Escape The Citadel

A minimal, strategic solo dice game where you explore, fight, and survive as long as you can.
By K. M. Musgrave

Objective

You have escaped **The Citadel** and have a small **lead**, now you must push as far as you can down twisting paths, fight the searching **Patrols**, and see how many *Spaces* you can reveal before you are **Captured** or **Killed**.

Setup

💗 **Health:** 20/20 | 🔍 **Lead:** 30 | 💪 **Power:** 0
You need a 6-sided 🎲 dice (or Dice App).
Plays best on paper as a spider diagram radiating out, or on a word processor as a nested bullet-point list.

Rules

- Start with a single 🟩 **Space**, 🏯 **The Citadel** and as you explore, connect more 🟩 *Spaces* either as branching paths on your paper diagram or as nested bullet points.
- Each 🟩 *Space* can have, **one** path leading in toward the 🏯 *Citadel,* and up to **two** paths leading away.
- Take 👣 *Steps* from one 🟩 *Space* to another numbering the 👣 *Steps* as you go, even if forced to move by a loss.
- You may not equip Weapons or Armour if it would kill you. Weapon and Armour effects stack infinitely.

End Game

You are **Captured** if ever your 👣 *Steps* equal your 🔍 *Lead*. You die if your 💗 *Health* is reduced to 0.

Movement

- 👣 *Step* from 🟩 *Space* to 🟩 *Space* expanding your map and numbering your 👣 *Steps* as you go.
- Upon entering a 🟩 *Space* for the **first time**, 🎲 roll on the *New Space Table*
- 🚫 *Blocked Spaces* **only** allow you to move back towards the 🏯 *Citadel*.

New Space Table

Roll	Result	Notes
1	🚫 Blocked	Can only move inward from here. 🎲 Roll on Items Table.
2 or 3	🟩 Empty	-
4 or 5	🧍 Patrol	You must fight immediately. See *Combat*.
6	⛩️ Shrine	Is 🚫 Blocked. Increase 🔍 *Lead* by 5.

Combat

- 🧍 Patrol's Attack is equal to its distance from 🏯 *Citadel*, Including the 🏯 *Citadel* and its current 🟩 *Space*.
- ⚔️ Player's Attack is equal to your current 💪 Power + a 🎲 Dice Result.
- If your 💪 Power is equal to or exceeds a 🧍 Patrol's Attack, the 🧍 Patrol is killed before 🎲 rolling with no effects.
- Otherwise, roll 🎲 and compare ⚔️ Player's attack vs 🧍 Patrol's Attack.

Win	Draw	Lose
+1 💪 Power	Reroll until decided	Take 1 👣 step towards the 🏯 Citadel Lose 💗 *Health* equal to 🧍 Patrol's Attack minus ⚔️ Player's Attack Mark this 🧍 Patrol on the map, it gains +1 🧍 Attack in the future. Stacks with each loss. The 🟩 *Space* is 🚫 blocked until the 🧍 Patrol is defeated

Items

Items Table

Roll	Item	Effect			Carry Limit
1	Weapon	+1 💪 Power & -1 Max 💗 Health			Instant use or discard
2	Armour	-2 💗 Health & +2 Max 💗 Health			Instant use or discard
3	Map	Take a 3rd path from any 🟩 *Space* which is not 🚫 blocked			1
4	Poison	+2 ⚔️ Attack **once**, can be used before or after the 🎲 roll, can stack			3
5	Potion	+2 💗 Health			3
6	Divine Scroll	+ 5 🔍 Lead then roll 🎲 Dice	**1**	-2 💗 Health	1
			2 or 3	+2 💗 Health	
			4 or 5	+½ Max 💗 Health	
			6	Restore Full 💗 Health	

Example Play

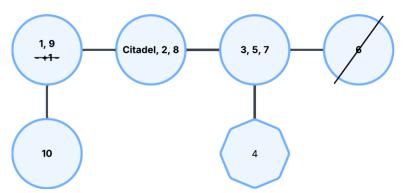| Step	Roll	Effect	Notes
1	4	Found 💂 Patrol	💂 Patrol's Attack is 2. 💪 is 0
	1	Defeated by 💂 Patrol	2 💂 is greater than 1 ⚔️ Attack (0 💪 +1 👻) so the patrol wins. Take -1 ❤️ Health (the difference between attacks, and Mark the 💂 patrol attack as +1 for next time
2			We were pushed by the defeat
3	3	Found Empty 🟩 Space	
4	6	Found ⛩️ Shrine	+5 🔍 Lead. This space is now 🚫 Blocked
5			Moving back to try a different route
6	1	🚫 Blocked Space	
	4	Found Poison	Rolling on Item Table. Found a Poison
9	1	Defeat 💂 Patrol	💂 Patrol's Attack is now 3. 💪 Power is still 0. 👻 Rolled 1 so used Poison to make ⚔️ Player Attack 3 (0 💪 + 1 👻 +2 💧). 💂 is Defeated, take +1 💪 Power
10	2	Found Empty 🟩 Space	

🔍 Lead: ~~30~~, 35
💪 Power: ~~0~~, 1
❤️ Health: ~~20/20~~, 19/20

From here just continue exploring and fighting to stay ahead of the pursuit. If you step count ever reaches your 🔍 Lead, you have been captured. If you ❤️ Health ever reaches 0, you have been killed.

(Diagram of connected circular spaces: "1, 9 +1" connected to "Citadel, 2, 8" connected to "3, 5, 7" connected to a crossed-out circle "6". Below "1, 9" is "10". Below "3, 5, 7" is a heptagon "4".)

Optional Challenges

Challenges are optional goals for players who want something to aim for. Ignore them completely.

Name	Result	Done
Explorer	Reveal 50 different 🟩 Spaces	
Far-Strider	Achieve a distance from the 🏰 Citadel of 25	
Veteran	Reach 💪 Power 10	
Fleet Foot	Reach 🔍 Lead of 100	
Staying Ahead	Find a ⛩️ Shrine when within 5 👣 Steps of 🔍 Lead	
Cat & Mouse	Achieve **Staying Ahead** 3 times in one run	
Ghost Path	Get Captured with less than 3 Power	
Over-Stretching	Take 20 Damage at once	
Over-Achieving	Deal 20 Damage at once	

Unbalanced Variants

These variants deliberately bend or break the balance of the game.
They aren't fair and they aren't balanced. Use them to change the feel, difficulty, or narrative.

Name	Result
Hard Mode	On the New Space Table, replace 2 with a 🚫 Blocked Space and 3 with a 🚫 Patrol
Divine Intervention	⛩️ Shrines and 📜 Scrolls provide 10 🔍 Lead
Chaos Theory	🟩 Spaces can have 3 outward paths, Maps provide a 4th
Hot Pursuit	Backward 👣 Steps toward the 🏰 Citadel take 2 👣 Steps
Choke Point	🟩 Spaces with a Distance greater than your 💪 Power +3 are always a 💂 Patrol
Fire Wall	You may not enter 🟩 Spaces with a distance less than your 💪 Power -5