



Witches' Quarrel Reference Book

Witches' Quarrel will teach you to play as you go. Each envelope has an instruction card with clarifications for its contents. Use this book if you need additional reference. It contains minor content spoilers.

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Overview

Witches' Quarrel is a fast, 2-Player story about best friends practicing magic by dueling each other.

Each game, you'll try to damage your rival's Resolve to make them Cry Mercy.

You'll also try to complete your Rituals to open new envelopes.

Every envelope starts with new story and instructions and ends with new spells and choices for the game—and all your future games.

Good luck!

Experienced Gamers

If you are familiar with deck-building games, note these differences:

- You have no discard pile. (pg. 10)
- You can save up power between turns.
- The first game will start very simple. Complete your Rituals to add options.

How to Start the First Game

Following the instructions inside the box lid, the more assertive player should open envelope A, and the other player should open envelope B. Read the story cards out loud, then follow the instructions on the back.

You will be instructed to open envelope 1 together. With envelopes A, B, and 1, you will have enough materials to follow the First Game Setup instructions from envelope 1 and play your first game.

Each player will get:

1. A witch card with a Resolve tracker along the side.
2. A starting deck with their witch's name in the top right corner of each card, consisting of 3 Focus spells and 1 Scorch spell
3. 2 unique rituals for their witch
4. A turn structure reference card

Now read *Rituals and Envelopes* (pg 5) and *Turn Structure*, (pg 9) and start your first game!



Rituals, Rites, and Envelopes



Each player gets 2 Rituals each game. When a player completes the requirement in the left half of the Ritual, the game pauses and the player immediately receives the reward in the right half.

Rituals let you open new envelopes when you complete them. When you open an envelope, always read the story card aloud, then follow the instructions on the back.

Completed Rituals should be put into the Completed Rituals section of the box and never used again.

Later, you will find Repeatable Rites. Rites are like Rituals, but they do not open envelopes. When you complete a Rite, return it to the Future Rituals section of the box: it can be used again in future games.

Setup

Follow the steps W-A-R-D in order:

Witches: Each player chooses a witch to play for this game. The most recent loser chooses first. Alternate who is the first player.

Arcanum: Choose 5 different spells and set the full stack of each spell out on the table. This is the Arcanum (supply).

- Choose spells by consensus, randomly using the Arcanum Randomizer cards, or any other way.
- If you have discovered fewer than 5 spells, use as many as you have. For your first game you start with just 1 stack of Scorch spells.
- If you choose fewer than 2 red spells and no Scorches, add Scorches as a 6th pile.
- Set the power stones nearby.

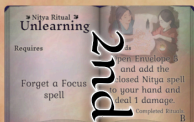
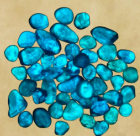
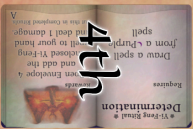
Rituals: Set out all the Future Rituals. You may add Repeatable Rites until there are 6 options total. The first player chooses 1 ritual, then the other player chooses 2 rituals, then the first player chooses their 2nd ritual. Set all your Prophecies near the Arcanum.

Decks: Each player chooses 5 of their witch's starting spells to play with this game. Shuffle them to make your starting deck. Set others to the side for this game. The first player draws 2 spells. The other player draws 3. (After the first turn both players will draw 3.)

1st
player
draw 2



2nd
Player
draw 3



Spell Diagram



1. Spell name
2. Slot in box or owning witch
3. Artist credit
4. Special rules for this spell
5. Effect when this spell is cast
6. Power cost to Learn this spell
7. Colorblind icon(s)

Turn Structure

1. **Start of Turn:** Complete any “start of your turn” effects. If there are multiple, you choose the order.

2. **Turn:** Cast and Learn spells in any order:

Cast spells from your hand:

- Put each spell in front of you and do what it says.
- **Casting spells is free.**
- You may keep spells in you hand, but you will draw fewer spells for next turn.

Learn spells from the Arcanum:

- Pay the power cost shown in the bottom-right corner for each spell you Learn.
- You may Learn multiple spells in one turn, or none.
- **Do not cast spells when you Learn them.** They must go through your deck first.

3. **End of Turn:**

- a. Complete any “end of your turn” effects. If there are multiple, you choose the order.
- b. **Save unused power** as power stones.
- c. Put Remembered and Learned spells under your deck in any order. **Do not shuffle.**
- d. Return Forgotten spells to their Arcanum piles.
- e. Leave Lingerin spells face-up in front of you.
- f. Draw spells from your deck until you have 3 in your hand.

Remember, Linger, Forget

Every spell says what happens to it after you cast it.

Remember and Learn

Many spells, like Focus and Scorch, are Remembered. At the end of your turn put Remembered spells under your deck. New spells you Learn go under your deck at the same time, and you can choose how to arrange all these spells, deciding the order you will draw them later.

Spells you Remember have a braided border.



Forget

Some spells are so powerful that you Forget them after you cast them. At the end of your turn, return Forgotten spells to their Arcanum piles. If you Forget a core spell, put it in a new stack in the Arcanum: anyone can Learn it for 1 power. Forgotten spells go to the Arcanum at the end of the turn, so they cannot be Learned until the next turn.

Spells you Forget have a spikey border.



Linger

Lingering spells remain active, face-up in front of you until something moves them. If you have multiple Lingering spells, you choose which one acts first.

Spells that Linger have a blocky border.



Mercy!

When a witch's Resolve is reduced to "mercy", their rival wins the game! You may also cry mercy any time.

If a Ritual is completed at the same time a witch cries Mercy, you may choose to complete the Ritual.

If you play multiple games, give the last winner the Gloat spell. They must start with it. If you lose to a deck with Gloat, you may start the next game with Seethe.

After a Game

1. Return any uncompleted Rituals to the (II) Future Rituals section of the box.
2. Put all the spells with your witches' name and icon in the top right corner in front of your witch card in the (V) Witches section of the box.
3. Return spells from the Arcanum, including spells you Learned, to the (VI) Spells section of the box in numerical order, in front of their divider cards. Put empty envelopes in the (IX) Empty Envelopes section.

Storing the game this way will save your progress between games and make setup faster.



Blocking

Some spells block damage. If an opponent deals damage to you and any of your Linging spells are able to block damage, you must block. If you deal 4 damage, but your rival has a Linging spell that blocks 2 damage, they will lose 2 Resolve.

- You must block damage if you can (unless a spell specifies that you “may” block damage).
- If you have multiple spells that can block damage, you choose the order that they block in.
- One spell can block damage from multiple spells (if it blocks more than 1 damage), and multiple block spells can be used to block damage from one powerful damage spell.
- You can (and usually must) block damage you deal to yourself.



Prophecies

Rituals are completed during games, but Prophecies are completed after games. Prophecies are not assigned to a single player. Once you have completed the requirement for a Prophecy and finished your game, follow the reward instructions.

Some Prophecies require you to open specific envelopes, and start a special new game as a reward. You should complete these only when you have time for a new game.



A Statement on Witches

(A rough draft open to feedback)

For this game, I wanted to represent witches in a fictional world, based cross-culturally. Most cultures don't use the English word "witch", but there is a global phenomenon of persecuting people who have useful, "magical" knowledge (and therefore community respect) that does not come from the dominant-class sanctioned academia. The victims of the persecution are most commonly unmarried or widowed women or gender non-conforming, often ones who own desirable land.

Caliban and the Witch teaches that this persecution was a necessary step for Capitalism to declare every acre and even our bodies "capital". This seems true to me, but the pattern must have played out for other dogmas long before capitalism. It seems that knowledge, even the most pragmatic, healing knowledge, threatens those in power if they have not sanctioned it or do not understand it.

Some narrative inspirations for Witches' Quarrel include The Broken Earth trilogy, The Winternight trilogy, The Earthsea cycle, Ancillary Justice, legends of Parvati, Durga, and Kali, The Witcher, Luna Nera, Full Metal Alchemist, and The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction.

–Shanti

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Glossary

Arcanum—The supply of **spells** available to **Learn** during a single game.

Banish—A banished **spell** cannot be **cast** or **Learned** again in this game. Banished spells return after this game.

Block—Prevents losing **Resolve** when you take **damage**. See Blocking.

Cast—Put a **spell** in front of you to do its effects. Spells are usually cast from your hand, but may be cast from other places. Casting spells does not cost **power**.

Damage—When a witch is dealt damage, they lose that much **Resolve** unless they can block the damage. **Blocked** damage still counts as “damage” for relevant spells.

Draw—Take a **spell** from your deck and add it to your hand. If your deck is empty, do nothing.

Forget—See Remember, Linger, Forget in the rules.

Learn—Gaining a new **spell**, usually by paying the power cost in the bottom-right corner and taking it from the **Arcanum**. See Turn Structure and Remember, Linger, Forget in the rules.

Lingers—See Remember, Linger, Forget in the rules.

Power—Gain power by **casting** some **spells**. Spend power to **Learn** new spells. You can save power between turns.

Remember—See Remember, Linger, Forget in the rules.

Resolve—How much unblocked **damage** you can take before you lose the game. You start the game with 10 Resolve, tracked with a slider on your witch card.

Spell—All the cards in your decks and the **Arcanum** are called spells. They have the same backs.

Steal—When you steal **power**, take it and add it to your power. When you steal a spell, **Learn** it unless instructed to do something else (such as “steal a spell and cast it”).

Then—Effects after “then” only happen if the preceding effects happen completely.