

Nihil Letter

We all seek purpose in our lives. Many of us may think they can grasp the meaning of existence in the context of life on Earth, as it is. Be it by some kind of religion, art or spirituality, or by any agenda of our dynamical society, hidden behind people, power, money or status. But it is only believable that, inside any brain, somehow, humans flirt with the illusion of purpose, being oblivious of the infinite truths and horrors that may lie beyond the curtains of their capacity in this vast and strange universe. More accurately, humans are all just fractured points in space and time, emerged from the dust they step over, hopelessly trying to make and to find sense and ultimately achieving comfort in delusions or inexistence itself. Yes, inexistence, the only end of all journeys and source of that everlasting fear setting their rhythms. There is no escape. And even at the shadows of this dark scenario, equipped with our incoherent selves, we can convulse, we can try, and we do. We join this absurd spectacle and embrace the misery of our condition by being the clowns we deserve to be, by showing our yellow teeth wide and playing our little games while we can. So welcome to the nihil letter and play the game of purpose catching!

OBJECT

In the position of climbing the mental ladder towards the purpose of your existence, you fatally end up facing some common places of despair that lurk behind the steps, ready to consume you. All the traps and the very lives of your peers, stumbling upon you, can't be enough to destroy the fevered flame inside you that is keeping yourself from putting an end to your own embarrassment. Your only chance is to move on, to strive, hoping for not being smashed by the bad luck inherent to every path you can take in life. At the end of the road, you win by being the closest one to The Purpose. Good luck at that, and don't get frustrated.

COMPONENTS

The game consists of 16 cards, each representing those realizations you shall have in your way to The Purpose. The cards are composed by their names, illustrations, rules and flavor texts and their meaning values.

THE GAME

Shuffle all the cards and put them all in a face-down pile in the center of the table. Remove the top card face-down, without looking. Then, if it's a two player game, remove the next three cards face-up, for you both to see. These cards will not be used during this round. Then, each player gets one card from the pile; you can see only your card. The most depressive player starts the first round.

In your turn, draw the top card of the pile, then play one of the cards in your hand, discarding it in a face-up pile at the center. Then, you must follow the effects of that card. Your turn ends, and the next player, at your left, repeats these actions. The discarded cards remain visible, maintaining the order of discard, for counting cards and remembering the round's history.

Whenever a player goes to the Void of Inexistence, he or she is no longer in possession of a sentence or a body, due to a lack of fortune of any kind. That player is dead for the round and is no more an agent in pursuit of something. His or her cards are discarded with no effects.

It is possible, but not allowed, to cheat during the course of the game while you are holding private information about your cards. If you have such an impulse, the misery of your existence surpasses the maximum permitted for you to understand even the purpose of a game, stop trying to seek anything in real life, for your own preservation.

The round ends when the center pile of cards gets empty, at the end of the same turn. Then, all the living players show their hands, and the winner is the one holding the card with the highest meaning, the one closest to The Purpose. If there is only one player alive during the round, he or she also wins for just that. The winner actually achieves nothing, but can pretend to be closer to a clear understanding of The Purpose, so he or she may count the victory.

If the game has 2 players, count 7 victories for you to be the overall winner. For 3 players, count 5 and, for 4 players, count 4.

THE CARDS

1. Life: You start out by having a life, and even it being a strange position, it's lucky enough that you could get it. Congratulations for that, you born possibility. Anyway, most people stay just in the life level. The one who plays life chooses another card and another player; if that player has the named card, he or she has to quit this journey, murdered by the player who discarded a life.

1. *Life*: You start out by having a life, and even it being a strange position, it's lucky enough that you could get it. Congratulations for that, you born possibility. Anyway, most people stay just in the life level. The one who plays life chooses another card and another player; if that player has the named card, he or she has to quit this journey, murdered by the player who discarded a life.

2. *Isolation*: The first occurrence of a quest for understanding is being understood. You want so badly just to be comprehensible, to have meaning in your own thoughts, until you see that before any progress it's you that can't assure any understanding of others. There is always something out of place, then you see yourself isolated in your disgrace, alone in your own pit. When you play the isolation, you get to see another player's hand, without revealing to others.

3. *The Absurd*: Once you start to seriously consider thoughts about the reality that surrounds you, that's when the absurdity of life can strike you on the nose. You see yourself in the middle of a comedy play, where the truths that you always relied upon are just some of the jokes. And they are not for you to laugh at, you are just part of it. You understand that you shall die in discomfort and may start to play with the idea of your own abortion. Put yourself at ease, for there is joy in the endless rolling of rocks humanity is trapped in. Try to find it. By conjuring the absurd, you choose another player to immediately confront reality with you. You both compare hands without showing your cards to other players, then the one with the card of lesser meaning jumps into non-being.

4. *Flee from Reality*: Here are some of the perks of being a bunch of organized matter. We can play with matter to consciously warp our minds, those rooted in this chaos. Drugs can be used for presence and for absence, and there is good use for both. If you feel pressured enough, don't collapse, flee; you are allowed to sever the chains that are binding you to yourself, sometimes. Whatever it is you consider to be you, anyway. When you flee from reality, you can't be affected or chosen by other plays until your next turn.

5. *Insanity*: This feature is remarkable, because you should not fear it. You will never be insane, only others will; whenever they can't hold it, as you can see. It is the opposite of awareness in a beautiful way. Insanity is only observable from the outside while awareness is only observable from the inside. For all we can see, though, it seems also to be a natural resolution for all (other) tired minds struggling up to this far. Always remember to be

considerate to the insane, that's because, ultimately, you can never know... Insanity lets you choose any living player to discard the card in hand without effects and draw a new card. If the center pile already has no cards, that player draws the removed hidden card instead. If all other players are fleeing from reality, you must choose yourself.

6. *Feebleness:* The mind isn't constrained to destroy itself. Once the job is fairly done inside the house, despair spreads over the entire body. The dice of death roll both directions, sucking a bit of your strength at every step. Once you are here, it's not so surprising, and your move is to try to overcome your disease. At the edge of your feebleness, you pray. The real surprise is that you can only hope to succeed in your quest despite it, and this one is hard to absorb. You probably never get to truly accept it, for illness consumes the whole of you first. By playing feebleness you choose another living player to trade hands with you. Feebleness only does nothing if everybody else is fleeing from reality.

7. *Motivation:* Ironically, this is the closest you can be of any purpose, although motivation is a state you can achieve at every stage of your path. The trick is that, the further you go, the more meaningful and precious motivation is to you. And the harder it is to grasp. The only effect of motivation is being lost, whether by Insanity or by feebleness. If you happen to have one of these cards and motivation in your hand, you must discard the latter. You can also lose your motivation by your own will.

8. *The Purpose:* You go all the way to the end of the game, then you see it's another joke. Of course the purpose is unreachable, what do you think you are? It actually is way beyond your most wild dream, if it happens to be somewhere. But since you do have wild dreams, here is a bit of wisdom; conceive this path as a circle that goes back to the stage of life, where everybody lies. Yes, you smashed yourself during the journey, but now you are in position to rearrange the pieces to really build a purpose that belongs to you. It is of the most value to know that this purpose has nothing to do with the reality around you, only to the reality of you. This is a position you can only understand after completing the circle. It's still miserable, as you are, but it dignifies the insides of your world, and that's the most you can create for you. If you discard the purpose, you are giving your backs to the whole search for meaning, you are abandoning life itself.

CREDITS

This is a custom made flavor variant of the very known game Love Letter, designed by Seiji Kanai, from Alderac Entertainment Group. There are lots of variants of Love Letter, the original game is about delivering a love letter to a princess, and the cards are the members of the court able to do the task (the rules of the game and cards are unchanged). If you like the game, please buy the original and support its creators.

The illustrations portrayed in the cards were taken from the internet and I will credit the ones I know the source: Pink Floyd – The wall (1982); Francis Bacon (the artist); Jean Frederic Bazille; Tiziano Vecellio; René Magritte; Caspar David Friedrich.



Feebleness



Trade hands with another player of your choice.

Death is a continuous process that begins with the realization of impotence

6

Flee from Reality



Until your next turn, ignore all effects from other player's cards.

One must be out of home to feel at home

4

Flee from Reality



Until your next turn, ignore all effects from other player's cards.

This is what forever feels like

4

Insanity

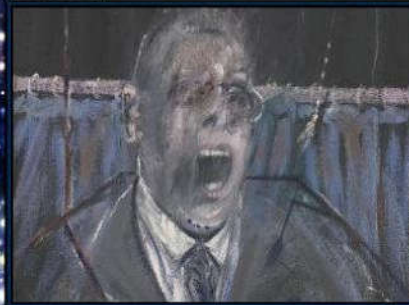


Choose any player, including yourself, to discard his or her hand and draw a new card.

Insanity is the true face of survival

5

Insanity

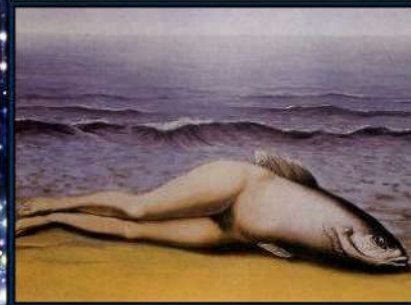


Choose any player, including yourself, to discard his or her hand and draw a new card.

Embrace the illusion or spend your life trying to reach the unreachable

5

Isolation



Look at another player's hand.

To find yourself alone, just try to reach someone else

2

Isolation



Look at another player's hand.

No one will ever see what you see and truly understand what it is to be you

2

Life



Name a non-life card and choose another player. If that player has it, he or she goes to the Void of Inexistence.

Life is fragile

1

Life



Name a non-life card and choose another player. If that player has it, he or she goes to the Void of Inexistence.

Life is meaningless

1

Life



Name a non-life card and choose another player. If that player has it, he or she goes to the Void of Inexistence.

Life is obscure

1

Life



Name a non-life card and choose another player. If that player has it, he or she goes to the Void of Inexistence.

Life is everything

1

Life



Name a non-life card and choose another player. If that player has it, he or she goes to the Void of Inexistence.

Life is unjust

1

Motivation



If you have Motivation and also Feebleness or Insanity, you must lose Motivation.

It's embarrassing that we always keep trying despite never achieving, but that's all we get to do

7

The Absurd



You and another player secretly compare hands. The player with the lowest meaning goes to the Void of Inexistence.

The realization that life is absurd cannot be an end, but only a beginning

3

The Absurd

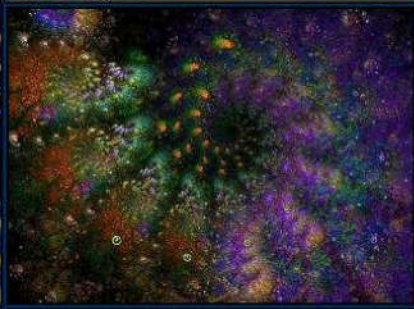


You and another player secretly compare hands. The player with the lowest meaning goes to the Void of Inexistence.

At any street corner the feeling of absurdity can strike anyone in the face

3

The Purpose



If you lose The Purpose, you go to the Void of Inexistence.

The answer must lie somewhere in existence, and probably is not even conceivable to us

8