



CULT OF THE DEEP

TOME OF RULES

Kobayashi

GAME OVERVIEW

Cult of the Deep is a hidden role dice game for 4-8 players where you are a cultist trying to complete your faction's rise to power. Fight over rituals and mythical monsters as you seek to control the cult and victory. Your actions are driven by dice, which you may use to help or betray other cultists.

Components



GAME SETUP

5 Players

High Priest
Faithful
2x Cabalist
Vengeful Heretic

6 Players

High Priest
Faithful
3x Cabalist
Repentant Heretic

7 Players

High Priest
2x Faithful
3x Cabalist
Vengeful Heretic

8 Players

High Priest
2x Faithful
4x Cabalist
Repentant Heretic

- Gather a set of role cards determined by the number of players in the game; for 4 players see page 13:
Shuffle these roles and deal one face-down to each player. Look at your role but DO NOT reveal it to the other players.
- Shuffle all sigil cards and deal one face-down to each player. Look at your sigil but DO NOT reveal it to the other players.
- Set aside the Necromancer character card (*unless you wish to use the Necromancer variant; see below*). Shuffle all other character cards and deal one face-down to each player. These will be revealed later.
- Return all unused role, sigil, and character cards to the box; they will not be used this game.
- Stack all wraith cards to form a wraith deck, and set this off to the side.
- Set out a number of altar boards depending on the number of players: for a 5 or 6 player game use 3 altar boards; for a 7 or 8 player game use 4 altar boards.
- Shuffle the ritual cards to form a ritual deck, and set this beside the altar boards. Place a ritual card face-up on each altar board. Line up the ritual tracks on the board with the ritual on that altar, and place ritual markers on the tracks equal to the number of players.
- Create a supply of ritual coins within easy reach of all players.
- Whoever holds the High Priest role card reveals it now.
- Next, reveal your character card and read its name and ability out loud (this is helpful for new players). Take a number of life counters as shown on your character card and place them next to it. The High Priest receives extra life tokens as outlined on that role card.

Now you're ready to play! The High Priest always goes first...of course.

Table Setup

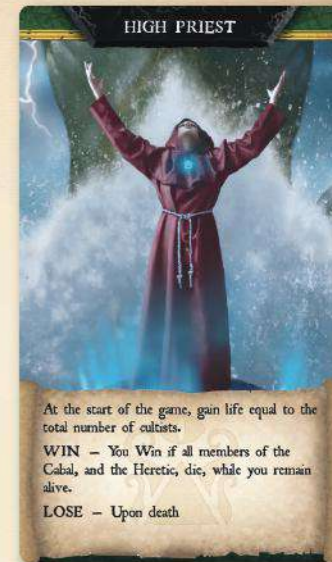


Ritual Anatomy



- Ritual Deck – Setup (pg 2) Play (pg 6)
- Altar Boards – Setup (pg 2) Play (pg 6)
- Ritual Trackers – To complete a ritual all trackers must be at 0. (page 6)
- Ritual Requirements – Required symbols/actions in order to contribute to a ritual. (page 8)
- Ritual Effect – Some rituals have special effects or abilities that occur.
- Altar Effect – You gain the altar effect for each die you resolve on a ritual.
- Keeper Effect – You become the Keeper of the ritual and apply its effect if you are the one who completes the ritual.
- Ritual Discard – Discard for rituals.

Card Anatomy



- Starting life at beginning of game.
When a cultist gains life from any source, they can go above their starting life as much as they want.
- Power Symbol – when rolled on your dice, can be used to gain life. (page 8)
- Special ability rule for the cultist (page 6)
- Number of dice you roll when it is your turn. (page 10)
- Starting dice symbols when you gain the Wraith card. (page 10)
- Rules for how the Wraith plays. (page 10)
- Special ability that may be used once per game. (page 9)
- Win Condition (page 5)
- Alternative Win Condition (page 5)
- Loss Condition

HOW TO WIN

Your victory condition depends on the hidden role you were dealt. Try to deduce who the other cultists are to achieve your victory and deny them theirs.

High Priest

You win if all Cabalists, and Heretic, die, while you remain alive.

Faithful

You win if the High Priest is alive and all Cabalists, and Heretic, dies.

Cabalist

You win if the High Priest dies and at least one Cabalist is alive.

GRAVE VENGEANCE:

If every Cabalist, including you, is dead, you only win if the Heretic is the last cultist alive or everyone is dead.

Repentant Heretic

You win if you are the last cultist alive or everyone dies.

DEATHBED CONFESSION:

While dead, you win if the High Priest is alive and all Cabalists die.

Vengeful Heretic

You win if you are the last cultist alive or everyone dies.

WRATHFUL RETRIBUTION:

While dead, you win if the High Priest dies and at least one Cabalist is alive.

GAMEPLAY

Cult of the Deep is played over a series of rounds, with each player taking a single turn each round, starting with the High Priest.

Each player's turn is split into four phases:

1. Roll
2. Commit
3. Response
4. Resolve

After your turn, play passes to the cultist on your left.

Abilities from character cards, rituals, sigils or other effects may allow you to do things that the rules forbid. In these cases, the ability takes precedence over the rules.












Phases

Roll Phase

First, roll your 5 cultist dice, noting any abilities, rituals, or other effects that may increase or decrease this number.

You have two opportunities to re-roll any amount of dice of your choice. You must accept the results of the second re-roll.

Re-rolling Dice

Example: Kim rolls 5 action dice and gets 3 , 1 , and 1 . They decide to keep 2  and 1 , re-rolling the rest. This re-roll yields 2 . Based on this outcome, Kim decides to get aggressive, and re-rolls the 2 dice showing ; they end up with 2  symbols after this re-roll. Kim must now accept this outcome: 2 , 1 , and 2 .



Commit Phase

In this phase you commit your dice results to cultists, including yourself, and rituals in order to carry out the actions associated with those results. There are no limits to how many dice you can commit to any cultists or ritual but you must commit all of your dice, if able.

Each cultist has a Power Symbol specified on their character card. You, and only you, can commit dice showing your power symbol to your own cultist.

Each ritual specifies which symbol allows you to perform that ritual, and you may only commit dice to rituals if they match that symbol. You may commit as many dice as you wish to a ritual.

Response Phase

Before resolving the dice you have just committed, each other player has an opportunity to use their special abilities to respond to your committed dice. There is no set player order for responses, but each player must be given a chance to respond before the phase ends.

If an ability changes or replaces the result of one of your committed dice, you may re-commit that die to another cultist or ritual if you wish.

If an ability provides you new dice during this phase, you must commit them as usual. Re-rolling and re-committing modified dice can only happen in the Response phase, unless otherwise noted.

This phase ends when no other player wishes to respond.

Committing Dice




Example: Jon's Roll phase yielded  and 2 . Jon commits one  to Kim, 1  to a ritual, 1  to Kevin, and 1  and the  to himself (his Power Symbol is ).



Kim    **Kevin**

Jon  

Response Phase

Example: Jon has committed a  to himself, but during his Response phase Kevin uses an ability changing it to a . Jon may re-commit that  to another player if he wishes, and he chooses to

Response Phase Example (cont):



Kim   


Kevin  


Jon  


Resolve Phase




Now it is time to resolve your committed dice. You choose the order in which your dice resolve, and all dice are resolved one at a time.

RESOLVING ON CULTISTS

: Affected cultist loses 1 life.

: Affected cultist loses 2 life.

: Affected cultist gains 1 life.

, , and  symbols have no effect on cultists, unless they are their Power Symbol or character ability.

Power Symbols

Each cultist has a specific power symbol found on their character card. You, and only you, can commit dice with this face to your own character, and when you resolve it you gain 1 life instead of that die's usual effect.

RESOLVING ON RITUALS

When you resolve a die that matches the symbol required for a ritual, advance the ritual marker one space to the left. If you do, you gain the Altar benefit of that ritual. If all markers on a ritual are now at the final space(s) of the track, you have completed the ritual and become its Keeper.






When you become the Keeper of a ritual, place that ritual next to your character card. If it has an immediate benefit, gain that now. If it has an ongoing ability, you can use that ability for as long as you remain that ritual's Keeper.

Once a ritual is completed, finish resolving any abilities from that ritual, then draw a new ritual from the deck and place it face-up on the empty altar board. Line up the ritual tracks on the board with the ritual on that altar, and place ritual markers on the tracks equal to the number of cultists in the game. If the ritual deck is empty, shuffle the ritual discard pile to form a new ritual deck and draw from there.

If a ritual is discarded, remove its ritual markers and place it in the ritual discard pile. Then, draw a new ritual and place it face-up on the empty altar board, lining up its tracks and placing ritual markers as indicated.

If you are killed, the cultist who killed you becomes the new Keeper of that ritual. They gain the benefits of any ongoing abilities on those rituals. If you are killed by yourself, or by a ritual independently of another player's influence (such as the effect of Ancient Shadow), your rituals are placed into the discard pile and not given to another player.

Keeper of the Ritual

Example: It is time to resolve Jon's dice. He first resolves the  on himself, gaining 1 life as it is his Power Symbol. Next, he resolves the  and  dice on Kim, causing him to lose 3 life in total. After that, he resolves the  committed to Kevin, who then gains 1 life. Finally, Jon resolves the  assigned to the ritual, gaining that ritual's Altar benefit. If that moved the ritual's markers to the last spaces of their tracks, Jon would become the Keeper of that ritual and gain its Keeper ability as well.




KRAKEN DICE: Before your Roll phase, roll each Kraken die on your character. You lose life equal to the total rolled. You may re-roll each Kraken die as many times as you wish, but every time you do you will roll one fewer die in your next Roll phase (*you cannot re-roll more times than you have total dice*). Kraken dice remain on your character after rolling as long as the Kraken ritual is in play.



SIREN COINS: During any living cultist's Response phase, you may spend 1 Siren coin to re-commit one of their dice to a cultist or ritual of your choice (*max. 1 coin per turn*).



CHANT COINS: During your Commit phase, you may spend any number of Chant coins to change the face of that many dice before you commit them, but you cannot change any to .

Sigils

Once per game you may declare your sigil ability. Follow the instructions on the sigil card, and then remove it from the game. Many sigil abilities can change the results of committed dice during the Resolve phase; if this happens, those dice cannot be re-committed except by another sigil ability.

Sigil abilities are immediate effects that last only for the current turn unless otherwise noted.

Death

Death is not the end for a cultist. If you die, you are not out of the game; instead you return as a Wraith to haunt the other cultists.

If you have 0 life at the end of any phase, you are dead. Reveal your role card to all cultists, choose a Wraith card from the deck and place it on top of your character card: you lose your character's ability for the rest of the game.

Then gain dice showing the symbols pictured under "upon death" of your Wraith card. These will only last until it is your turn and you roll.

If you were killed by a fellow cultist, they become keepers of each of your rituals. You keep all of your coins and your sigil, and can continue to use them as a Wraith.

Playing as a Wraith

Your Wraith card provides you with a new ability to use, which you can use once during each other cultist's Response phase as long as you have unused dice remaining. Your win condition may change depending on your role. How you take your turn will definitely change, however.

Your Roll phase proceeds as usual, except you use the wraith dice instead of the cultist dice, and roll a number of them as stated on your Wraith card. In your Commit phase, you cannot commit these dice. However, they are not discarded at the end of that phase. During each other cultist's Response phase, you may use your Wraith ability a single time to modify their committed dice.



GAME END

THE GAME ENDS IMMEDIATELY IF EITHER:

- All Cabalists and the Heretic(s) are dead: the High Priest and Faithful win together
- The High Priest is dead:
- If the Heretic is the only living cultist remaining, they win.
- If everyone dies, the Heretic wins.
- Otherwise, all Cabalists win.



NECROMANCER VARIANT

Recommended for advanced players, the Necromancer variant introduces a new character that impacts how you win the game. There are two ways to set-up the Necromancer variant:

1. During setup, shuffle the Necromancer character card along with the other character cards before dealing one to each player.
2. After passing out roles, have the High Priest reveal their role and give them the Necromancer character card. Then continue set-up as normal.

If the Necromancer dies, they do not lose their ability when they become a Wraith. Place the Wraith card beside the Necromancer card, not on top of it. They will continue playing as a Wraith, however, the Necromancer has the ability to revive themselves during the course of the game. If they do, they discard their Wraith card and resume playing as a living cultist.

High Priest and the Faithful

If the High Priest is the Necromancer, their loss condition, and that of the Faithful, changes. The High Priest and the Faithful only lose when both the High Priest Necromancer and all Faithful are dead. As long as one Faithful, or the High Priest are still alive while all Cabalists and the Heretic(s) are dead, the High Priest and the Faithful all win.

If a Faithful is the Necromancer, their win condition remains the same.

***Set-up Note: If playing with 8 cultists, change the Repentant Heretic out for a Vengeful Heretic.*

Heretics and the Cabalists

The victory conditions of the Cabalist and the Heretics remain the same, but note that they depend on whether you are alive or dead. As the Necromancer, you will have to decide whether or not to remain as a Wraith and strive for that win condition, or return to life and try to achieve your original win condition.

Variant Example

Example: The Vengeful Heretic, while alive, wants all of the other cultists to die, with the High Priest dying last. In particular, they want the Cabalists to die before the High Priest dies. While dead, this Heretic instead wants to keep at least one Cabalist alive. As the Vengeful Heretic Necromancer, you'll need to decide whether or not to resurrect yourself, and that will depend on whether or not you want to aid the Cabalists...

FOUR PLAYER VARIANT

Set up the game as usual, using 3 altar boards and the following set of roles:

4 Players


Repentant Heretic

Faithful

2x Cabalist

Set the High Priest where a player would normally sit. They will be an automated player. Deal the High Priest a character card but not a sigil card. They will also be rolling 6 dice instead of 5 during their turn.



When it is their turn, choose a player to roll the High Priest's dice, only re-rolling those dice that can't be committed (re-rolling up to 2 more times). Then follow these priorities when committing those dice as long as they have more than 15 life:

1. Cultists lose life. Commit dice one at a time, each time prioritizing the cultist with the highest potential life total, considering the life being lost from the committed dice. If there is a tie, commit to the closest tied cultist to their left.
2. Commit to rituals. Prioritize the leftmost altar board and work their way to the right, prioritizing having other cultists lose life in the ritual if possible.
3. Gain life from , as well as Power Symbols if they are not already committed to another cultist or a ritual.

However, if the High Priest is ever at 15 or less life, they will change their priorities.

1. Gain life from  and Power Symbols.

2. Cultists lose life. Commit dice one at a time, each time prioritizing the cultist with the highest potential life total, considering the life being lost from the committed dice. If there is a tie, commit to the closest tied cultist to their left.
3. Commit to rituals. Prioritize the leftmost altar board and work their way to the right, prioritizing gaining life for themselves if there is a choice in the ritual, if possible.

The High Priest can gain the effects of Altar abilities, using the priorities above, Kraken dice (but cannot re-roll them) but not Chant coins. The High Priest will use Siren coins to redirect  or  to whomever committed those dice to the High Priest, choosing the higher value if possible. If there is a situation that is ambiguous on how to resolve the Siren coins, choose the option that provides the most benefit to the High Priest.

If the High Priest completes a ritual, that ritual is discarded with no effect. If the Kraken ritual is discarded, all Kraken dice are removed from all living cultists.

POSSESSION

Whoever dies first between the Faithful and the Heretic will possess the High Priest instead of becoming a Wraith. They will transfer their sigil if it hasn't been used, any coins they have accumulated, take the role and character card of the High Priest, and their place in the turn order. The High Priest will still keep rolling their 6 dice even if possessed. Play will then continue as normal.

Possession only happens once per game.

SMALL VARIANTS/OPTIONAL RULES

In later games of Cult of the Deep, you may want to make some small changes to add or slightly change gameplay. We encourage people to experiment with the game and we would love to hear about it. Here are some changes that we have tested if you are looking to bring some flavor to a game, or encourage some slight changes to gameplay.

Truly a High Priest

Before gameplay starts, the High Priest may choose to replace one of the rituals on the Altar boards with a random one from the ritual deck. If they do, after the new ritual is placed on the Altar boards, shuffle it in the replaced ritual deck and continue the game as normal.

Don't Be So Selfish

If all of the Faithful in a game are killed, the High Priest will immediately lose 3 life as their power wanes with the lack of faith in the cult. This only happens once per game.



QUICK REFERENCE

1. ROLL PHASE

- Roll all of your dice.
- Choose which to keep and re-roll the rest. You may repeat this up to 2 times.

2. COMMIT PHASE

- Commit dice to rituals and living cultists
(Wraiths cannot commit their dice to rituals or cultists during this phase).

3. RESPONSE PHASE

- Other cultists may respond to your committed dice.
- If a die result is changed or replaced, you may re-commit it elsewhere.
- You may commit any new dice you gain.

4. RESOLVE PHASE

- Resolve all your dice individually in an order of your choice.



KRAKEN DICE

Before your Roll phase, roll each Kraken die on your character card. You lose life equal to the total rolled. You may re-roll a kraken die as many times as you wish, but each time you do you will roll one fewer die in your next Roll phase. Kraken dice remain on your character card after rolling.



SIREN COINS

During any cultist's Response phase, you may spend 1 Siren coin to re-commit one of their dice to a cultist or ritual of your choice (max. 1 token per turn).



CHANT COINS

During your Commit phase, you may spend any number of Chant coins to change the face of that many dice before you commit them, but you cannot change any to ~~X~~.


 DAGGER – Lose 1 life.

 DOUBLE DAGGER – Lose 2 life.

 BLOOD – Gain 1 life.

 PARCHMENT – Advance ritual.

 ANCIENT – Advance ritual.

 COSMOS – Advance ritual.