

Christmas is Cancelled!

How could this have happened? Gather your family and friends, and save our beloved holiday!

Have you ever seen the old Christmas movies like Rudolph, How the Grinch Stole Christmas, or The Year Without a Santa Claus? What if you were in them? Who would you be? Can you save Christmas?

What is it?

Christmas is Cancelled is a story game for 3-6 people where you play the role of a character in a story like the Christmas classics. To play, you will need 3 or more people, at least 2 six-sided dice, paper, and some pencils. You can expect to play for 1-4 hours depending on the number of people and the pace of the story. One person will be **The Spirit of Christmas** (The Gamemaster or Story Teller in role-playing game terms). That person is responsible for guiding the events of the world and of all the supporting characters who are not played by the rest of the players. Everyone else creates their own characters to control (The **Player Characters**). Creating those characters is covered below. One important note is that Santa Claus can never be a Player Character. If he is present in the story, he actions will be directed by The Spirit of Christmas.

Everyone at the table together will all craft a story guided by their character's actions, the responses of the Spirit of Christmas, and a little luck. You should all work to create a memorable tale that could be retold later.

Christmas is Cancelled!? How did this happen?

Everyone in the group collectively determines what caused the end of Christmas. This reason can be as silly or serious as you want your story to be, but whatever it is, it means Christmas is Cancelled! Was it stolen by a terrible creature? Is Santa Claus too sick to make his journey? Is the Sleigh broken?

What's in a character?

Characters in this game can either be created for the game or taken from existing stories. Some examples based on popular media are listed on the last page. Each character will have a **Name**, **Concept**, **Stats**, **Special Abilities**, and a **Connection**.

The **Name** can be anything you like, it's what everyone else will address you by when you're playing as your character.

The **Concept** is the idea behind the character. For example, they may be a talking snowman, and elf, a reindeer, or just a regular person.

The **Stats** are *Body*, *Mind*, and *Christmas Cheer*, and they're used with two dice when a character needs to address a challenge or conflict. When creating your character, you choose one of your stats to get +2, another to get +1, and the final one to get -1 to rolls. You can select in any order but all 3 stats will have a number, and each number may only be used once. These stats are used when facing a challenge or conflict and are added to your dice roll. This is covered in more detail below in **Resolving Conflicts and Overcoming Obstacles**

A **Special Ability** can be anything you like that allows you to do something out of the ordinary. The other players and the Spirit of Christmas should approve your ability. For example, certain reindeer can fly and might even have a nose that can light up. You can use these abilities in some situations to drive the story in a new direction or bypassing the need to roll dice when overcoming a challenge. These aspects make your character unique in the world.

Your **Connection** is centered around one of the other Player Characters at the table. It should be a shared experience with them that ties you to each other. You might have known them in childhood, had some sort of adventure with them before, or perhaps you're friendly rivals. Whatever you select, it will help give depth to your characters. Each Player Character at the table should have someone's Connection directed at them.

Resolving Conflicts and Overcoming Obstacles

In the course of their journey, the Player Characters will sometimes be beset by obstacles and conflicts. Perhaps they need to convince a person to help who rather would not, confront a yeti, or bring joy to someone who needs it.

When the Spirit of Christmas determines that there is a conflict in the story whose outcome is uncertain, they inform the players that a roll is needed. One of the players will perform the roll, and they **describe the action** they take as well as what **outcome they intend**. The Spirit of Christmas will tell the player which stat applies to the action described before the dice are rolled.

The player will roll two dice, add the named stat, and if the result is 7 or more, the outcome described by the player happens. The player can use their imagination to narrate the results. If they miss the roll, something else will happen. What happens in that case is entirely up to the Spirit of Christmas, but it should always be an interesting result that drives the story forward. An example of a poorly handled outcome that doesn't aid the story would be "You attempt to open the stuck door by rolling your *Body*. You've missed the roll, so you can't get it open." A better example would be "You attempt to open the stuck door by rolling your *Body*. You missed the roll, so you're a little too slow -- you get the door open, but too late. Everyone else can run through, but the yeti chasing you grabs you and picks you up! *What do you do?*"

The Spirit of Christmas is encouraged to pose challenges to the players and see how they

respond with "What do you do?" Using "Yes, but ..." or "Yes, and ..." responses when a player performs some actions will help drive the story forward and make it enjoyable for everyone.

In some situations, a character's Special Ability may allow them to skip a roll and succeed without rolling dice. The players at the table will collectively determine if it's appropriate. The Spirit of Christmas has the final say.

"Rule 0"

This is a game meant to be played for fun. If something in these written rules isn't working, change it to suit your group. The Spirit of Christmas is free to make decisions during the game that go against what's written here if it helps everyone at the table have fun together. They should still try to be consistent and keep the same decision throughout the game.

Advice for the Spirit of Christmas

As the Spirit of Christmas, you will be in charge of a lot during the game -- posing challenges to the players, creating and acting out the responses of the Supporting Cast (Every character not controlled by players at the table), and keeping track of what might happen next. You should have a general idea of possible outcomes, but the players will be using all their imagination and creativity, so don't become determined on a single outcome. The other people there will surprise you!

You should encourage imaginative and fun actions. Nothing will stop the fun more than saying "No, I don't think that will work", or "You can't do that." Instead, say "You can do that, but ..." or "It works, and ...". Use it as a challenge that they can roll to overcome. If it's something really extreme, bump up the number they need to beat up to 8 or even 9 instead of the usual 7.

If a situation comes up that could be a challenge but failure isn't interesting to the story, just say "yes", and let them succeed. Keep them engaged and in character instead of thinking about the dice.

This role has a lot of responsibility, but also remember that you're at the table to have fun too. Keep it exciting and interesting! Be a fan of your players; this shouldn't be competitive with you against them, but rather your role serves to give the players challenges they can eventually overcome, creating a good story as they struggle, sometimes fail, and eventually succeed. A good story will end with everyone at the table laughing, recollecting exciting moments, and celebrating how they personally saved Christmas. Break out the hot chocolate and candy canes!

During the game, some players may be more talkative or outgoing than others, and this can sometimes mean that people aren't feeling engaged or effective in the story. It's your job to keep the spotlight moving around from player to player, crafting scenes that different individuals can

each rise to the occasion for. Encourage the quieter players to speak up and act, pose challenges directly to them, and encourage the outgoing ones to support the other people so that everyone at the table walks away with a happy memory.

If everyone at the table is a little older or already familiar with role-playing games, you can use a slightly more advanced version of the conflict resolution system. On a 6 or less, the character does not accomplish the intent of their action. On a 7-9, they succeed, but with an added twist, cost, or complication. The Spirit of Christmas should narrate how they fell short or what was lost on the way to the success. On a 10+ they succeed with no problem at all - the player can narrate here.

Playing with Younger Children

The dice mechanics in this game might be unfamiliar for children, but it should be simple enough for them to catch on quickly. Older players at the table are encouraged to help them out during play, reminding them of things their character can do, helping out with the dice, and encouraging their imagination. They may have a shorter attention span, so plan in some breaks and keep the pace exciting and fast-moving to aim for a shorter game. Throw in some Christmas music during the game, eat some candy, and make a fun occasion out of it. Some well-timed videos during the game can raise a lot of excitement for it - find the Snow Miser or Heat Miser songs online if they come into the story, show some pictures of the Yeti, or use ornaments or figures to represent characters at the table. If they deviate from the rules, don't worry about it too much as long as everyone is having fun. Treat these as guidelines and go with what feels right in the moment.

Example Characters

Name: Ralph the Reindeer

Concept: A reindeer trying out for the sleigh team

Stats:

Body: -1

Mind: +1

Christmas Cheer: +2

Special Abilities: Flying, Orange-lit nose

Connection: _____

Name: Stan the Snowman

Concept: A snowman who wants to become human

Stats:

Body: +1

Mind: +2

Christmas Cheer: -1

Special Abilities: Living snowman, Can make snowballs from nowhere.

Connection: _____

Name: Suzy Acker

Concept: An athletic young girl getting tired of the holiday

Stats:

Body: +2

Mind: +1

Christmas Cheer: -1

Special Abilities: Can overcome challenging physical obstacles with ease.

Connection: _____