It’s Christmas, and the little children are enjoying their time off from school – but they’re not the only ones who have been looking forward to the holidays. The Krampusz, a race of Christmas demons, are looking for tasty little children to stuff in their sacks and carry off to their lair. And they’ve learned how to look like children during the day to make sneaking into the house all the easier...

So, the tender, tender children have to turn to the one person who can always protect them: their parent. By tattling on the right players, the children can eliminate the Krampusz and survive. But if they don’t pick the right players to tattle on, the Krampusz can pick them off, one by tasty one. The children do have a few other friends willing to pretend to be children and help them out.

**How to Play**

**Part 1: Set Up**

Choose a “parent”. That person will not play in the game but will manage the rounds. The Parent selects and shuffles an appropriate number of Child, Krampus, and other role cards. All players should know which role cards are in play - but not who has each role.

All players should close their eyes and put out their hands. The Parent randomly distributes one card to all players. When all cards have been distributed, players should look at their roles – but not look at others’ roles or allow others to see their role. Roles can be revealed only when players are eliminated from the game – or as listed on specific cards.

**Part 2: Night**

1. The Parent says, “All players close your eyes.”

2. Once all players have closed their eyes, the Parent asks anyone whose role allows them to take actions at night to open their eyes and act.

Remember, secrecy is key during the night. The Parent should avoid talking directly in the direction of a player. Players taking actions at night should move as quietly as possible and should indicate choices by pointing. Speaking is permitted but highly discouraged.

**Order of Night Actions**

Night actions should be taken in the following order, with the Parent saying the following (omit as appropriate for roles not in play):

a. “Ghost of Christmas Future, make your prediction for who will be carried off.”

b. “Ghost of Christmas Past, speak one letter from beyond the grave.”

c. “The Nutcracker Prince, please open your eyes. Select a player to protect.”

d. “Santa, please open your eyes. Select a player to have the Milk and Cookies.”

e. “Elf on the Shelf, please open your eyes. Select a player to learn whether they are a Krampus or not.”

f. “Krampusz, please open your eyes. Select a player to stuff in your sack.”

**Part 3: Day**

1. Once all night actions have been completed, the Parent should say, “It’s the morning. Children, wake up!” All players should open their eyes.

2. The Parent says, “And when you wake up, you find that [name] has been carried off by the Krampusz.” That player reveals their role and is now out of the game - unless their role prevents this elimination.

3. If you would like to, you may time your day rounds. 3 minutes is our suggestion.

4. During the day, all players who have not been eliminated may talk. Remember, the children are trying to tattle on the Krampusz to eliminate them from the game.

5. Players may reveal their role to other players, may lie about their role, or may say nothing about their role.

6. Players may vote to tattle on another player. Any player may call a vote, and majority rules. If a majority of players vote to tattle on a player, that player reveals their role and is out of the game - unless their role prevents this elimination. Players may only tattle on one player per day. In cases of a tie, no one is tattled on, but players may vote again.

7. Day ends after an agreed upon time limit.

Repeat night and day rounds until there are no more Krampusz or until there are as many or more Krampusz than other roles.

**How to Win**

If you are a Krampus, you win if there are the same number of Krampusz as children – or if there are more Krampusz than children – even if you were tattled on.

If you are a child or a role other than a Krampus or Jesus, you win if you tattle on all of the Krampusz. If the children win, all children win - even the ones tattled on or carried off. Once the Krampusz are gone, your friends can rescue you.

Some roles have different win conditions. If you meet that condition, you win regardless of the outcome for the Krampusz and children.

Also remember that some roles must meet specific conditions in order to win. If those conditions are not met, that player does not win regardless of the outcome for the other children and Krampusz.
Fun Krampus Facts

1. Krampus is a Christmas demon from the Alpine regions of Europe including Germany, Austria, southern Bavaria, South Tyrol (wherever that is), northern Friuli (okay, now Wikipedia’s just making stuff up), Hungary, Slovenia, and Croatia.

2. Whereas in American tradition, naughty children are punished by getting coal by Santa, in the above-listed Alpine regions, naughty children are punished by getting abducted by Krampus. He stuffs them in a sack and carries them away to his lair to be eaten, drowned, or just carried directly to Hell. Hardcore, Alpine peoples. Hardcore. Such abductions typically occur on Krampusnacht, which is on December 5th. So stay out of that part of Europe for basically the whole first week of December just to be safe.

3. Krampus traditionally appears as a large demon with dark brown or black fur, the horns of a goat, and a long, pointed tongue that lolls out of his mouth and is objectively terrifying. His feet are depicted as either both cloven hooves or one such hoof and a human foot with long, pointed nails. Krampus usually carries chains, a sack or washtub (for child transportation), and birch branches and/or a whip.

4. People who study the history of Krampus – which would be an awesome job, we think – claim that his history dates back to pre-Christian traditions where pagan initiation rites included binding, scourging, and other forms of mock-death. We’re surprised those traditions aren’t still around. That sounds like good holiday fun.

5. Greeting cards bearing Krampus’s image (Krampuskarten) have been popular in Europe since the 1800s. They often include the slogan “Gruss vom Krampus!” (“Greetings from the Krampus!”) This slogan has led to the occasional misconception that his first name is Gruss. That misconception may have been limited to us before we did all of our research.

6. In recent years, some regions have hosted Krampuslaufen, where people dress as Krampusz (the Hungarian plural of Krampus) and go on an alcohol-fueled jog through the city. Typically, the alcohol imbibed is schnapps. Basically, this region of Europe sounds awesome, as it combines two of our favorite things: running around drunk and terrifying children.

7. When we grow up, we want to be Krampusz – or any number of the other names for Krampus: Klaubauf (Northern Austria); Bartel, Niglobartl, or Wubartl (Southern Austria); Pelzebock or Pelznickel (Southern Germany); Gumphinickel (Silesia); Schmutzli (Switzerland); or Miley (North America). 

“Der Krampus ilt dal!” from Wiener Bilder, No. 48 (Dec. 6, 1896)
Each day, you may vote to tattle on one player.
Child

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Krampus

Each night, you may stuff one player in your sack and take them to your lair.

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**Ghost of Christmas Past**

If you are carried off by the Krampusz, you may speak one letter of the alphabet from beyond the grave each night, but you may not talk, gesture, or communicate in any other way with the living.

You remain completely “awake” at all times, seeing everything.

**Ghost of Christmas Present**

Always vote not to tattle on players.

**Ghost of Christmas Future**

Win if you predict who will be carried off two nights in a row.

**Jesus**

Win if and only if you die. You cannot pretend to be a Krampus.

**Santa**

At the start of each night, you must give the Milk and Cookies to one other player.

**Milk and Cookies**

-----Item-----

The player with the Milk and Cookies may not be tattled on or carried off by the Krampusz.

This item remains face up and visible in front of the player who currently has it.

**Elf on the Shelf**

Each night, you may learn if a player is a Krampus or not.

**The Grinch**

You’re a mean one.

Always vote to tattle on players.

**Frosty**

You’ll be back again some day.

After the first time you are tattled on or carried off by the Krampusz, reveal your role and remain in the game.
**Rudolph**

You cannot play in any reindeer games. You may still vote, but your vote counts neither for nor against the player.

You do, however, count as part of the population for the purpose of determining how many votes constitutes a majority.

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**Tiny Tim**

I see a vacant seat...

If you are not protected by the Milk and Cookies or The Nutcracker Prince during at least one of the first three days, you die on the fourth night.

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**Mall Santa**

You win if another player states that they think you are Santa.

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**Scrooge**

If you would be the deciding vote for tattling on a player, you can learn the player’s role and then may change your vote.

In cases of a majority determined by more than one vote, this ability cannot be used.

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**The Nutcracker Prince**

At the start of each night, you can protect one player for that night and the following day. If that character would be tattled on or carried off by Krampus, your role is revealed and that player is protected.

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**Krampus**

Tattle on your friends or eat them later.

A game by Andrea & Doug Levandowski

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Fonts: Steelfish & Christmas Card

All facts from Wikipedia, the source of all knowledge.

Card Image: "Der Krampus ill dal" from Wiener Bilder (Dec. 6, 1896) via Wikimedia Commons

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Suggestions? Compliments? Let us know what you think at info@meltdowngames.com!