



*la! la! Cthulhu Fthagn! Ph'nglui mglw'nfah
Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn!*

Some may call you a “cultist.” “Insane” is another word that gets tossed around. But they don’t know what you know ... and they will pay. With only a little forbidden knowledge and just the right materials you can re-create a cosmic horror in your own backyard. Just start with a body and keep adding on until it attains enough mass to grow a head with its horrifying, malformed maw. Those jerks will be sorry!

One problem. Some of your “insane cultist” friends worked with you to obtain the eldritch secrets, and they’ve got it into their heads to grow their own monstrosities. No way will you let those morons grow a tentacled beast to completion before you! Thankfully your friends Smith and Wesson and a burlap sack full of shotgun shells are on standby. Blowing off the odd tentacle will slow down the competition, and if anyone damages your slimy baby, the power of *Necronomicon* can be called forth to heal a boo-boo or two. Your Elder God shall rise first, no matter the price!



OVERVIEW & OBJECT OF THE GAME

Building an Elder God is a fast-paced card game of Lovecraftian construction for 2-5 players, ages 6 and up. Each turn you may place cards to complete your tentacled monster, damage another player’s creature, or heal damage of your own. The first player with a complete monster wins the game! A game lasts an average of 15-30 minutes, depending on the number of players.

BEFORE YOUR FIRST GAME

The first time you play, pull the five *Necronomicon* cards from the deck and cut each into two separate pieces (using the middle line as a guide) that each resemble an individual book. You will have ten total. *Necronomicon* cards function as game pieces and are not shuffled or used like standard cards.

SETUP

Make sure you have a big surface to play on, especially if you have more than two players. Before each game you need to set aside the Body, Mouth, Elder Sign, and *Necronomicon* cards. Remove the Elder Sign cards from play unless you wish to use the optional rules described below. Every player begins the game with one Body, one Mouth, and two *Necronomicon* cards. Shuffle the remaining cards, deal five cards to each player. The remaining cards form the draw deck. Designate space next to the draw deck to form the discard pile. Determine the starting player. Play proceeds clockwise.

Each player places a Body card in front of him so that the “open” end faces toward the center of the table and should keep the Mouth and two *Necronomicon* cards nearby on the table.

MANAGING CARDS

A player begins and ends each turn with five cards in his hand. Whenever gameplay leaves a player with an extra card, he must discard down to five cards at the end of the turn. If the draw deck runs out, shuffle the discard pile to form a new draw deck.

Card Types

These are the types of cards in the game:

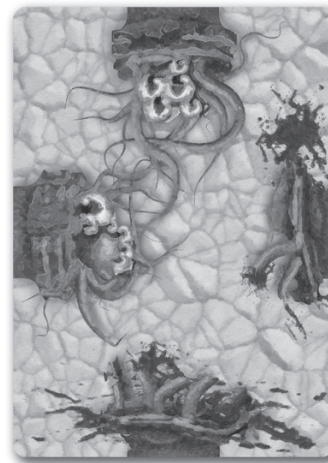
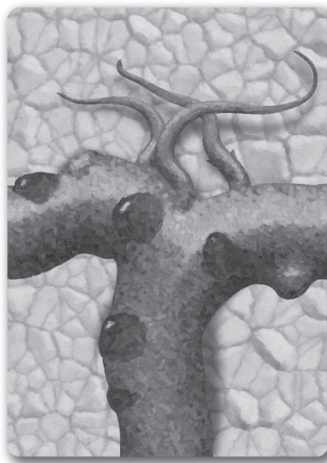
Monster cards form almost all the cards in the game. They include the **Body**, **Tentacle**, **Split**, **Eyestalk**, and **Mouth** cards. (These are all explained in more detail below.)

Damage cards are played over or adjacent to a matching, open Tentacle or Split card. They may also be played on any matching Eyestalk.

Immune cards look like other monster cards but are outlined with a purple glow. Damage cards cannot be played on a card that is Immune.

Necronomicon cards are used to “heal” Damage cards and additionally make that card Immune for the rest of the game.

Elder Sign cards are only used in the optional rules (see below). Remove from play unless they are being used.



Body, Split, Tentacle, Eyestalk

Game Terms & Concepts

The following are general terms and game concepts to understand.

In Play: Cards attached to a player's monster are considered in play. These include the Body, Tentacle, Split, and Eyestalk cards—as well as damaged cards and *Necronomicons*. Cards in a player's Hand, cards set aside (Mouth cards and unplayed *Necronomicons*), and cards in the discard pile are not considered in play.

Vertical: All the monster cards (Body, Tentacle, Split, Eyestalk, and the Mouth) are played vertically—up-and-down, or portrait. It is never legal to play a card horizontally.

Closed / Open: If a monster card extends to the border where it could connect to another card, it's considered Open. Cards that already have cards attached at all connecting points are considered closed.

Damage: You “shotgun” another player's monster by playing a Damage card over or adjacent to the original open Tentacle, Split, or Eyestalk card. You cannot damage an Immune card.

Healing: Damage can be healed by either playing a matching Tentacle, Split or Eyestalk. Any cards underneath the top card are discarded. A *Necronomicon* card may also be played to heal, leaving the *Necronomicon* on the original card to mark it as Immune.

Matching: A Matching card is one in which all connecting points are identical (top, bottom, left, and right). You may flip the card vertically if that allows it to match. The art does not have to match exactly.

WINNING THE GAME

The first player to build a complete monster on his turn wins the game! A monster is considered complete when the required number of connecting cards (all cards in-between the head and the mouth, forming a complete “path”) with no Open or Damage cards present. Once a player lays down the last required connecting card needed to win, he may immediately play the Mouth card and declare victory! The mouth card must be played vertically (like any other card) but may be pointed up or down.

The number of connecting cards required to win varies based on the number of players:

- **Two Players:** 15 connecting cards minimum
- **Three Players:** 12 connecting cards minimum
- **Four Players:** 10 connecting cards minimum
- **Five Players:** 8 connecting cards minimum



Mouth

TAKING A TURN

During your turn you draw a card and then play a card from your hand or play a *Necronomicon* to heal a damaged card.

1. Draw a Card

Draw one card from the top of the draw deck.

2. Play a Card

You may grow your monster, damage an opponent's monster, heal, or pass. A player may only play one card per turn.

To grow your monster ... place a Tentacle, Split, or Eyestalk card adjacent to an open card so that the points connect (though eyestalks only must connect on one side). If you've played the final required connecting card to win the game, place the Mouth card down and declare yourself the winner!

To damage an opponent's monster ... place a damaged Tentacle, Split, or Eyestalk card on top of a matching card or adjacent to an open card belonging to another player.

To heal your monster ... place a matching card on top of your damaged card. Alternately, place one of your *Necronomicon* cards on top of the damaged card—it is now healed and Immune for the remainder of the game. Whenever you heal, keep the top card and discard any underneath.

You may pass ... if you choose for whatever reason.

3. Discard

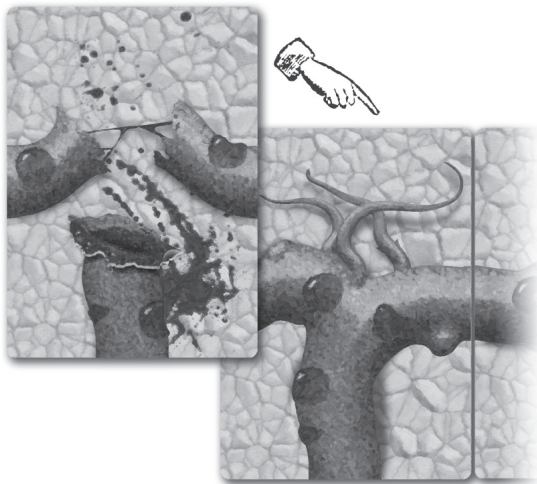
You cannot have more than five cards in your hand when your turn ends. If you have an extra card in your hand, choose one and discard it. Play continues clockwise.

RULES FOR MONSTER BUILDING

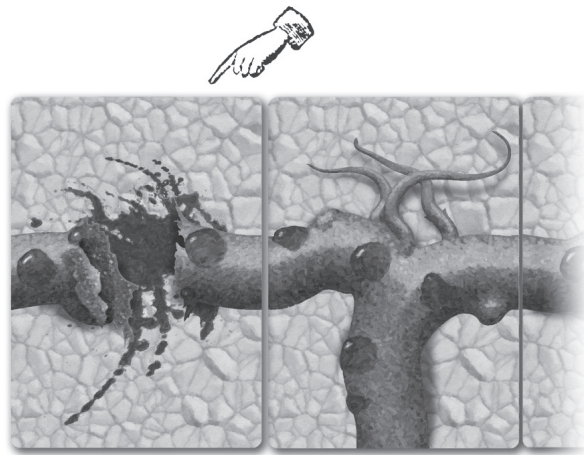
There are a few rules to keep in mind when constructing a monster, either by placing “healthy” cards or damage cards on an opponent. Remember: You may only build your own monster, and only damage an opponent's monster.

Open Placement

Any card played must leave at least one open card on the monster. You cannot play in such a way that it blocks a monster from continuing. (This rule applies whether you are building your own monster or damaging another.) Only playing the Mouth card to declare victory allows you to completely close off a monster.



Damaging a Matching Card



Placing a Damage Card Adjacent to an Open Card

Vertical Placement

Cards must be placed vertically so each connecting point properly joins together.

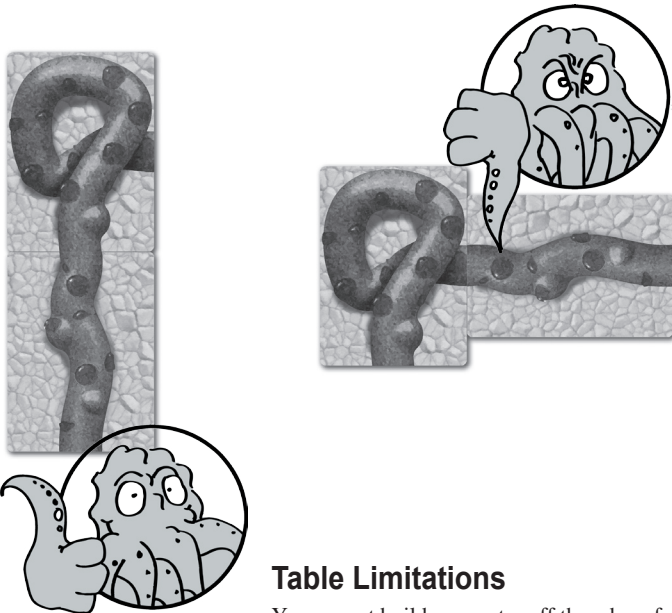
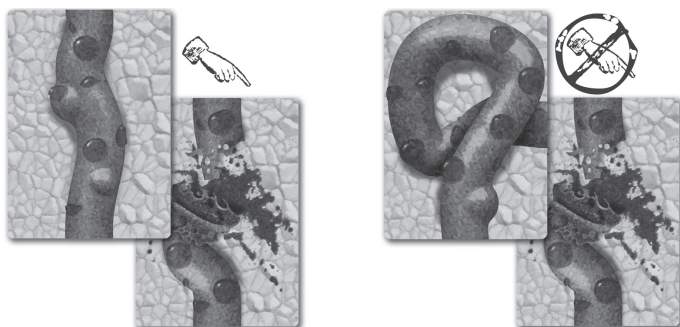


Table Limitations

You cannot build a monster off the edge of the play space or to overlap an opponent's monster. Be sure to have plenty of room divided equally among the players.

SHOTGUNNING

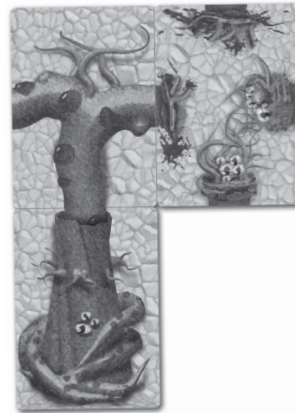
Players may slow their opponents' progress by playing damage cards—including Tentacle, Split, and Eyestalk. A "shotgunned" card may be played on top of or adjacent to an open card belonging to an opponent, subject to the normal building rules. Immune tentacles (surrounded by a purple glow) cannot be damaged, and only one damage card may be present on a player's monster at any one time.



Healing

HEALING

A player may heal a monster by placing a matching card on the damaged section. Discard any cards beneath the new card (if any). A *Necronomicon* card may also be played to heal, leaving the *Necronomicon* on the original card to mark it as Immune. Once a *Necronomicon* is played it cannot be played again. (Remember: If you place a *Necronomicon* you will need to discard a card to keep your hand at five cards when your turn ends.)



Damaged Eyestalk



Undamaged Eyestalk

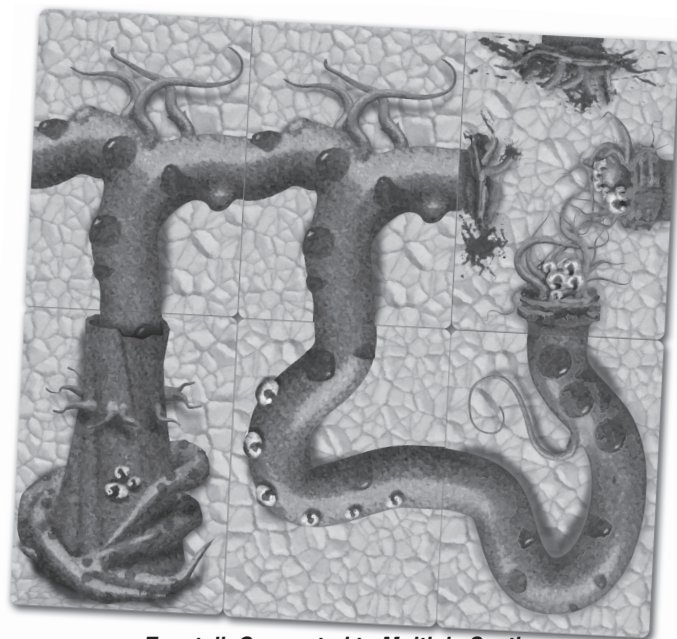
SPLIT & EYESTALKS

Split cards allow a monster to progress in two different directions, but leave a section open that must be closed off before he may win the game. (A player must also be able to trace a straight path of undamaged cards from the Body to the placement of the Mouth.)

There is rarely an advantage to playing a Split card, since it makes it more difficult to complete the monster and win the game—so many times a player will wish to hold onto a Split card to replace a damaged Split card forced on their monster by an opponent.

Eyestalk cards have four eyestalks—one for each orientation of the card. An individual eyestalk on the card may be immune, normal, or damaged. Players should try to use an Eyestalk card to close off an open section after a Split card as soon as possible. (Otherwise their monster is developing in two different directions, slowing down progress toward victory.) Eyestalks are only required to properly connect on one side, though they may connect at more than one point. Note that any eyestalks not connecting with another card are simply ignored.

Only an eyestalk connected to the monster counts in terms of legal card play or the victory condition.



Eyestalk Connected to Multiple Sections

VARIANT - BANISHMENT

There are five Elder Sign cards included in the game. If you play with this variant, shuffle the cards into the draw deck.

A player may choose to play an Elder Sign card from his hand, discarding it and declaring which player is his target and how many monster cards he is banishing. Both the active player and the target must remove the declared number of cards from their monsters—starting with outermost cards and working inward. Eyestalks must be removed before the cards to which they are attached, immune cards are removed like any other, and any card stacked on top of another only counts as one. Every card removed is discarded.



Elder Sign

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