FIRST **RAT**

A rocket building game for 1 to 5 rat friends
by Gabriele Ausiello and Virginio Gigli

For generations, the rats in the old junkyard have been telling each other the great legend about a moon made out of cheese and they want nothing more than to reach this inexhaustible treasure one day. But how is that supposed to be done?
One day, the little rat children discovered a comic in the junkyard that described the first landing on the moon. And thus the plan was born. Build a rocket and take over the Cheese Moon!
Fortunately, the junkyard has everything the rats need to build their rocket and the other animals are willing to support this daring venture—at least if they're well paid. Of course, all the rats work together to achieve this mighty goal. However, each rat family competes to build the most rocket parts and to train the most rattronauts so they can feast on as much of the lunar cheese as possible.

Components

1 double-sided Gameboard



Front: Standard Layout

Back: Variable Layout

Components for 5 Rat Teams in 5 Team Colors:



4 Rats



1 Light String marker



10 Score markers



1 Rat Burrow marker

60 Cheese markers:



45 Value 1



15 Value 3

Neutral Components when playing with less than 5 people:



2 Rats



14 Score markers

12 Moldy Cheese markers



36 Items:
(front/back)



10 Backpacks



6 Energy Drinks



10 Bottle Caps



10 Comics

95 Building Materials:



30 Vinegar Bottles



30 Baking Soda



20 Tin Cans



15 Calculators

Components for the Variable Layout:



26 Junkyard path tiles, divided into 5 groups (A to E)



8 Score Tracks

4 Super Rats



16 Awards



5 Player Aids



1 Start Rat marker



1 Scorepad



22 Cards for the Solo Game

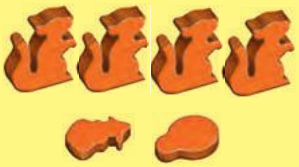


Setup

2 Place the **building materials** (**Vinegar Bottles**, **Baking Soda**, **Tin Cans**, **Calculators**), **Awards**, **Cheese**, and **Moldy Cheese** next to the gameboard as a general supply.



3 Choose a team color and take all **4 Rats**, all **10 Score markers**, the **Rat Burrow marker**, and the **Light String marke**r for this color.



Place 8 of the 10 Score markers in front of you and keep the remaining 2 markers aside for now.



Take **1 Player Aid** and place it in front of you.



4 Place **2** of your **Rats** in the **Start space** on the **junkyard path**.

5 Place **2** of your **Rats** in the **Nursery** in the middle of the rat's burrow.

6 Place your **Rat Burrow marker** in the **Start space** on the **rat burrow path**.

7 Place your **Light String marker** in the **Start space** on the **light string**.

8 Shuffle all **10 Bottle Caps** facedown.
Turn **6** of them **faceup** and place them side-by-side in the **Madcap Crow's Booth**.
Return the rest of the Bottle Caps back to the box.



9 Based on the number of players, place the following number of **Energy Drinks** in a faceup stack in **Zippy the Frog's Booth**:



Players:	2	3	4	5
Energy Drinks:	3	4	5	6

Return the rest of the Energy Drinks back to the box.

1 Place the **standard side of th**







e **gameboard** faceup in your play area.







Mix together all **10 Backpacks** facedown.
Based on the number of players, turn the following number of Backpacks **faceup** and place them side-by-side in **Harry Hamster's Booth**:

Players:	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Backpacks:	**5**	**6**	**7**	**9**

Return the rest of the Backpacks back to the box.

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Setup the **Comics**:

1st Game:
Return the 4 Comics with the **Super Rats** back to the box. Place the remaining **6 Comics** in the **Library** on the **right side** of the **rat burrow**.



For the 2nd game on:
Mix together all 10 Comics facedown.
Turn **6** of them **faceup** and place them side-by-side in the **Library** on the **right side** of the rat burrow.
Return the rest of the Comics back to the box.

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The player who last ate some cheese begins the game. This player takes the **Start Rat marker** and **1 Cheese**.

The next 2 players in clockwise order each take **2 Cheese**.

The fourth and fifth players each take **3 Cheese**.

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Note: *Players keep their Cheese, building materials, and items in their personal supply, which may be handed in to the general supply when necessary.*

In games with 3 or 4 players:
Place 1 Neutral Score marker in the rightmost highlighted space on each of the Score Tracks. These spaces won't be available to you during the game.



In a game with 2 players:
Place 1 Neutral Score marker in both of the highlighted spaces on the Score Tracks. These spaces won't be available to you during the game.

Note: *Use the Neutral Rats in the highlighted spaces on the Rattronaut Score Track.*

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Game Overview

Each player begins with 2 adult Rats that will be moved along the junkyard path to collect building materials as well as Light Bulbs, Apple Cores, and Cheese. You may hand in building materials to the general supply to build rocket parts. Your Light String marker advances along the light string 1 space for each Lightbulb you collect to increase your future income. You may either use collected Apple Cores to raise more Rats or store them in the rat's burrow for the winter to earn points. They may also be exchanged for Comics that will give you special skills for the rest of the game.

Along the way, Harry Hamster, Zippy the Frog, and the Madcap Raven have booths featuring various useful items in exchange for Cheese. You may also donate Cheese as provisions for the flight to the Cheese Moon to earn additional points.

The end of game is triggered as soon as 1 player either has all 4 of their Rats in the rocket or has placed their eighth Score marker. Then, the player with the most points wins.

Sequence of Play

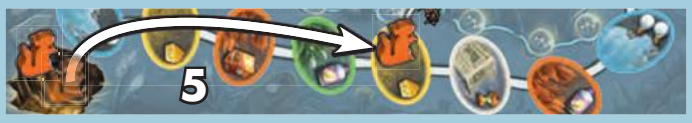
Play continues in rounds with the start player taking the first turn and the other players taking their turns in clockwise order each round. When it is your turn, carry out the following 4 steps in the order given:

1. Move Rats 2. Collect Resources
3. Go Shopping (optional) 4. Build and Donate Cheese (optional)

Step 1: Move Rats

The first step on your turn is to move your Rats along the junkyard path. You must perform 1 of the following 2 options:

A) Advance **1 of your Rats 1 to 5** spaces along the junkyard path.



B) Advance **2-4 of your Rats** for **1 to 3** spaces each along the junkyard path. All Rats moved on your turn must end up on **different spaces** of the **same color**.



Note: *When the game begins, you only have 2 Rats available to move. The other 2 Rats are in the Nursery and must be raised before you can use them (see page 7).*

Rules for Movement

- You must always move your Rats in the direction towards the rocket, never back towards the Start space.
- You may never have 2 of your Rats in the same space (except for the Start space). If you choose Option B, you may move a Rat away from a space first before moving another Rat into that space.
- The final junkyard space (the Launchpad) has all 5 colors. If 1 of your Rats ends its movement on this space, you may choose which color you want the space to be.



Note: *If your Rat ends its move in the final junkyard space, you may choose which color you want it to be. However, if you are moving other Rats this turn, they must all end their move in spaces of that chosen color. The color chosen is only valid for this turn. If you move a Rat into the final junkyard space on another turn, you are free to choose any color again.*

- If you end your Rat's movement in a space that already has another Player's Rat, you must give that player 1 Cheese. If there are several players' Rats in that space, you must give each of these players 1 Cheese.

Note: *You may have to give a player more than 1 Cheese if your Rats end their movement in more than 1 space where that player already has Rats.*

Moldy Cheese



Whenever you don't have enough Cheese to give to other players, you must take a Moldy Cheese and place it in front of you. Each Moldy Cheese gives you 3 Cheese.
You may only take as much Moldy Cheese as is necessary to give to other players. You may never take Moldy Cheese for any other reason.
Once you have taken Moldy Cheese, you must keep it until the end of the game. You will lose 2 points for each Moldy Cheese you have at the end of the game.

Example 1:
Gaby takes her first turn. She can only move 1 Rat. If she tries to move both of her Rats, the board layout only allows her to move them to different colored spaces, which isn't allowed. When moving only 1 Rat, she may move it up to 5 spaces. She decides to move the Rat 4 spaces to the green space with the Vinegar Bottle. Since Esra already has a Rat in this space, she must give Esra 1 Cheese.



Example 2:
It's now Gaby's second turn. This time she has the option of moving either both of her Rats or just 1 of them.
She decides to move both Rats for 1 to 3 spaces each. She advances the Rat in front by 1 from the space with the Vinegar Bottle to the yellow space with the Cheese. In addition, she advances her second Rat by 2 spaces from the Start space to another yellow space with a Cheese.
Since both spaces are the same color, these are legal moves.
As an example, she would not be allowed to move her second Rat 1 space to the blue space with the Lightbulb.
Since Esra already has a Rat in the second yellow space, Gaby must give Esra 1 Cheese.



Example 3:
Now it's Vero's turn. She may also move both of her Rats to the yellow spaces with the Cheese. However, in this case she would have to give Gaby 2 Cheese and Esra 1 Cheese. Since she currently only has 1 Cheese, she would have to take a Moldy Cheese in order to have enough Cheese for both Gaby and Esra. Instead, she decides it would be better to move only her lead Rat 5 spaces to the blue space with the 2 Light Bulbs.



Shortcuts

There are various pipes that provide shortcuts in the junkyard. A shortcut always connects 2 spaces but doesn't count as a space itself. If you want to use a shortcut during your movement, you must hand in the building material depicted on the shortcut to the general supply.

Example:
On a later turn, Vero decides to move her Rat through a shortcut. Her first Rat starts on the green space with the Baking Soda.
She hands in a Tin Can and advances her Rat 3 spaces using the shortcut to reach the white space with the 3 Apple Cores. Then, she moves her second Rat to another white space.





Step 2: Collect Resources

During this step you may collect resources from all the spaces where you have just moved a Rat. Rats that weren't moved this turn don't collect resources.

Yellow Spaces

...it's unbelievable the delicacies people throw away!



Take the depicted number of **Cheese** (1 to 4) from the general supply.

Green and Orange Spaces

...some see a pile of trash, I see a rocket!



Take 1 **Vinegar Bottle** from the general supply.



Take 1 **Tin Can** from the general supply.



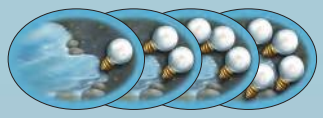
Take 1 **Baking Soda** from the general supply.



Take 1 **Calculator** from the general supply.

Blue Spaces

...yes, yes, rats are nocturnal, but the cockroaches don't need to know that!



Advance your Light String marker on the light string 1 space for each **Lightbulb** depicted (1–4).

Details for the Light String



- When advancing your Light String marker, each Lightbulb or Construction Light on the Light String represents 1 space.



- There is no limit for the number of Light String markers in a space on the light string.
- By advancing your Light String marker along the light string, you increase your future income. In later rounds, your yield for any space your Light String marker has reached or passed is increased by 1.





- Once your Light String marker reaches or passes any of the 3 large **Construction Lights**, place a Score marker on the Construction Lights Score track. (More about **Scoring** on page 9.)

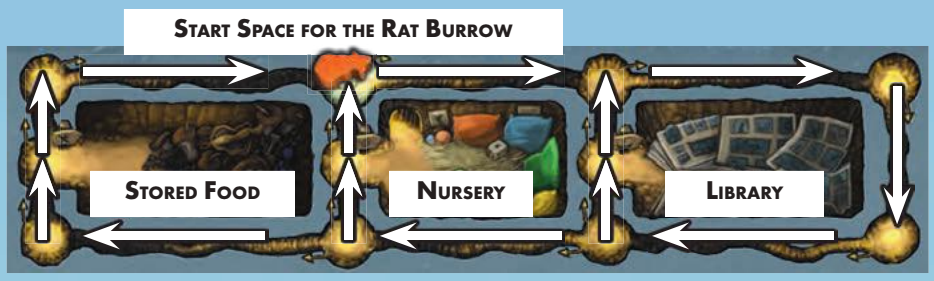
White Spaces

...sure, this Cheese Moon thing is all well and good, but we're hungry now!



Move your Rat Burrow marker 1 space along the rat burrow path for the indicated number of **Apple Cores** (1 to 4).

Rat Burrow Details



- Your Rat Burrow marker only advances **clockwise** around the rat burrow path.
- Whenever you reach an intersection, you must decide which way you'll continue your movement (up or to the left).
- 3 spaces in the Rat Burrow provide you with a **reward**:



If you enter the space to the left of the **Library**, you may take 1 Comic from the Library and place it faceup in front of you. Comics provide various advantages for the rest of the game. You can find out more about the Comics in the Reference sheet.



If you enter the space to the left of the **Nursery**, you may raise 1 new Rat. Take 1 of your Rats out of the Nursery and place it in the Start space on the junkyard path. You can raise a maximum of 2 new Rats during the game.



If you enter the space to the left of the **Stored Food**, score the Stored Food track. (More about scoring on page 9.)

Note: *You still gain the respective reward even if your movement doesn't end in the highlighted space. This means it is possible to gain rewards several times in one turn if you've collected enough Apple Cores.*

The Final Space: The Launchpad

...congratulations little one, you are now a Rattronaut!



You've reached the end of the junkyard path. This Rat now becomes a Rattronaut and part of the crew that will fly (or at least will try to fly) to the Cheese Moon. Place your Rat in the leftmost free space (the space with the most points) of the Rattronaut Score track.



You immediately gain 1 reward:

Either take 1 Award from the general supply, which is worth 3 points at the end of the game, **or** raise 1 of your Rats from the Nursery and place it in the Start space on the junkyard path. Rats on the Rattronaut Score track may no longer be moved.

Note: You can only choose the Award if you still have at least 1 of your Rats on the junkyard path or if you have just placed your fourth and final Rat into the rocket. Otherwise you will no longer be able to move a Rat for the rest of the game!

Example 1: *Gaby has moved her Rats to the yellow cheese spaces. Since she had already advanced her Light marker past the first Cheese space, the yield for this space is increased by 1. Gaby gains 2+2+1 Cheese for a total of 5 Cheese.*



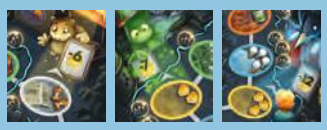
Example 2: *Vero has collected 6 Apple Cores. She moves her Rat Burrow marker clockwise around the path.*
She passes by the first intersection and turns up at the second intersection and crosses the space next to the Nursery. She immediately raises 1 of her 2 Rats and places it in the Start space on the junkyard path.



Example 3: *Esra moves 1 of his Rats to the blue space with 2 Lightbulbs. He advances his Light String marker 2 spaces on the light string. In doing so, his Light String marker crosses the second Construction Light, which allows him to immediately score the Construction Lights Score track (see Scoring on page 9).*



Step 3: Go Shopping (optional)



If one of your Rats ends its move this turn in a booth space managed by **Harry Hamster**, **Zippy the Frog**, or the **Madcap Crow**, you can **Go Shopping** there for 1 item.

You have 2 options:

A) Shop: Hand in the specified number of Cheese to the general supply and take 1 of the items of your choice from the display for the corresponding booth. (Zippy the Frog's Energy Drinks are all identical.)

B) Steal: Take 1 of the items of your choice from the corresponding booth (without handing in Cheese) and return this Rat to the Start space on the junkyard path.

You have a choice whether you want to hand in Cheese for an item or not. If you hand in Cheese, your Rat remains in the respective booth space. If you take an item without handing in Cheese, you must return your Rat back to the Start space on the junkyard path.

If you moved more than 1 Rat to different booth spaces, each of these Rats may Go Shopping for 1 Item in their respective booth. You may not Go Shopping with any of your Rats in a booth space if they did not move there this turn. You can find a detailed explanation for each of the items available in the 3 booths in the Reference sheet.

Example 1: *Esra has moved 1 of his Rat's to the space for Harry Hamster's booth. Esra would like to have one of the Backpacks offered. Since he isn't willing to hand in the required 6 Cheese, he chooses option B and Steals it instead. He takes 1 Backpack of his choice (without handing in any Cheese) and returns his Rat to the Start space on the junkyard path.*



Example 2*: Gaby has moved 1 of her Rat's to the booth space for the Madcap Crow. She decides to Shop for a Bottle Cap and therefore hands in 12 Cheese to the general supply and takes 1 Bottle Cap of her choice from the booth. Gaby's Rat remains where it is. She may not take another Bottle Cap this turn.*



Step 4: Build and Donate Cheese (optional)

Now you may build rocket parts and donate Cheese for the flight to the Cheese Moon.

Build

Build **1 or more parts** for the rocket.

To build a rocket part, you must hand in the following building materials for each type to the general supply:



Cockpit: 2 Calculators and 1 Tin Can



Cargo Bay: 3 Baking Soda and 2 Tin Cans



Thruster: 5 Vinegar Bottles and 2 Baking Soda

Whenever you build a rocket part, you immediately score the corresponding Score track.

Note: *During this step you may build as many rocket parts as you want, including duplicate parts.*

Donate Cheese

Donate Cheese for the flight to the Cheese Moon.



Donate Cheese: Hand in 10 Cheese to the general supply.

Whenever you Donate Cheese, you immediately score the Provisions Score track.

Note: *During this step, you may Donate Cheese as many times as you like.*

Score Tracks

Each Score track has 5 spaces. Depending on the number of players, some spaces may be covered with a Neutral marker.
When you score a track, place 1 of your Score markers in the free space **furthest to the left**, which is the free space with the most points.
1 Score marker may be placed in each of the **first 4 spaces to the left**.
Any number of Score markers may be placed in the **last (fifth) space** on the right.



Rocket Construction:
Place a Score marker on the **Cockpit Score track** each time you construct a Cockpit.



Place a Score marker on the **Cargo Bay Score track** each time you construct a Cargo Bay.



Place a Score marker on the **Thruster Score track** each time you construct a Thruster.



Complete Rocket: Place a Score marker on the **Rocket Score track** each time you complete a set using all 3 rocket parts (Cockpit, Cargo Bay, and Thruster).



Donate Cheese: Place a Score marker on the **Provisions Score track** each time you donate 10 Cheese.



Construction Lights: Place a Score marker on the **Construction Lights Score track** each time your Light String marker reaches or passes a Construction Light. (Max. 3 Score markers per player).

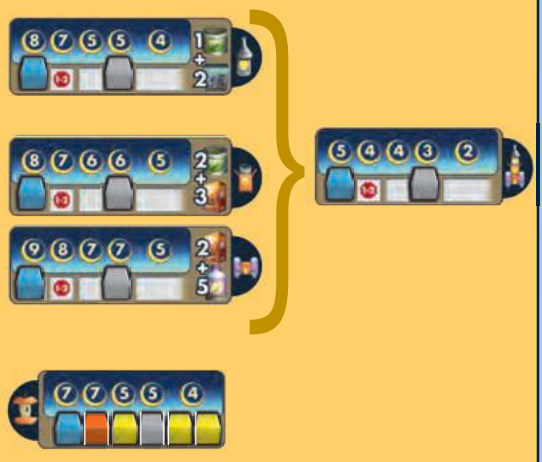


Stored Food: Place a Score marker on the **Stored Food Score track** each time your Rat Burrow marker reaches or passes the space next to the Stored Food.



Rattronaut: Whenever 1 of your Rats reaches the Launchpad, it becomes a Rattronaut. Place this Rat on the free space furthest to the left on the **Rattronaut Score track**.

Example 1: *During his turn, Esra builds a Cockpit in step 4 by handing in 2 Calculators and 1 Tin Can. Then he scores the Cockpit Score track.*
Example 2: *Esra builds a Cargo Bay and a Thruster on his next turn by handing in a total of 5 Vinegar Bottles, 5 Baking Soda, and 2 Tin Cans. Then he scores the Cargo Bay and Thruster Score tracks. In addition, Esra also places a Score marker on the Rocket Score track because he has now constructed a complete set of all 3 rocket parts.*
Example 3: *During her turn, Vero collected a total of 22 Apple Cores during step 2. She advances her Rat Burrow marker through the space to the left of Stored Food twice. This allows her to score the Stored Food Score track twice. Since the first 4 spaces of the Score track have already been occupied, she places both Score markers in the 5th space for 4 points each.*



End of Game

The end of the game can be triggered in 2 ways.

A) A player moves their 4th Rat onto the Launchpad: In this case, the game ends at the end of the current round so that all players will have the same number of turns.
B) A player places their 8th Score marker: In this case, finish the current round and then play **1 additional round**. Then the game ends.

Note: *Players have a 9th and a 10th Score marker (set aside during Setup) that may still be used for scoring. Each player may never use more than 10 Score markers.*

Now total your points. Use the **Scorepad** to write down each entry.

- Enter the points you have collected in each of the **8 different Score tracks**.
- Enter the total points for your **Bottle Caps**.
- Total your 3-point **Awards** and subtract 2 points from that total for each **Moldy Cheese**.
- Gain 1 point for every **4 of the following resources** you have left in any combination: **Vinegar Bottles**, **Baking Soda**, **Tin Cans**, **Calculators**, and **Cheese**.

The player with the most points wins.
In the event of a tie, the tied player with the most Rattronauts in the rocket wins.
If there is still a tie, the tied players share the win.

	Esra	Vera	Gaby
	5	6	-
	12	9	8
	6	6	13
	7	9	-
	-	6	13
	13	10	19
	13	-	5
	-	16	19
	12	8	-
	-1	+3	+1
	-	2	-
	67	75	68

Variable Setup

Once you've played a few games on the standard side of the gameboard, you'll be ready to add more variety in the game. Use the back side of the game board for variable play.

Variable Path

The variable junkyard path will now change every game. Some aspects of the game may become stronger and others weaker. It's up to you to figure out the best strategy each time!

- Sort all **26 junkyard path tiles** into 5 groups based on the letter on their backs (A to E)
- Mix each of the 5 groups separately facedown.
- Randomly place the tiles on the junkyard path beginning with the 6 A tiles which are placed faceup in the first 6 spaces on the path. Then place the 5 B tiles in the next 5 spaces, then the 5 C tiles, the 5 D tiles, and finally the 5 E tiles to complete the path.



Variable Score Track

- Mix all **8 Score tracks** facedown.
- Then draw 7 of them and place them on the 7 Score track areas on the gameboard. Don't place a Score track for the Rocket as it always remains the same.
- Return the remaining Score track back to the box.

Solo Play

Greg the Robo-Rat challenges you to a Solo game of ***First Rat.*** Regrettably, Greg gave up playing fair long ago. He ignores most of the rules and only cares about winning. Will you be able to put him in his place?

Setup

Decide whether you want to play with the standard or variable setup. Then setup the game the same as for a 2-player game with the following changes:

- Pick a color for Greg and place his 4 Rats in the following 4 spaces on the junkyard path:
  1st Rat: Space 8 **2nd Rat:** Space 5
  3rd Rat: Space 1 **4th Rat:** Start space
  Greg starts the game without any Rats in the Nursery and without Light String and Rat Burrow markers.
- Sort the 22 cards for the Solo game into 3 stacks according to the letter on their front (A, B, C). Separately mix the A and B stacks facedown.
- Choose a level of difficulty (easy, medium, difficult, unfair).
- Prepare Greg's deck of cards depending on the chosen level of difficulty. Deal cards facedown from the A and B stacks according to the following table. Then add the C card facedown and shuffle them all together to create a facedown deck for Greg next to the gameboard. Without looking at them, return the remaining A and B cards back to the box.



Level of Difficulty	Easy	Medium	Difficult	Unfair
Number of A Cards	5	6	7	8
Number of B Cards	5	4	3	2

- Using an unplayed color, place 1 Score marker just off the board next to each of the Score tracks except for the Rattronaut and Rocket: i.e. Cockpit, Cargo Bay, Thruster, Stored Food, Provisions, and Construction Lights. You won't need the 4 other Score markers in this color.
- You are the start player.

Sequence of Play

The Solo game is generally identical to the multi-player game with the following changes:

- Greg doesn't collect resources. Whenever you must give him Cheese, hand it in to the general supply instead.
- At the start of each of Greg's turns, reveal the top card of Greg's deck. The front of this card shows the number of spaces Greg's 4 Rats will move.
- The top move is for Greg's Rat in 1st position, the next move is for Greg's Rat in 2nd position, and so on.
- If one of Greg's Rats moves onto the Launchpad, any remaining moves are forfeited.
- If 1 or more of Greg's Rats are already on the rocket, their movement numbers are added to the next available Rat in position order. For example, if there are already 2 of Greg's rats in the rocket, the rat in 3rd position would move 3 space as shown on the card to the right (1+2+0).
- If Greg's Rats end their move in spaces with your Rats, you gain 1 Cheese as usual. Take it from the general supply.
- If one of Greg's Rats ends its turn in a booth space for Harry Hamster, Zippy the Frog, or the Madcap Crow, mix the tiles facedown and return 1 at random to the box. Then return the remaining tiles back into that booth's display faceup. Greg's Rats are never returned back to the Start space.



Note: *Greg's Rats may end their movement in spaces with different colors. Greg's Rats may also be in the same space with each other. However, your Rats must follow all rules unchanged.*

- Some of Greg's cards may have icons in the lower right corner. These include the following:



If you reveal a card with this icon, Greg prepares the corresponding Score track. Place the Score marker for an unplayed color on the illustration for that track. However, if there is already a Score marker on the illustration for that Score track, Greg scores the track by placing 1 of his Score markers there instead. Then return the Score marker for an unplayed color just off the board next to the Score track (as you did when setting up the game). If this icon is revealed again, Greg prepares the corresponding Score track again, and so on.



If you reveal a card with this icon, Greg prepares the Score track where he would currently gain the most points. If Greg has already prepared this track, he simply scores it instead (using the rules described above). If there are several tracks where Greg would currently score the most points, you may choose any one of them (regardless of whether this will be in Greg's best interest or not). Then, reshuffle the faceup cards back into Greg's deck.



When you reveal a card with this icon, mix all the Comics in the Library facedown and return 1 at random to the box. Then place the remaining Comics faceup back in the Library.

End of the Game

The Solo game ends using the same rules as the multi-player game. Total your points first and then Greg's points. If you have more points than Greg, you win the game. Next time, you may want to try a higher level of difficulty.

Solo Challenges

Try your hand at the various challenges. Can you master all of the challenges at the highest level of difficulty?

Solo Challenge	Easy	Medium	Difficult	Unfair
Win without placing any Rats in the rocket.				
Win without any Backpacks, Energy Drinks, Comics, or Bottle Caps.				
Win with all 4 of your Rats in the rocket.				
Win and score the Rocket Score track twice.				
Win with 4 different Backpacks.				
Win with at least 90 points.				
Win in 16 turns or fewer. Use 16 Cheese to count the moves.				
Win with at least 5 Score markers on the Stored Food Score track.				
Win a game in which you used all 5 Shortcuts at least twice.				

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