

# CURSES & COVENS

In **CURSES & COVENS**, one player is the **Witch Hunter** trying to capture the witches hiding in towns in the game, and all the other players are the **towns** working together to shelter the witches from the Witch Hunter.



3 love witch cards



1 fake witch card



13 townsfolk cards



3 nature witch cards



1 wild witch card



6 reference cards



3 crystal witch cards



3 ritual cards



3 double-sided spell tiles (charms/curses)



... and a witch's hat!



# OVERVIEW

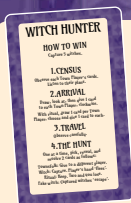
The game cycles through four phases:

1. **Census:** All the Town Players openly discuss their tactics, and the Witch Hunter listens.
2. **Arrival:** The Witch Hunter deals each Town Player a secret card, after looking at it themselves.
3. **Travel:** The Town Players redistribute their cards amongst themselves. The Witch Hunter observes cards moving around, but doesn't know what they are.
4. **Hunt:** The Witch Hunter tries to capture witches by picking, revealing and resolving a single card from a Town Player's hand. Then they repeat this step once.

Play loops through these 4 phases until either:

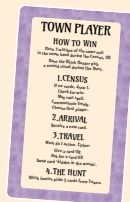
- a. The Town Players win as a group if they form a coven by revealing **3 witches of the same suit** in one town's hand during the census, OR the Witch Hunter has **2 ritual cards** in front of them during the Hunt.
- b. The Witch Hunter wins by **capturing 5 witches** during the Hunt.

# SET UP



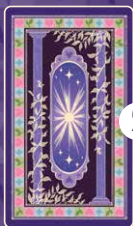
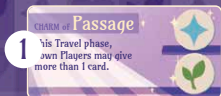
Decide which player will be the **Witch Hunter**. The Witch Hunter takes a reference card and places it in front of themselves with the Witch Hunter side face-up.

The other players each take a reference card and place it in front of themselves with the Town side face-up. Return any remaining reference cards to the box.



The Witch Hunter follows these steps:

- 1 Place the 3 spell tiles in the middle of the table, **Charm** (light) side face-up.
- 2 Shuffle all of the cards into a deck, draw 1 card, look at it secretly, and place it face-down next to the spell tiles. This card is '**hidden in the woods**'.
- 3 Deal each other player 2 cards from the deck to form each Town Player's hand of cards.
- 4 Place the remaining deck of cards face-down within reach of all players.



The Witch Hunter may shuffle the deck at any time.








# HOW TO WIN

**The Town Players immediately win** as a group if:



During the Census phase, one Town Player reveals **3 witches of the same suit** (love , crystal , or nature ) in their hand of cards. The wild witch card counts as any suit.



*or*

During the Hunt phase, after taking a card from a Town Player, the Witch Hunter has **2 ritual cards** in front of them.

**The Witch Hunter immediately wins** if, after taking a card from a Town Player during the Hunt phase, they have **5 witches** (of any suits) in front of them.



# HOW TO PLAY

Starting with the Census phase, play through each phase in order repeatedly until either the Witch Hunter or the Town Players win the game.

## 1. Census

*The Town Players have a meeting to discuss what they can do to save the witches from persecution.*

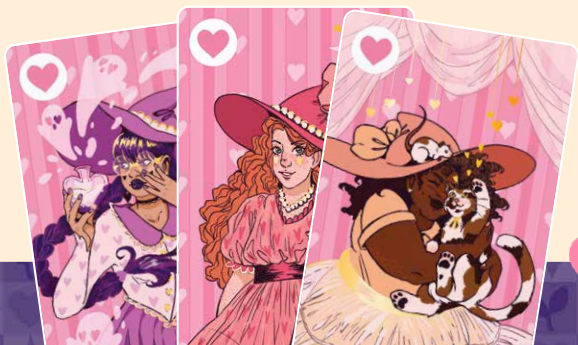
### If no cards, draw 1

At the start of the Census phase, if a Town Player has no cards, they draw 1 from the top of the deck.

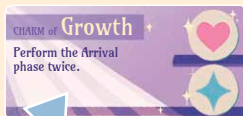
### Check for Town win

Then, each Town Player must reveal their hand of cards, placing them face-up in front of them.




If any one Town Player reveals **3 witches of the same suit**, they form a Coven and the Town Players win!



## Cast a spell



If a Town Player has revealed 2 witch cards that match the 2 icons on one of the face-up spell tiles, they may **cast that spell**. When you cast a spell, move that spell tile away from the others for now. It is active for the rest of the round and its rules override other game rules.

- The witches casting the spell remain in hand.
- Only 1 spell (charm / curse), chosen by the Town Players as a group, may be cast per round.
- The **wild witch** card counts as any one suit (love , crystal , or nature ).



## Town players communicate

Then, the Town Players can **discuss the strategies they will use during the next Travel phase**. This is the **only** time during the game that the Town Players can communicate directly about their strategy! They may lie, but the Witch Hunter must be allowed to hear everything that is said, and see any body language used while communicating.

**TIP:** What do you hope to accomplish this round? Try planning out the actions you will take during the travel phase. But remember, the Witch Hunter is listening!



## Choose first Town Player

Next, the Town Players give the witch's hat to the Town player they want to go first during the next travel phase.

**TIP:** Consider what each Town Player has in front of them, and if in doubt give the witch's hat to the player who has the most to give.

At the end of the Census, each Town Player returns the cards in front of them to their hand.

## 2. Arrival

*The Witch Hunter observes folks entering the different towns, and these may change the Town Players' plans...*

At the start of the Arrival phase, the Witch Hunter draws a card from the top of the deck, looks at it secretly, and gives it face-down to the Town Player on their left. They repeat this process for the next Town Player clockwise around the table, until each of them has received 1 card.

However, if there is a **ritual card** in front of the Witch Hunter, they instead draw cards equal to the number of Town Players, secretly look at all of them, then give 1 card of their choosing to each Town Player face-down.

No matter how the new arrival cards are dealt, the Town Players each receive a new card the other Town Players don't yet know about. This may inspire a change in the Travel phase strategy they agreed on during the Census Town meeting.

But remember, Town Players cannot discuss their new cards or changes in strategy during the Arrival or Travel phases!



### 3. Travel

*The towns move cards between them to hide witches, trick the witch hunter, or set up a spell or coven.*

Starting with the player with the witch's hat, and going clockwise around the table without any consultation, each Town player must take 1 of the following actions:

- ✦ Choose 1 card in your hand and give it face-down to another Town Player.
- ✦ Ask another Town Player to choose and give you 1 card face-down from their hand. They must do so, unless they only have 1 card in hand.
- ✦ Choose 1 card from your hand, then swap it face-down with the card hidden in the woods.

All cards given or swapped in this way may only be seen by the Town Players involved.

You are NEVER allowed to give away your last card!

**NOTE:** If the deck runs out, continue playing, but ignore drawing cards until there are cards discarded back into the deck.

## 4. Hunt

*The Witch Hunter accuses the townsfolk of witchcraft. Are any witches captured, or can the witches ensnare the Witch Hunter in a ritual?*

At the start of the Hunt phase, the Witch Hunter picks 2 cards from the Town Players, one at a time. To pick a card, choose a Town Player. That player holds up their hand of cards, keeping them hidden from the Witch Hunter, who then picks one card at random, reveals it to everyone, and resolves the card as described below. Repeat this process for your second pick, which may be from the same Town Player, or a different one.



### Townsfolk

The Witch Hunter gives this card to a different Town Player.

### Witch

The Witch Hunter captures the witch placing the card face-up in front of themselves. The Town Player from whom this card was taken must **discard all their remaining cards** face-down to the bottom of the deck.



**If this is the fifth witch card the Witch Hunter has captured, they immediately win the game!**



## Ritual

The Witch Hunter places this card face-up in front of themselves. **If this is their second ritual card, the Town Players immediately win the game!**

## Fake Witch

The fake witch card counts as a witch; the Witch Hunter places the fake witch face-up in front of themselves, and the Town Player discards the rest of their cards, as normal. However, **all other captured witches then immediately escape the Witch Hunter** and are discarded face-down to the bottom of the deck. The fake witch remains in front of the Witch Hunter until the end of the game.



The Witch Hunter cannot win upon drawing the fake witch, as any captured witches immediately escape. However, the fake witch then counts toward the Witch Hunter's quota of 5 witches.

The fake witch has no suit, and so cannot form a coven of witches.

## Concluding the Hunt

At the end of the Hunt phase, **turn over any spell tile that was cast this round to its other spell side**, and place it back with the other tiles.

Then continue to the next Census phase.



# CREDITS

**Design:** Samara Jethwa & David Walsh.

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**Rulebook editing:** David Walsh & Good Games Publishing.

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