



CHEZ CTHULHU™



Prepare for an encounter with the most sanity-blasting entities in this or any dimension . . .

Your roommates.

In this game, you and your friends (up to 5 people) are living together, worshiping the great Cthulhu, and generally being even more disgusting than in the original *Chez Geek*. The object of *Chez Cthulhu* is to be the first to reach your personal Slack Goal . . . and you might get your Slack *in spite of* being a little bit mad, or *because* you are completely stark raving bonkers. So read on, and see how it's done . . .

Stuff

This set includes these rules, one 6-sided die, and 112 cards: 101 *Life* cards (with green backs), nine *Job* cards (with purple backs), and one blank of each type, for your own unspeakable additions.

There are also tokens for Slack (yellow on red) and negative Slack (red on yellow), and for Madness (drippy green on purple). And, last but not least, there are six large Stark Raving Mad tokens.

Setup

There are two types of cards: *Life* and *Job*. These go in separate piles. Each player (or *roommate*) will need table space for his room – that is, the cards he has played for *Activities* and *Things*, and the *People* who have come over to visit.

Job Cards

There are nine of these; they are purple, front and back. Each Job has three numbers and a special perk or disadvantage.



- ✱ *Income* is how much money you can spend on Shopping or Activities. You get your Income at the beginning of your turn. You can't save Income from turn to turn; any Income not spent on Things or Activities disappears at the end of your turn.
- ✱ *Free Time* is the number of things you can do during your Free Time phase.
- ✱ The *Slack Goal* is the number of Slack points you need to win. Your degree of Madness (see below) will affect this. A little bit of Madness counts against Slack, but a *lot* of Madness is *good*.
- ✱ The *perk* or *disadvantage* is something special that your job lets you do or keeps you from doing.

Variable Income and Free Time

Some Job cards have two numbers (e.g., 2/3) for Income or Free Time. Roll a die each turn, on your Roll phase, to see which Income or Free Time you have for that turn. On a roll of 1, 2, or 3, you have the lower number. On a roll of 4, 5, or 6, you have the higher one.

Life Cards

There are four kinds of Life cards: *Person/Pet* (green), *Thing* (blue), *Activity* (red), and *Whenever* (orange). If you run out of Life cards during a game, shuffle the discard pile and reuse it.

Note: You may not give cards away or trade them with your roommates, but you may show a roommate your hand if you like, and you may make any deal that you like about how you will play your cards. No deal is binding if someone decides to welsh. In the end, Cthulhu will eat us all anyway.

How to Play

The dealer shuffles the Jobs and deals one, *face up*, to each player. He then shuffles the Life cards and deals five, *face down*, to each player. The player to the left of the dealer goes first. Play proceeds clockwise. Each player's turn has five phases: *Draw*, *Roll*, *Call People*, *Free Time*, and *Discard*.



1. Draw

Draw cards from the Life card pile until you have six cards in your hand. You should never have more than six cards in your hand at any time.

2. Roll

Various cards require you to roll a die at the beginning of each turn, either to determine Income or Free Time, or to get rid of a Person. The Roll phase is when you do it.

Example: Oscar is the **Gravedigger**. His Income is variable (2/4), so Oscar must roll according to the rules in *Variable Income and Free Time*, above. This turn he rolls a 5, so he has an Income of 4. Oscar can now afford that copy of the **Economicon** he's had his eye on!

3. Call People

Person cards represent people who might visit the apartment. They may only be played during the Call People phase. You may call as many People as you want, if you have their cards in your hand. There are two types of Person cards: invited (they give Slack) and uninvited (they have a Slack of 0, and have other bad features, too). Invited People must be Called (see below). Uninvited People are put into play during the Call People phase, but you don't have to Call them. After all, fun people need to be called; jerks just drop in. To play a Person card:

1. **Announce** your intention to have a Person come over, and lay down the card. Then **announce** whether the Person is coming to your room or another player's room. If the Person gives no Slack, play him now.

2. If the Person gives Slack, roll a die. On a roll of 1-2, that Person was not home. Discard the card.

3. On a roll of 3-6, the call succeeded and that Person card stays in your room. Any effects that Person has on the game then occur, including Slack awarded to the owner of the room in which the Person was played!

4. When you get an uninvited Person to leave your room (see *Getting Rid of People*), you determine which room the Person goes to next.

5. Pet cards count as Person cards, and are played during this phase as well. A Pet requires no roll to Come Over – you just announce it and put it in your room!

Getting Rid of People

On the Roll phase of your turn, you may attempt to get rid of any People in your room except Pets. To invite someone to leave, roll a die. On 1-3, the Person hangs around and any negative effects take place. On 4-6, you can discard the Person, or send him to any other room that he is not restricted from entering, and he has no effect on you that turn. Except for the turn they enter your room, unwanted People do not have a negative effect until after you roll to get rid of them.

Example: Mike plays **Bill the All-Consuming** on Pam. Pam discards **Sprouts**, a Food card. During Pam's next Roll phase, she rolls to get rid of **Bill the All-Consuming**, but gets a 3. **Bill the All-Consuming** stays, and Pam discards **Hastur**, her Pet, to appease her unwanted guest. When Pam rolls during her next turn, she gets a 6. Hurrah! **Bill the All-Consuming** must leave. Since Pam controls the card, she puts it in Mike's room. Turnabout is fair play! Now Mike must discard a card (and so on, and so on, and so on . . .).

4. Free Time

During this phase, you may spend your Free Time by Shopping or doing Activities. Each Free Time allows you to do one Activity or to go Shopping. You may also play cards that give you more Free Time. You must always **announce** how you are spending your Free Time. Try to sound like it's the most important thing in your life; make your roommates jealous ("Ooo, nice tattoo!"). You must have the card for any Thing you want to buy or any Activity you want to do.

More Free Time

If a card gives you more Free Time, it goes into effect as soon as it is in play. *Example:* **Mayan Calendar Stone** gives you +1 to Free Time. You can use that Free Time as soon as the card is played.

Shopping

You must **announce** that you are Shopping. No matter how many Things you buy in one turn, it counts as one Shopping trip. If someone cancels your Shopping, all Thing cards you played return to your hand. (See *Canceling*, below.) If you still have Free Time and Income left, you may attempt to Shop again.

If no one prevents you from Shopping, you may buy as many Things as you have the Income to afford.

Example: Megan has an Income of 3 and a Free Time of 2. She plays **Switch Robes**, raising her Income to 4 for this turn. She then announces that she will use her first Free Time to go Shopping. She buys **Ironic T-Shirt** (Cost 1) and **Narconomicon** (Cost 3), which net her a total of 4 Slack. She puts both cards in her room. During her second Free Time, she will play an Activity card:



Activities

Some Activities have a Cost. If you don't have enough remaining Income to pay the Cost, then you may not perform that Activity.

You must **announce** the Activity that you plan to perform as you play the Activity card. If nobody plays a card to stop you, place the card in your room and gain the appropriate Slack. Some Activities are worth a variable amount of Slack, determined by a die roll. If a result is ever *zero* Slack (or less), the Activity is considered unsuccessful and the Activity card is put in the discard pile. You have still used up one Free Time in the attempt.

Example: During Eric's Free Time phase, he announces that he will try for some Nookie. He plays an **Evil Ritual Nookie** card. No one plays a card to stop him, so he rolls and gets a 1. The Slack for a Nookie card is 1 die -1, so Eric's Nookie is worth 0 Slack. Cursing fate, Eric discards the card.

5. Discard

If you have more than five cards, you *must* discard down to five. You *may* discard all the way down to one; you can't discard to zero. This rule only applies to discarding. If you can use your whole hand before your Discard phase, more power to you!

Other Stuff You Can Do During Your Turn

Your Whenever cards may be played on anyone at any time, unless the card text specifically prohibits it. Unless otherwise stated, a Whenever takes effect as soon as it is played, and the Whenever card is immediately discarded. If a Whenever has a continuing effect (such as **Switched Robes**), keep it on the table as a reminder, and discard it when its effect is over.

Stuff You Can Do When It's Not Your Turn

1. Again, a Whenever card may be played on anyone at any time, unless the card text specifically limits it.
2. Play a TV card to cancel someone else's Free Time. (See *TV Cards*, below.)

Marking Slack

If an Activity gives variable Slack, or if *anything* changes the amount of Slack on any card so the printed value is no longer correct, the owner must place Slack counters on the card that provided them, one for every point of Slack. All roommates must be able to look at your room and count up the counters, and the printed value on all cards with no counters, to see how much Slack you have.

If you get Slack counters that are not connected to one of your cards (for a Sacrifice, for instance), just put them below your Job card.

Or: Players start with a pile of counters, as many as their Slack Goal, and then mark *each* card in their room with the appropriate Slack. When someone runs out of counters, he knows he's won. Except, of course, for the effects of Madness . . .

Madness

It's a toss-up which will drive you mad first . . . the sanity-destroying fiends of the Cthulhu Mythos, or your roommates.

Some cards give you *Madness*, and some (but not as many!) will reduce your Madness. Use the purple Madness tokens to keep track of your Madness.

Madness interacts with Slack in peculiar ways. When you're just a little bit nuts, it makes you unhappy, which counts against your Slack. As you get crazier, though, you worry less . . . and when you're crazy enough, the upcoming destruction of the world seems just fine, and any further Madness just *adds* to your Slack and helps you win.

Score your Madness as follows in order to reach your Slack Goal:

1-3 Madness: each point of Madness counts as -1 Slack.

4-6 Madness: counts as a total of -3 Slack.

7 Madness: counts as -2 Slack.

8 Madness: counts as -1 Slack.

9 Madness: counts as 0 Slack.

Discard all your Madness tokens and take a *Stark Raving Mad* token instead. From now on, nothing can make you lose Madness. Any time something would normally let you gain Madness, just take a Slack instead!



Winning the Game

The first person to reach or exceed the Slack Goal on his Job card (keeping in mind the effects of Madness, described above) immediately wins.

Example: Zvi has the Job card **Sanitarium Guard** (Slack Goal 20). He has 19 Slack currently and acquires **Tiny**, a Pet who gives 1 Slack. He wins. Even if Mordecai plays **Possessed** to make Tiny worth negative Slack, Zvi still wins the game because he had 20 Slack for one brief shining moment. (However, if Zvi had reached his 20th Slack with a **Sleep** card, then a Canceling card – below – could keep him from winning, because the effect is that the **Sleep** was never played.)

The winner gets to *choose* his Job Card for the next game before everybody else draws theirs.

Additional Rules and Definitions

Canceling

A card that can *cancel* other cards may only affect a target card *as that card is being played*. Canceled cards are discarded. If the card was an Activity, the Free Time for that Activity is lost. If someone cancels Shopping, all Thing cards that the roommate was trying to buy are returned to his hand. A canceling card has no effect on any card already in play.

A card that is "being played" is a card that a roommate has announced and put in his room. You must play a canceling card *before* that roommate:

1. puts down another card, or
2. rolls to see if a Person is coming over, or to see how much Slack a card gives, or
3. ends his turn.

Example: **An Inconvenient Truth** can cancel any Activity card. If Traci plays a **Sleep** card and ends her turn, and then Jamie draws **An Inconvenient Truth** on his next turn, Jamie cannot affect the **Sleep** card Traci already played. Jamie will have to wait until someone announces that he is playing an Activity card, at which point Jamie can cancel it.

TV Cards

You may play **TV** as a normal Activity, or you may play it against a roommate to cancel one of his Free Times. As a roommate announces what he will do with his Free Time (Shopping or performing an Activity), play a **TV** card on him. He then spends that Free Time watching TV, and the Activity card he attempted to play, if any, is discarded. Thing cards return to his hand. He keeps the **TV** card in his room and gains 1 Slack.

TV cannot be used to prevent players from Calling People.

Anime Girl and Bill the All-Consuming

These uninvited People have special rules for their behavior. When **Anime Girl** or **Bill the All-Consuming** is played on you, you must immediately discard one card from your room, of the type stated on the uninvited Person's card. You choose what to discard. Each consecutive turn one of these People is in your room, you must discard one card of the appropriate type, until all cards of that type are gone from your room. After these pests eat/drink/destroy all cards of the appropriate type, they still stay in your room until you can get rid of them.

Jobs and Slack

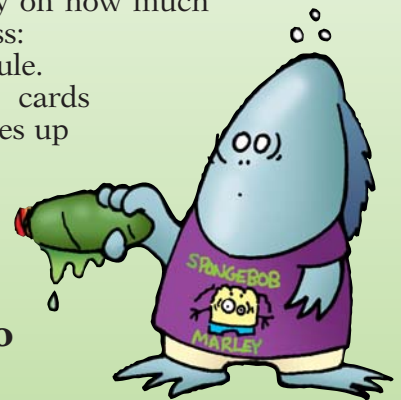
If your job increases the Slack of other cards in your room (for instance, **Dog Walker** increases Pet Slack), put a counter on the cards to show the extra Slack. If you get a new Job during the game because of **Displeased the Master!** or **New Job**, you keep this extra Slack on cards that you acquired during your old Job.

The new Job's special trait only applies to cards played *after* the Job card comes into play.



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Example: Mordecai plays **New Job** and draws **Lackey**. Mordecai may not draw any replacement cards until the start of his next turn.

Double Cards

Some cards fall into more than one category. For example, **Can of Worms** counts as both Booze and Tentacles, and **Narconomicon** counts as both Weed and Book. These cards are open to the attacks and benefits of both categories, so, for instance, **Can of Worms** gains Slack from **Mutation**, but can be discarded because of **Anime Girl**.

Noisy Nookie

At any time a player gets Nookie worth 5 or more Slack, the roommates on either side of him lose (if they have it) one **Sleep** card from their rooms. Yes, this can remove an already-played **Sleep** card.

Combining Chez Cthulhu with Chez Geek

If you are utterly insane, you may combine **Chez Cthulhu** with the original **Chez Geek** (and/or any of its supplements).

To keep the character abilities balanced, you will have to read every reference to “Cigarettes” on **Chez Geek** (etc.) cards as including “Tentacles” on **Chez Cthulhu** cards, and vice versa. Yes, we know that will have some alarming results. We’re okay with that.

Using Madness in Other Games

Since there are no Madness-inducing cards in other **Chez Geek** games, you have two choices, and the one you pick depends entirely on how much fun you have with Madness:

1. Ignore the Madness rule.
2. Count all Madness cards double, so when one comes up it will be really powerful.