

# BriarMaze Rules - 1

## Of Lost Cats and Mazes

You live next to a great mansion with a huge briar maze. Night is about to fall, and your three cats have been missing for hours now. You are certain that they got lost in the maze. You go out to look for them, but you remember what your parents said:

*Never go into the maze. Never be around that mansion when darkness falls. The people who live there are strange. The old man is-- they say he's a sorcerer. And his wife -- she's something even worse than that. And weird sounds come from their maze at night. Sounds like howls, growls, hisses and roars. Do not go there.*

There's still some time before darkness falls. Time enough to go and look for your cats. What could go wrong?

## Needed For Play

You need the *BriarMaze* deck, two six-sided dice, and a pencil to keep track of your character's Life points.

## Choose a Character

There are 5 characters in the deck, each with different scores (Body, Mind, Soul, Life), and a skill. Choose one and remove the others from the game.

## Cats

There are three cats: white (Snow), black (Ink), and ginger (Ember). You score 1 point for each cat you have with you when (if) you exit the Maze.

## Rolling Dice

When a card asks you for a roll, it means: roll two dice and add your relevant score (Body, Mind, or Soul). To succeed, the total must be equal to or higher than the target number. **A roll of 2 is always a failure, and a roll of 12 is always a success, no matter what your score is.** Rolling a success is also called "to pass" in the rules, as is "Pass a roll".

*Example: a card requires you to make a Body 10 roll. You roll two dice, add them to your Body score, and if the result is 10 or better, your roll is successful. The card tells you what happens if you succeed and what if you fail. Typically, failing causes the loss of one or more Life points. In most cases, you continue to roll until you eventually succeed, but each attempt will cost you Life points.*

## Banning or Discarding

When a card is Banned, it goes out of the game. When a card is Discarded, it goes into the discard pile.

## How The Game Works

You play in turns. Every turn, draw a card and apply its effects. Sometimes you have to roll dice to avoid its effects or to proceed. Here's a guide to cards:

<b>Maze:</b> Something happens to you, or happens if/unless you pass a roll/use an Item in your possession.	
<b>Item:</b> You find an object. Decide if you pick it up.	
<b>Cat:</b> One of the three cats lost in the maze.	
<b>Encounter:</b> You meet someone or something and must deal with them.	
<b>Spell:</b> You find a magic scroll, that you can use only once.	

## Items and Spells

The sorcerer and his wife are having an argument and throwing stuff at each other, including the old man's belongings and scrolls. So, as you walk through the Maze, you will find stuff that may help you in your quest. When you draw an Item or Spell card, you may keep them in your hand. You can keep a maximum of 3 Item/Spell cards in your hand (exception: Paula can keep up to 4). You may play one immediately when you draw it. For example, if you have 3 Items and draw a Cheese card, you may eat the Cheese immediately, and it would not count against your limit of 3 Items.

**Caught cats do not count as carried Items. A mouse counts as an Item, no matter if it was caught with a Cage or with Cheese. Spells do NOT count as items if you have the Grimoire.**

## Running Out of Cards

You enter the Maze at twilight. **When you run out of cards to draw, darkness falls.** Reshuffle your discard pile into a new deck (ignore cards that were Banned) and keep playing. Any Exit cards drawn are reshuffled into the deck. If you run out of cards a second time, reshuffle again and keep playing until you win or lose. The more you cycle through the deck, the smaller the deck becomes as you Ban cards out of the game.

## Card Positions

A card can be in one of the following positions during the game:

- In the deck (you haven't drawn the card yet)
- In the discard pile (you have drawn and discarded it)
- Out of the Game (you have played the card and/or a rule told you to BAN the card)
- In permanent play (the card is placed on the table, next to the deck, as a reminder of a lasting effect -- e.g. Ball of Yarn)
- In your hand (the card is an Item, Spell or Cat you carry). You may carry a maximum of 3 cards. **You must BAN excess cards.**

Cards go to the discard pile once used if the card says "Discard this card", or go out of the game if the text says "Ban this card".

## Searching Through the Deck

If a card lets you search through your deck for a specific card, reshuffle the deck once you have found it.

## Encounters

You will have to deal with the creatures that haunt the maze. The Encounter card will give you options to defeat or avoid the creature, and will tell you whether the creature card is Discarded or Banned by passing the required Body, Mind or Soul roll. Each Encounter requires different rolls. If you are given multiple options, choose before rolling dice. Each failure when fighting a creature will cost you 1 or more Life points, as explained on the card. If your Life total is brought to zero, you lose the game.

*Example: You meet the Barrow Cat. The text says: "DISCARD 1 Mirror card to DISCARD Barrow Cat. Roll Body 9 or Soul 7 to BAN Barrow Cat. Each failed attempt costs you 2 Life." So your options are discarding a Mirror (if you have it - note that Discarding means the Mirror goes to the Discard pile, and does not go out of the game, so you may find it again later) or passing a Body or Soul roll. You do not have the Mirror, so you choose to roll Body, but you fail. You lose 2 Life. Now you must try again, rolling Body again. Keep doing this, losing 2 Life every time you fail, until you succeed or you run out of Life points and lose the game.*

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## Bonuses are Cumulative

If you have more than one Item or Spell that gives a bonus to a roll, you may play them at the same time. Exception: the bonus from Silver Dagger does not stack with Walking Cane and Rocks.

## Healing

If a card allows you to heal 1 or more Life, you may only heal Life points that you have lost. You may not increase your Life total beyond its starting value. You may not heal during an Encounter or while chasing a cat.

## Winning the Game

To win, you must find your cats (drawing their cards), catch them (meeting the requirements shown on the cards), and move out of the maze (drawing an Exit card). When you find an exit card, you may exit the maze and end the game, or continue playing. If you exit with only one or two cats, you score a partial victory. If you find an Exit card but do not want to end the game, put it sideways in your discard pile so it sticks out. Once you find your cats, you may backtrack to the Exit by drawing a number of cards equal to the number of cards between your current position and the Exit card.

*Example: You find an Exit card and place it sideways in your discard pile. After drawing 5 more cards, you find your cats and manage to catch them. Now you may backtrack to the exit. Draw five more cards and you automatically find the Exit as if it were your sixth card -- unless, of course, you find another Exit card before that!*

If you BAN a Ball of Yarn when you find an Exit, backtracking to that Exit will require half the number of cards, rounded down. In the example above, using a Ball of Yarn means backtracking to an Exit 5 cards away from your current position requires drawing only two cards. If you reshuffle the discard pile into a new deck, the Ball of Yarn associated to that Exit is NOT reshuffled.

## Catching Cats

Each cat requires a different Item: for example, you may catch Ink automatically with a Ball of Yarn. If you do not have the required Item, you may try the attribute roll listed on the cat's card. This is called chasing the cat. Different cats require different attribute rolls. A Soul roll is an attempt to calm a nervous cat, a Mind roll is an attempt to find a sneaky cat hiding in the briars, and a Body roll is an attempt to chase a cat that runs away. As you run through the briars, fatigue and scratches by the thorns cause you to lose 1 Life point per failed attempt. You may try as many times as you want until you either catch the cat or decide to give up. If you give up, Discard the cat. In other words, the cat goes into the Discard pile and you may try to catch it later. When you run out of cards and the Discard pile becomes your new deck, you will eventually meet that Cat again. Do not waste too many Life points chasing cats -- you need Life to survive encounters in the maze.

## Multiplayer Variant (2 or 3 players)

BriarMaze is designed as a solo game but up to 3 players may compete. Each player needs his/her deck and chooses a different character. Roll a die to determine who goes first -- players who go second or third get to pick their characters first. Players then draw a card each from their deck, taking turns around the table. Once a Cat is caught by a player, or an Encounter card is Banned from the deck, the other players must ignore that card (Ban it) when they draw it. Creatures that are Discarded may be met by other players as normal (they are still in the maze). There are multiple copies of Spells, so each player may find one copy of each of the four spells, but there is only one Grimoire. A player finding the Grimoire may decide to keep it or Ban it. If it is Banned, however, the other players may find it, as normal. Players whose character runs out of Life points are eliminated, but any Cats or Items they were carrying may now be found as normal by the other players. In addition, if the eliminated player was carrying a Mouse in a cage, the first player drawing a Mouse may simply pick it up without using a Cage or Cheese (the poor fella is still trapped in the cage).

The game continues until all characters run out of Life points or exit the maze with 1 or more Cats. A player may continue to play even if others have exited the maze. The player exiting the maze with more cats wins the game.

If players are tied, the player that lost fewer Life points wins.

If they are still tied, the following objects are worth one point each for purposes of tie-breaking: Gold Coins, Strange Amulet, Marionette, Silver Dagger, Walking Cane.

If players are still tied, the game ends in a draw.

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