WITCHSTONE: ZATORIUS *SOLO-MODE*
## by Gláucio Reis
Solo variant

OVERVIEW

This solo variant intends to keep the playing experience as close as possible to a two-player game, with no actual changes to the player actions.
I playtested it a dozen times and I'm satisfied with the result. You play against the neutral wizard Zatorius. You will need a regular six-sided die.

Zatorius´ hex-tiles:

Score track with Zatorius´ crystals:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	...

←3→   ←3→   ←3→   ←5→   ←3→   ←3→
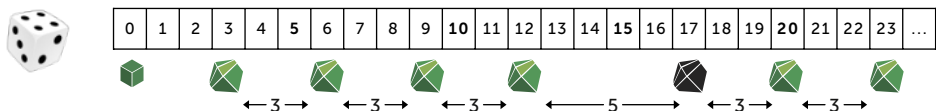
SETUP CHANGES

- Choose a color for Zatorius.
- Zatorius does not use a cauldron. After shuffling, reveal two of his hex tiles. These represent his starting action symbols. Make a stack of 11 face-down hex tiles. Put the rest back in the box, without looking.
- The score track is also used to track the Crystal actions of Zatorius. Place his position marker (cube) next to space 0. **Roll the die:** the result is the number of colored crystals to be placed before the black crystal. Place the first crystal next to space 3. Place each colored crystal 3 spaces after the previous crystal. Place the black crystal 5 spaces after the previous crystal. For example, if you roll a "4", you must place the crystals next to spaces 3, 6, 9, 12, 17 (black), 20 and 23. (see illustration above)
- The order of magic chips on the stone table is important. Place them in a random order, but move any 3VP chips to the leftmost positions.
- Choose your tower. Zatorius selects the opposite tower and **plays first**.

PLAYING FOR ZATORIUS

On Zatorius turn, reveal an hex tile from his stack and carry out the two actions for him, from top to bottom (or left to right, if you prefer to place the tiles horizontally). Exception: **Energy actions** are always performed first.
- All action symbols of the same type are considered to be in a single cluster, including the hex tiles revealed during setup (also for scoring).
- Always perform bonus actions after fully carrying out the current main action.
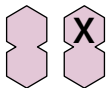
ZATORIUS´ ACTIONS

...see **tabel** on page 2!
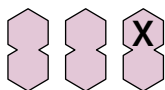
Play on your own turn
as usual.

DIFFICULTY MODES

I find this solo mode challenging, but winnable.

However, if you find it too hard or too easy, you may adjust it by changing the number of starting symbols for Zatorius.

For an easier game, during setup, cover the top symbol of the first revealed hex tile (or a repeated symbol, if there is one) with the animal marker.

For a harder game, do the same, but reveal an extra hex tile. Never cover an Energy action symbol.

I tested easier setups, but I found the game too easy with just one hex tile revealed, hence the idea of just covering one symbol. I have not tested harder setups, but I suspect that using three full hex tiles (six symbols) may be too hard.

ENERGY ACTION

Zatorius follows a list of priorities. He goes for complete connections whenever he can, for the maximum number of points. For example, when he places four energy units, he completes a connection of 3 spaces and another of 1 space (instead of two connections of 2 spaces), if possible. First, he connects to the Wicthstone. Then, he tries to connect to locations with magic chips, preferably not connected to your network and further away from his tower. In short, follow his priorities in this order:

1. Complete connections, highest scoring.
2. Connect to the Witchstone.
3. Connect to a location containing a magic chip, not connected by you.
4. Connect to a location containing a magic chip, even connected by you.
5. Connect to a location where he does not have a wizard.
6. Connect to the location further away from his tower.
7. Start a two-space connection.

WITCH ACTION

If Zatorius has a witch lying next to his tower, he always moves her, if he can. After the Witchstone, he tries to get magic chips using the fewest possible number of actions, preferably on locations also connected to your network.

If he cannot get a magic chip, he still moves the witch, even if he has to spend additional actions that he could use to place new witches on the board. He only lays a new witch next to his tower if he has no other option. This is his list of priorities:

1. Move a witch to the Witchstone.
2. Move a witch to a location containing a magic chip, using only his own connections, but also connected by you.
3. Move a witch to a location containing a magic chip, only connected by him.
4. Move a witch to a location containing a magic chip, using the fewest number of your connections.
5. Move a witch to a location where he does not have a witch, using the fewest number of actions.
6. Lay a new witch next to his tower.

ADDITIONAL RULES FOR THE ENERGY AND WITCH ACTIONS:

- Everything else being equal, choose a location with a 3VP chip (instead of an action chip).
- When there is more than one possible location, select randomly, by assigning numbers to those locations and rolling the die.

PENTAGRAM ACTION

Zatorius always chooses to carry out one of the actions on special hex tiles. Roll a die to select the action: 1-3 = left action, 4-6 = right action.

If he gets more than one special hex tile, resolve them in order. Exception: tiles with the **Energy action** are always resolved first. Also, if an action cannot be carried out, select the other.

CRYSTAL ACTION

Move Zatorius' **position marker (cube) o**n the score track the corresponding number of spaces. If it passes by or ends on a space with a crystal, move the crystal to a random vial. If you move more than one crystal, resolve them separately, in order. Roll a die to select the shelf, counting from top to bottom (1 = Witch, 2=Energy, etc.). If there is no empty vial or the action cannot be carried out, place the crystal on the bottom shelf and select the leftmost magic chip available.

MAGIC WAND ACTION

No change.

SCROLL ACTION

Zatorius always chooses the scroll that he can get with the highest scoring value, including reinforcement spells (worth 2 points if not used), according to his current situation. If two or more cards are tied, he selects the one in the lowest position among them. Place prophecies face-down. He does not actively tries to fulfill them. Place reinforcement spells face-up and use them with the next corresponding main action (he never uses spells with bonus actions).

! IMPORTANT RULE - SPECIAL CASE FOR BONUS ACTIONS:

When randomly selecting a bonus action (from crystals and special hex tiles), if Zatorius has fewer than two complete connections, select the **Energy action** instead, if available.

END OF THE GAME

No change. Score everything normally for Zatorius.