kill one of her Byakhee, and Frank must retreat both Cultists out of the Area.*

***Complex Battle Example:*** *Rich attacks Angela in East Africa. He has Cthulhu, a Shoggoth, 2 Deep Ones, and 3 Cultists. Angela has the King in Yellow and 5 Undead. In the Pre-Battle phase Rich’s Shoggoth Absorbs one of his own Deep Ones, and Cthulhu Devours one of Angela’s Units. She chooses an undead (she had no choice really, because the King cannot be picked for Devour, as a Great Old One).*

*Rich then rolls 12 dice (6 for Cthulhu, 2+3 for the “Absorbent” Shoggoth, and 1 for his remaining Deep One), and Angela rolls her 3 dice (the amount she gets for having 4 remaining Undead). Rich scores 1 Kill and 6 Pains. Angela gets 1 Kill and 2 Pains. Rich kills one of his Cultists, and Pains his Deep One and Cthulhu. Angela kills one more Undead, and the remaining three, plus the King, are Pained. Rich’s excess Pain result is ignored.*

*In Post-Battle, Frank, as Black Goat, moves two Ghouls into the Area via Necrophagy. Rich must retreat two more Units out of the Area. He chooses one of his remaining Cultists plus his Shoggoth. He has just one Cultist left unaffected. (Angela isn’t affected by Necrophagy because all of her Units are already Pained.)*

*Now Crawling Chaos steps in. He has the Madness ability, and so he gets to choose where all Units retreat. He decides to retreat Cthulhu First, and moves Cthulhu to Arabia, one green Cultist to West Africa, the Deep One to the Indian Ocean, and the Shoggoth to the South Atlantic. (No Yellow Sign Units were in any of these Areas.) Since East Africa is now entirely surrounded by Cthulhu’s Units, the Yellow Sign is unable to retreat, and must lose one of his Pained Units. He chooses an Undead, and so the King and his 2 remaining Undead stay behind, along with Cthulhu’s Cultist, who is now en prise, vulnerable to the King.*

# Spellbooks

Spellbooks are new abilities that your Faction gains by meeting certain requirements. Once earned, they remain in effect throughout the game. Each individual Spellbook enhances your Faction significantly, plus when you finally achieve all 6 Spellbooks, useful game effects are triggered. (Notably, Battle becomes Unlimited and you can now win the game.)

A major part of your game strategy is tied up in which Spellbook you choose, and the order in which you do so.

## Earning Spellbooks

Earning Spellbooks works a lot like a video game achievement. Fulfill one of the requirements listed on your Faction card, and take the Spellbook of your choice and place it over that requirement. You never lose that Spellbook, even if the requirement is no longer true. *Example: Great Cthulhu has a requirement which states “Control Three Gates in Ocean Areas”. As soon as his Faction meets that requirement, he gains a Spellbook and places it on his Faction card, in the appropriate slot. Even if the very next round, someone drives him out of one (or all!) of his Ocean Gates, he retains the Spellbook.*

### Spellbook Requirement Actions

Some Spellbook requirements state “As your Action, do [X]”.. For instance, Crawling Chaos has the requirement of “As your Action, spend 4 Power.” This does not mean “spend 4 Power on a single Action such as a large Move”. It means that Crawling Chaos must spend 4 Power and do no Common or Unique Action. Only then he receives the Spellbook.

Similarly, Black Goat has the requirement of “As your Action, eliminate two of your Cultists”. This does not mean you must lose two Cultists in Battle (or whatever). It just means that Black Goat, as her only Action, picks up two of her Cultists (from anywhere) and places them back in her pool. This costs her no Power.

For another example, when Shub-Niggurath is awakened, her player must eliminate two Cultists. This does NOT count as fulfilling the “eliminate two Cultists” Spellbook, and is part of an entirely separate Action (i.e., Awaken Shub-Niggurath).

**TIP: Beware Yellow Sign’s Screaming Dead Spellbook. He can use it to move, then immediately use Zingaya, Desecration, or Capture (or take an Action elsewhere). This is also true of the He Who Is Not to be Named Spellbook, which generally comes into play later.**

## Spellbook Effects

Some Spellbooks enable new Actions unique to your Faction.

Many Spellbook effects are ongoing. An ongoing effect is always available for free, once you have gained the Spellbook. Some ongoing Spellbooks can take effect during an enemy’s turn. *Example: when Crawling Chaos’s Madness Spellbook is in play, he uses it during enemy Actions, not just his own. Great Cthulhu can use Regenerate, a Battle ability, even if an enemy declared the Battle against him, so long as he has a Starspawn in the fight.*

Some Spellbooks are tied to particular Units. For instance, Cthulhu’s *Absorb* Spellbook is useless without a Shoggoth (plus a Unit to absorb!).

# Awakening Your Great Old One

Each Great Old One has a high cost, plus specific requirements which must be fulfilled to bring it onto the map. In combat, a Great Old One is treated as any other Unit. They usually have special rules for how many dice they roll in combat. Yes, a single Kill eliminates your Great Old One.

# Victory: Ending and Winning the Game

**Important: you can ONLY win the game if you have earned all 6 Spellbooks on your Faction card! (See the “Earning Spellbooks” section.) The game can end several different ways.**

## Doom Track Victory or Instant Death Victory

When a player advances his Doom marker to or beyond 30 on the Doom track, the game ends at the conclusion of this Doom phase. All players may finish performing Rituals of Annihilation and exposing Elder Signs as they desire.

In addition, if a player performs a Ritual of Annihilation while the Ritual marker is on the 10 box, the marker moves to the *Instant Death* space, and the game ends at the conclusion of this Doom phase. Players may continue to expose Elder Signs, and may continue to perform further Rituals of Annihilation if they have not yet had a chance (at a cost of 10 each).

Both the Doom Track and Instant Death victories occur at the end of the Doom phase. At this time, the player with the most Doom points is the winner, unless he does not have all 6 Spellbooks, in which case the player who is furthest along the track and does have 6 Spellbooks wins. (The Doom track goes to 40 to enable players to keep track of extra Doom points beyond 30.)

## Action Phase Victory

A player can reveal Elder Signs at any time during the Action phase (even when it is not his turn). If this brings his total Doom points to 30+, the game immediately ends. Other players may also turn in their Elder Signs at this time. Again, a player can only win if he has 6 Spellbooks.

Because this happens during the Action phase, no one has a chance to perform Rituals of Annihilation before the game ends.

## Tied Game

If the game ends by Doom Track, Instant Death, or Action Phase victory, and two players have equal Doom track totals (and both have 6 Spellbooks) the game ends in a draw, and the two share victory.

## Losing the Game

If the game ends via any means (Doom Track, Instant Death, or Action Phase) and no player has 6 Spellbooks, the game ends anyway. All Factions are sucked back through the collapsing Gates and humanity survives after all. (Yay!) But all players lose together.

# Two-Player game

## Normal Two-Player Setup

Lay out the normal 4-player map and the 4-player Ritual track. The first player chooses a Faction. The second player then selects TWO Factions. The first player then receives the remaining Faction.

Each player therefore controls 2 Factions.

### Action Round order

When it is a player’s Action round, he must take an Action for one of his Factions, and then the other. He takes only one Common or Unique Action per Faction, but he can take them in any order.

### Faction Interaction

The player’s Factions do not “cooperate” in Battle, trade Power, or interact in any way other than those permissible to the normal multiplayer game. They can even Battle one another, should you so wish.

### Doom Track and Victory

The game ends in the normal fashion. If *either* of a player’s Factions have 6 Spellbooks, he is eligible for victory.

Add together the total Doom points (plus revealed Elder Signs) of all a player’s Factions. The player with the most total Doom wins.

## Epic Two-Player Setup

If you own the 6-8 player map, and own 6+ different Factions, set it up to the 6-player side, and take the 6-player Ritual track. The first player chooses a Faction. The second player then selects TWO Factions. The first player then selects TWO Factions, and the second player then selects one last remaining Faction.

Each player therefore controls 3 Factions.

### Action Round order

When it is a player’s Action round, he must take an Action for each of his three Factions. He takes only one Common or Unique Action per Faction, but he can take them in any order.

### Faction Interaction

The player’s Factions do not “cooperate” in Battle, trade Power, or interact in any way other than those permissible to the normal multiplayer game. They can even Battle one another, should you so choose.

### Doom Track and Victory

As per the normal 2-player game. Only one of your 3 Factions has to have 6 Spellbooks to make you eligible for victory.

# Player Tips

## General Tips

The play can be divided into two main phases – the early game and the late game.

*Early Game*: in the first 2-3 Action phases players should try to acquire Spellbooks, build up a power base, and Summon at least a minimal army. Be choosy about when you awaken your Great Old One, because this generally leaves you weak for the rest of that Action phase. Combat in the early game is opportunistic, based on attempts to capture enemy Gates or fulfill Spellbook requirements.

*Late Game*: this starts once you have your Great Old One out and 3-4 Spellbooks under your belt. You still need to finish up your last Spellbooks, but you can now afford a Ritual of Annihilation once in a while. Remember that the earlier you do your Rituals, the cheaper they are (and the more expensive your enemy’s become). At this point the purpose of Battle changes –you now seek to reduce your opponent’s Gates so they are less effective at Rituals. If one player surges ahead in Doom points, get the others to work with you against him. If YOU are the player who surges ahead, try to break up such alliances.

## Playing Great Cthulhu

Cthulhu’s Faction is focused on destruction. Of all Factions, your Units are the most effective in a fight. On the other hand you are limited in obtaining Elder Signs, so you need to use your combat strength to ruin your enemy’s bases and keep them from taking the lead.

Your Spellbooks and abilities, even unused, cast a baleful influence on your enemy’s activities. *Submerge*, *Dreams*, and *Y’ha Nthlei* all cast a pall over the map hindering your opponents.

In the early game, you get Spellbooks quickly. Get Cthulhu out on turn 2 or 3, even if he is vulnerable to an enemy attack. After all, you can re-Awaken him cheaply and gain one Elder Sign. It is far easier to get your two “Kill/Devour” Spellbooks once Cthulhu takes the field.

In the late game, use *Submerge* to strike critical enemy areas. With *Regeneration* or *Absorb* plus Cthulhu’s *Immortal* ability, you can hurl your forces into battle with impunity. Cthulhu only rolls 6 dice, but an *Absorbent* Shoggoth gives you heft, plus Cthulhu’s *Devour* ability is better than a free Kill.

* *Devolve 🡪* keep a Deep One in your Pool to render you immune to Capture. Just Devolve a threatened Cultist immediately.
* *Dreams 🡪* this means that your enemies dare not leave a Cultist alone on a Gate. You may not often use Dreams vs. experienced players, but it affects their behavior throughout the game.
* *Absorb 🡪* turns Shoggoths into major combat dice. You only need 1 Shoggoth per attack, so long as he has “food” available. Remember that Cultists & Deep Ones are also useful to soak up hits– you may not want to Absorb them all.
* *Regeneration 🡪* with this, Starspawn inure your army to harm, making them the flip-side to *Absorb’s* massive damage output. Cthulhu accompanied by two Starspawns is well-armored even against enemy Great Old Ones.
* *Y’ha Nthlei* 🡪 like Dreams, this inhibits the enemy. Your foes are less likely to conquer your Gates, and you don’t care as much if they do.
* *Submerge 🡪* a critical Spellbook in the late game. Once Cthulhu’s army submerges, not only is he safe from harm, but other players react in desperation. If you attack an ocean Area, you can Submerge again after the strike.

### Thwarting Great Cthulhu

Cthulhu has strong Units, but not many of them. Each loss is a setback for him. When he hurls his might against an Area he is going to win, but you can mitigate this by not putting all your eggs in one basket. Killing Cthulhu himself isn’t particularly effective (unless you are Crawling Chaos, since *Harbinger* then gives you 2 Power or Elder Signs), because next turn he’ll be back at R’lyeh, ready to *Submerge* and make your life hell.

### Cthulhu: epilogue

*“It was gargantuan. A mountainous form rising from the sea, surrounded by lesser monstrosities that oozed and dragged themselves toward us with distorted limbs, tentacles, and pseudopods. When we heard that the Pacific Islands were empty, we didn’t understand. We still thought in human terms. We hadn’t considered that the colossal Thing had been eating, scouring the islands of life. And now it was here, hungry again.”* ***David Mendiola***

## Playing the Crawling Chaos

Crawling Chaos is all about opportunism; striking at the weak and vulnerable. While some other Factions have a faster start on attaining Spellbooks, Crawling Chaos is often the Faction that completes his collection first. Your Units are not mighty in battle, and your Spellbooks are defensive in nature. You are good at harassment, and debilitating foes over time.

In the early game, focus on safety and power-building. Use *Flight* to set up bases in inaccessible Areas. Nightgaunts with *Abduct* discourage enemies from attacking your cultists – at least they’ll need to send more than one monster. You won’t need Nyarlathotep himself for a while, and he is stronger later in the game anyway. Your most awkward Spellbook requirement is often “Capture a Cultist”, so look for any chance to pull this off.

In the late game, everything changes. Nyarlathotep now has a huge combat ability (up to 12 dice), and instead of fearing battle, you should seek it. Smite their Great Old Ones for the *Harbinger* bonus. You can perform Rituals more safely than other players, because you can restore the power imbalance with *Thousand Forms*, so you are not left as vulnerable afterwards.

More than any other player, you can hit an enemy where he is weak. As a result, if one player has surged ahead, the rest may try to convince you to save the day. Go ahead and save the day, but be sure to exact promises and tribute from the others. For instance, “Before I strike, I want you to evacuate your Gate in South America.” Promises are not binding in *Cthulhu Wars*, so make sure you “see the money” before taking whatever Action you see fit.

* *Emissary of the Outer Gods* 🡪 less useful when Great Old Ones are out, but it does keep expensive Nyarlathotep safe from cheap attacks. Remember to use *Madness* to use a Pain to retreat him somewhere safe!
* *Abduct 🡪* in the early game, this protects Gates from enemy Monsters. In the late game it is not as good, as you often need your Nightgaunts to soak up enemy Kills. It can sometimes be combined with Invisibility to pick off a good Monster.
* *Invisibility 🡪* safely place an invulnerable Flying Polyp in an enemy Area. Also good to cancel obnoxious Units such as Starspawn.
* *Seek & Destroy 🡪* now your Gates are protected across the world from weak-to-medium attacks, since you can throw in a 2-dice monster at will. While on the offensive, your attacks are cheaper, since your Horror joins in for free. Also gives Nyarlathotep extra meat shields in case he is ambushed.
* *Madness 🡪* your signature Spellbook. It is not immediately destructive, but over the course of the game, your enemies’ Units scatter inconveniently and it takes time and energy to restore the situation.
* *Thousand Forms 🡪* early in the round, it forces enemies to give up a Power advantage. Late in the round, it boosts you when they are most vulnerable. Combined with *Harbinger*, you can achieve a surprise Power surge that makes your foes whine.

### Thwarting Crawling Chaos

Crawling Chaos Units are excellent at staving off weak raids, but less effective against a major attack. Therefore take the gloves off and hit him as hard as you can – as the Germans say, *Klotzen, nicht Kleckern!*

Nyarlathotep is terrifying, but if you do kill him, it is a major setback, and Crawling Chaos may take a whole turn to recover. His cultists have no real defensive capability, unlike other players (Cthulhu has *Devolve*, Yellow Sign *Passion,* and Black Goat *Frenzy*), so are vulnerable.

There is not much you can do about his power drain abilities. Just suck it up and remember that it may be better to let your own Power drop rather than give him an undeserved boost.

### Crawling Chaos: epilogue

*“The uncertainty is the worst. No one looks up. I remember when we could see the sun. You can’t now, because They blanket the sky. No one wants to look up, and They know that. Everyday we live with the knowledge that it might your last day. The only warning is a slither of sucking wind, flapping of wings, or the brush of something utterly alien on your skin. Then you’re gone. I see fewer and fewer friends as time passes. How long before it is my time?”* ***David Mendiola***

## Playing the Black Goat

As befits a fertility cult, Black Goat’s emphasis is on occupation and expansion – sort of like a fungus infection. Unlike other Factions, you tend to be geographically restricted. You are not deadly in battle (in fact, you have no battle Spellbooks except *Frenzy*), but you have plenty of cheap throwaway Units, so you are resilient. As you hole up in your homeland, your abilities let you target enemies by remote control. This is your true strength.

In the early game, the most common mistake a novice *Black Goat* player makes is to initiate a diaspora of Cultists to immediately achieve the “Have Units in X Area” Spellbooks. But your enemies will move in once you are helpless from lack of Power. Build up at a sedate rate. Ensure that when you move Units into an Area they have support and protection, and in general use cheap monsters to occupy Areas for Spellbook purposes, rather than Cultists. *Thousand Young* is best defensively, as when an enemy moves on one of your Gates –reactively summon a heap of trouble for him. Create a stronghold where you can summon Shub-Niggurath safely.

In the late game, you can sadly annoy other players. *Ghroth* slows and cripples rivals. Battle becomes common, so *Necrophagy* can occur multiple times in a single turn. *Avatar* steals weak enemy bases with prejudice – just teleport to the spot, and they must send someone to your homeland. You can then capture their Cultist or, if the Gate is abandoned, Recruit your own Cultist to take it over.

The enemy often comes to you, in an attempt to stop the hurting, so sit tight. If you do need to strike at a distance, you have *Avatar*. You may not have as many Gates as other, more mobile, Factions, but you can make up for this – even with just 2 Gates plus Shub-Niggurath, *Blood Sacrifice* nets you 2 Elder Signs and 4 Doom points per Ritual.

* *Frenzy* 🡪 excellent both defensive and offensively. If a foe moves a monster into an area, hoping for a cheap Capture, declare combat, and Pain him right back out.
* *Necrophagy 🡪* use with impunity, as Ghouls are cheap (free, after *Thousand Young*). In a small battle, it can clean out an entire area, allowing your Ghoul to Recruit a Cultist and take the Gate. Teleporting Ghouls around the world also helps meet Spellbook requirements.
* *Ghroth 🡪* a complex Action, requiring timing and preparation, but worth the trouble. Some players focus on *Ghroth* as a central strategy. Others keep it as an occasional treat. Both techniques are effective.
* *Red Sign 🡪* gives you potentially more baseline Power than any other Faction, plus Gate-controlling Units that can’t be Captured. Remember, when you summon a Dark Young under *Red Sign*, you can place it right on the Gate (replacing the Cultist who summoned it.)
* *The Thousand Young 🡪*  its utility is obvious, but it contains subtle touches. For instance, summon a single Ghoul for 0 Power, in effect marking time while seeing what the other players do. It is also demoralizing for a foe to launch a mighty attack on you, destroying 3-4 of your Units, only to have you Summon your lost Units right back at trivial cost.
* *Blood Sacrifice 🡪* lets you earn an Elder Sign every Doom phase. As a bonus, it puts Cultists back in your Pool, so you can Recruit them for use with *Avatar* or *Necrophagy* Gate-stealing.

### Thwarting Black Goat

Black Goat is hard to dig out once settled in. However, she is easy to fend off in the first place, as her offensive Action is limited. Her monsters are feeble, and have other tasks to perform besides fighting. This means that her main tool for conquest are *Avatar* and *Necrophagy*, and both involve starting out weak in the target Area. React vigorously to drive her back.

Once she is established, she is hard to stop, because she gets extra Power from *Red Sign*, and extra Elder Signs from *Blood Sacrifice.* At some point, you may need to go take out one of her citadels. Luckily, all three of the other Factions can pull this off with their Great Old Ones, properly used. Don’t make the mistake of trying to extirpate Black Goat entirely – you’ll fail, and if you keep focusing on her, other enemies may surge ahead. *Remember: don‘t try to cure the Black Goat infection, just keep it contained.*

### Black Goat: epilogue

*“You can’t rest these days. We have nowhere to simply lie down. Our streets are overrun with beasts, loping with cloven hooves and jackal grins. The skies are no better, filled by flying abominations, dripping with fungus. I hear they take your brain. I don’t know what they do with it. Eat it? They say not. Something worse. But whatever you do, don’t go into the newly-grown woodlands. You’ll find Them there, giant horrors all mouths and tentacles. And at the center, stands the one who made Them. No, my friend, stay out of the forest.”* ***David Mendiola***

## Playing the Yellow Sign

You are constrained by strange rules, and seem to be playing your own separate game. However, in doing so, you do plunge the other players into a living nightmare. You leave a trail of scattered Units across the map, forcing foes to spend an inordinate amount of time and energy to expunge your traces. You have no real home base, but are nomadic, leaving ruin in your wake. You get Actions more quickly than other players, and can often do two things in the same round, which gives you a flexibility no one else has. Your Units are weak, but usually free, and numerous, which makes you resistant to loss. In effect, you can’t dish it out, but you sure can take it.

In the early game, be aware that you earn Spellbooks more slowly than other players, but concentrate on them. Awaken the King in Yellow soon (in the first turn, usually). Usually it’s easy to send the King in Yellow to North America after Desecrating Europe or Asia, but occasionally it’s wiser to get into Africa early and even harsh on enemies by Capturing Cultists with the King, or spreading *Zingaya.* Manyplayers prefer to migrate straight to Africa or America after Awakening the King, and save the Desecration of Europe or Asia for last.

The King in Yellow, despite his lack of Combat, is a terror. He moves quickly around the board with his undead bodyguard, and his ability to take a second Action (with *Screaming Dead*) means you can move into an enemy area and immediately use *Zingaya*, Capture a Cultist, or *Shriek* additional byakhee there in preparation for devastating effect. You don’t spend much Power on summoning monsters (most are generated via *Desecration* attempts), so focus on other priorities. Remember to leave a trail of Monster “breadcrumbs” behind you, so they can suckle Power from your Desecrations. Even if an enemy moves into the area to attack you, this will cost them 2 Power (one to move, one to Battle), so even a rear guard’s elimination is no tragedy. Plus it puts your monster back into your Pool to be recalled upon the next *Desecration* or *Znigaya.*

In the late game, you need to finish remaining Spellbooks. Usually you have few Gates, so you rely on *Third Eye* or your two Great Old Ones for Elder Signs. Thanks to *Vengeance*, when Hastur rolls into Action, you can ensure an enemy Great Old One will die. By this time you should be getting significant Power from *Feast*, to be used for Rituals or other purposes. With Hastur, you now have two choices for your double-actions – either the King or Hastur can move, and then you can do something else useful. In the late game, Hastur’s signature move is to use *He Who Is Not To Be Named* to enter an enemy’s space, then *Shriek of the Byakhee* to give him a bodyguard, and then declare Battle (unlimited with 6 Spellbooks) to assassinate any other Great Old One.

* *Passion* 🡪 can actually “resurrect” you when out of Power. It also hinders the foe. (I.e., they may choose to attack someone else, rather than give you Power).
* *Zingaya 🡪* the biggest problem with *Desecration* is mustering the troops. With *Zingaya*, you not only get a Unit, but your enemy is down a Cultist.
* *Shriek of the Byakhee 🡪* flexible, and gives both defense and offense. *Shriek* when an enemy invades, or after *Screaming Dead* or *He Who is Not to be Named* to give your Great Old Ones oomph.
* *Screaming Dead🡪* you’ll use this a LOT, so don’t put it off. It needn’t be the first Spellbook you acquire, but it shouldn’t be the last either.
* *He Who is Not to be Named🡪* the basic function is to assassinate an opposing Great Old One, but it has other uses which become obvious with experience. Remember the extra Action does not have to involve Hastur.
* *Third Eye 🡪* once you finish earning Spellbooks, *Third Eye* keeps you interested in *Desecrating*. In effect, you get an Elder Sign for 2 Power (1 to move, 1 to *Desecrate*), plus at the same time you earn a potential power source and a new monster. It’s the best bargain in the game!

### Thwarting the Yellow Sign

If you are playing against Yellow Sign, remember his monsters are puny. Because they are also numerous, you need to attack him more than once to knock out an area, but at least you don’t have to fear serious losses. *Third Eye* is terrifying, but he needs both his Great Old Ones out, plus enough monsters to succeed at Desecrating. This gives you many tools to stop him.

One of Yellow Sign’s oddities is that he tends to have too many Cultists sitting around in Europe – he is benefited by losing a few of them early game, so he can use the King to bring them forth around the world. So if you want to cause the most damage, don’t hit Europe –strike at the King himself. You are unlikely to kill the King, but just scattering his zombie army really hurts.

Yellow Sign has plenty of weak pseudo-bases (in the form of Desecration tokens) scattered round the map. You can’t spend all your time attacking these, but do it when convenient.

Yellow Sign is constrained by his need to Desecrate certain areas. If you can keep him out of, say, Africa or the Americas, you stop his progress. This is easier said than done, but each turn you delay his advance, the more desperate he gets.

### Yellow Sign: epilogue

*“I’ve done horrible things. I killed lifelong friends. Parents. Children. Why, you ask? Because … the King in Yellow. He whispered … secrets and portents. It just made sense. Don’t worry, my victims didn’t stay dead. They are a gift to the Unnamed One and so they follow, like the others. So the King in Yellow has his entourage as he spreads his message.”* ***David Mendiola***

# Frequently Asked Questions

Q. On the map of Earth, why does the North Atlantic have a little section seeping over to the Pacific side of central America?

*A. It is our way of indicating that the North Atlantic and the North Pacific are adjacent.*

Q. If my Units in an Area have 0 Combat dice, but I have special Battle abilities I can use, can I declare a Battle?

*A. No. The Units IN THE AREA must have at least 1 Combat die to declare Battle. For instance, if you have only a Nightgaunt in an Area, you can’t declare Battle there as Crawling Chaos, even if you have Seek & Destroy. .*

Q. If I have 6 Spellbooks (so Battle is unlimited), can I Battle and *then* do another Action (such as Moving out of the Battle Area)?

*A. Yes. Unlimited Actions can be done in any order. You may still only engage in one Battle per Area, however. You could use unlimited Battle in an Area, then (as your Action) move into a new Area, and Battle there.*

*In fact, it is theoretically possible to Battle in an Area, get Pained into a neighboring Area, Battle again, get Pained again, and keep up a sequence of Battles in this way until you run out of Power, lose your Units, or get Pained into an Area where you have already Battled this Action. The only limit is that you can only initiate one Battle per Area.*

Q. What happens if all Units on a side are “exempted” via *Invisibility* or eliminated by effects such as *Abduct* or *Devour* before a battle?

*A. obviously there is no need to roll dice. The Power to start the Battle is still spent. Post-Battle effects can take place if appropriate.*

Q. Cthulhu gets a Spellbook in the first Doom phase! Does this mean he gets it before his first Action?!

*A. No! There is no Doom phase in the first turn. Therefore, Cthulhu earns this Spellbook in the Doom phase of the Second turn – AFTER the first turn ends.*

Q. Two of Cthulhu’s Spellbooks require you to kill or Devour an enemy in a Battle. But doesn’t Devour take place *before* the Battle? Also, just *when* exactly do I receive these battle-oriented Spellbooks? In the middle of the fight?

*A. Pre- and Post-Battle effects count as happening “during a Battle”. Cthulhu’s two battle Spellbooks are not received until the Battle is fully completed and all post-Battle effects are finished.*

Q. Can Actions such as Cthulhu’s *Dreams* Spellbook or Yellow Sign’s *Zingaya* be used to simply remove an enemy cultist if you lack Units to make the replacement?

*A. No. If you cannot make the replacement, you cannot perform the Action.*

Q. Nyarlathotep’s Combat is based on his Spellbooks, plus his opponents?

*A. For each Spellbook he and his opponent have on their Faction sheet, he gets 1 Combat. For instance, if Nyarlathotep has all 6 Spellbooks while his opponent has only earned 3, he gets 9 Combat. His total does not count Spellbooks he has not yet earned, and it does not count Spellbooks earned for an Independent Great Old One (available in some expansions).*

Q. Can I use Black Goat’s *Avatar* with one of my own Units*?*

*A. Certainly.*

Q. How much Power does the Crawling Chaos get for Killing or Paining Cthulhu?

*A. He receives 2 Power, since that is now half the cost to Awaken Cthulhu (since, obviously, he has been Awakened once). Of course he could just take 2 Elder Signs instead.*

Q. When the Crawling Chaos exempts a Unit with his *Invisibility* Spellbook, does he pick the Unit? Can he pick an enemy? Can he exempt his Flying Polyp?

*A. Yes, yes, and yes. Remember he cannot exempt a Great Old One.*

Q. Yellow Sign’s Undead and Byakhee have Combat values that change depending on how many are present in the area. If an Undead or Byakhee is exempted via *Invisibility,* since it is still “present” does it affect the Combat of the remaining Units?

*A. An invisible Unit does not count as being “present” in the Area for this purpose. If you have 2 Undead in an Area, and one is turned invisible, the remaining Undead rolls 0 dice, not one. The intent is that Invisibility is supposed to be useful.*

Q. What if the Flying Polyp is eliminated by *Devour* or some other effect after using *Invisibility* on a Unit? Does this cancel the *Invisibility?*

*A. No. Effects, once initiated, remain regardless of the fate of the instigating Unit.*

Q. What if other players do not have enough Cultists to satisfy the demands of *Ghroth?*

*A. They lose as many Cultists as Black Goat chooses. If they do not have enough Cultists to meet the demand, the excess is ignored..*

Q. Regarding Crawling Chaos’s *Madness* Spellbook, must he obey normal restrictions on retreating Units (I.e., not into an area containing Units of the Faction just battled)?

*A. Yes, he must obey normal retreat rules. He also does not get to choose WHICH Units retreat, only their destination. Also note that with Madness, Crawling Chaos can retreat players in either order, i.e., retreating the Defender first.*

Q. Black Goat has a Spellbook requirement “Share Areas with all enemies”*?* Do the enemies all have to be in the same Areas with your Unit(s)?

*A. No. For example, in a 3-player game vs. Cthulhu and Yellow Sign, if you have a Unit in an Area with Cthulhu’s Units and also have a Unit in an Area with a Yellow Sign Unit, this requirement is immediately fulfilled. Note that this requirement can be met during an enemy’s turn.*

Q. When Crawling Chaos’s *Thousand Forms* or Black Goat’s *Ghroth* abilities are used, can a player insist on taking part of the loss, even if the other players don’t want him to? What if a player has no Power or no Cultists - can he “disagree” with the division?

*A. In the first case, this would count as a disagreement which needs to be resolved. In the second - if a player refuses to contribute to the effect, he does not participate in further negotiations, and his agreement is immaterial.*

Q. If a Ghoul is already in the target Area, can it be “summoned” there via *Necrophagy*?

*A. Only if it was not involved in the Battle. Note that an Invisible Ghoul is “not involved” and thus could react via Necrophagy!*

Q. If Nyarlathotep is alone in an Area, and *Emissary* is in play, and he receives a Pain, but cannot retreat because he is surrounded by enemy Units, what happens? Is he Killed? What if another Unit is with him, and only one Pain is rolled – can Nyarlathotep be picked to take the Pain so his companion is spared?

*A. No, he ignores the Pain. To answer the second question, yes, in this rare case Nyarlathotep could “take” the Pain to spare the other Unit. Of course if two Pains were rolled, the companion would have to be chosen to die.*

Q. When is Shub-Niggurath’s Combat total figured? For instance, if Cthulhu Devours a Cultist just before the battle, does this decrease Shub-Niggurath’s total for the battle itself?

*A. All Pre-Battle abilities happen BEFORE dice are rolled. Combat dice are figured at the instant of battle. In the example given, Cthulhu’s Devour would indeed decrease Shub-Niggurath’s combat.*

Q. If the Black Goat Faction is in a Battle, and uses *Necrophagy* does she also suffer extra Pain?

*A. Yes, both sides in the battle suffer additional Pain equal to the Ghouls called. The newly-called Ghouls cannot be chosen to take the extra pain for her, either.*

Q. If a Faction’s Units cannot retreat (because they are surrounded), and lose a Unit as a result, and then *Necrophagy* occurs, do they lose a second Unit as a result of the extra Pain?

*A. No. Only one Unit is ever lost due to inability to retreat per battle. (However, if Necrophagy causes the ONLY Pain result to an enemy-surrounded force, then of course such a Unit would be eliminated).*

Q. The King in Yellow can perform *Desecration*, but what does it *do*, exactly?

*A. The inhabitants are now shrieking in terror, fleeing their cities, or performing desperate obeisance to the King, but the immediate practical game effect is that it gives Yellow Sign a Unit, and a Spellbook when performed in the right Areas. Also, if it is successfully performed after the* ***Third Eye*** *Spellbook is in effect, it may give Yellow Sign an Elder Sign.*

Q. When Yellow Sign takes the *Screaming Dead* or *He Who is Not to be Named Action*, does he have to pay the normal Power cost for his second, subsequent Action?

*A. Yes! For instance, if he moved using Screaming Dead, and then immediately attempted a Desecration, this would cost him 3 Power total. Or 2, if Third Eye was in effect.*

Q. What happens when Crawling Chaos uses *Thousand Forms,* and the number rolled is higher than the sum of all other players’ Power?

*A. Crawling Chaos gets Power equal to the die roll.*

# Rule Omega – the Final Question

We have sought diligently for more than a year to cover all possible rules questions, and to make the game as true to Lovecraft as we can. But we are mere mortals, and as such, subject to err.

If you come across some ability or spell card conflict, and cannot find the answer in one of our FAQs (or our website FAQ online), we recommend that the players in the game vote on the desired outcome – the owner of the game should probably get a bonus – like his vote counts for double. In the end, ***Cthulhu Wars*** is *your* game. If you feel compelled to add house rules to cover such issues – do so with our blessing.

# Glossary

ACOLYTE 🡪 the only type of Cultist appearing in the core *Cthulhu Wars* game. Later expansions add new Cultists.

AREA 🡪 a map region, whether ocean or land.

ATTACKER 🡪 that Faction which just declared a Battle.

BATTLE ABILITY/EFFECT🡪 these are earned through Spellbooks or special abilities. Battle Abilities are classified as Pre-Battle, Battle, or Post-Battle. In any dispute, the Attacker uses his Spellbooks first in each segment, then the Defender.

CULTIST 🡪 a human who serves the Great Old Ones. They live on Earth and can be recruited in any Area. Their figures are identical to one another, distinguished only by their Faction color. In the basic game, the only type of Cultist is the Acolyte.

DEFENDER 🡪 a Faction involved in a Battle which it did not declare.

ELIMINATED 🡪 Units can be destroyed in many ways. When a Unit is removed from the board, it is returned to your pool (except when Captured), and can be awakened, summoned, or recruited again.

ENEMY 🡪 a Unit or Faction controlled by another player, i.e., not you. ALL Factions are “enemy” except the one you control. In the 2-player game, even other Factions you control are considered “enemy” when you are performing the turn of a particular Faction.

FRIENDLY 🡪 a Unit controlled by you.

GATE 🡪 a construct of alien science, constructed by Cultists. Gates channel Power to a Faction, plus permit the summoning of Monsters and (sometimes) Great Old Ones.

IN PLAY 🡪 some Spellbooks and abilities refer to a Unit as being “in play”. A Unit is “in play” if it is on the map, or, if it is off the map, still controlled by its owner. For example, Cthulhu on its Faction card via *Submerge* is “in play”. A captured cultist on an enemy Faction card is not “in play”.

KILLED 🡪 this refers to a Unit which was chosen to receive an enemy “6” result in Combat. Units can be eliminated in many ways that do *not* count as a “Kill”. For example, Cthulhu’s *Devour* ability does not count as a “Kill”.

MONSTER 🡪 non-human entities who serve the Great Old Ones. They usually arrive through Gates.

GREAT OLD ONE 🡪 otherworldly alien sovereigns who seek to conquer Earth. Most Factions have only one Great Old One (exception: Yellow Sign). Many abilities and Spellbooks refer to “Monsters and Cultists”. Such abilities do NOT apply to a Great Old One. All Great Old Ones have their own unique Awakening requirements, their own Combat totals (often a formula), and their own unique abilities (sometimes as an Action).

ONGOING 🡪 an “ongoing” Spellbook is permanently in effect, so long as you have satisfied its conditions. For instance, Black Goat’s *Thousand Young*Spellbook causes her Faction Monsters to cost 1 less Power as long as you meet the prerequisite of having Shub-Niggurath in play. Some “ongoing” effects permit a user to make a choice at certain times (for instance, Cthulhu’s *Devolve* Spellbook). But all “ongoing” effects are free of cost and can be repeated.

POOL 🡪 the pile of Units, Spellbooks, and other tokens which you have not yet managed to place on the map.

POST-BATTLE 🡪 an effect that happens after dice are rolled in a battle. (For instance, Shub-Niggurath’s *Necrophagy* ability.)

PRE-BATTLE 🡪 an effect that happens after a Battle has been declared, but before dice are rolled. (For instance, Cthulhu’s *Devour* ability.)

UNIT 🡪 a Cultist, Monster, or Great Old One. Does not include Gates.

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