Scott Brady's
boop the Halls!

2 players, 10+   **20 - 30 min**

deceptively cute, deceivingly challenging!

The hoomans are hanging ornaments on the highest boughs of the tree, but those clever cats are leaping up and boopin' them right off. In this Holiday edition of boop, you can win "Naughty" by knocking off 3 of your opponent's ornaments or "Nice" by lining up three cats in a row! But creating a line of three isn't easy with both you AND your opponent constantly "booping" kittens around. It's like… **herding cats!**

Can you "boop" your cats into position to win? Or wiil you just boop their ornaments out of the tree?

Contents & Set Up:

Empty the contents of the box and assemble the four puzzle-piece boards together at the center of the table. Onto it, stack the three tiers of the 'tree', slotting each into the matching size cut away as shown below.

Players begin the game with **8 Kittens and 3 Ornaments of their color.** Their 8 Cats begin "out of play" to the far side of the board. The player who most recently sang a Yuletide song will be the first player - or choose a first player at random.

4 piece puzzle board

Three stacked tiers to form the tree

Tier 1
Tier 2
Tier 3
Tier 4

8 Gold & White Cats (in reserve)

8 Gold & White Kittens

3 Gold & White Ornaments

3 Red & Black Ornaments

8 Red & Black Cats (in reserve)

8 Red & Black Kittens

Object:

Take turns placing one of your Kittens onto the tree, in any open green space available. Graduate your Kittens into Cats by lining up three of your pieces in a row, column or diagonally. Then...

Win Nice: Line up 3 of your adult Cats in a row - or place all 8 adult Cats on the tree!
Or Win Naughty: Capture 3 of your opponent's ornaments by knocking them off the tree - or by pouncing on them with an adult Cat!

"booping"

Lining up a row of three of your pieces isn't easy because when a piece is added to the board, it "boops" all of the pieces adjacent to it, pushing them one space away, including diagonally. (fig.1a & 1b)

🐾 *Don't be fooled by the tiered structure of the board. Cats and Kittens can be booped up or down a tier. Occasionally view play from overhead to see moves that are less obvious with the visual disruption of the 3-D board.*

🐾 *"boop" or "meow" sound effects are encouraged when you boop.* :)

A piece can be booped right off the tree, in which case it is returned to the owner's pool of pieces. (fig.1b)

A booped piece does not cause a chain reaction when it moves into a new space. Other pieces it moves towards do not move away in reaction. (fig.1b)

When any two pieces are already in a line on the board, another piece played *into that line* cannot push those pieces. This is true regardless of colors of the pieces. (fig.2)
(Of course, they CAN be booped from other directions.)

Setting up a line of two and defending against it is an important strategy. In (fig. 2), if it had been White's turn and a White Kitten had been placed instead, a line of 3 White Kittens would be scored on the diagonal. So, try to break up or block an opponent's line of two.

Graduating Kittens into Cats

After booping, check to see if you have 3 of your pieces lined up in a row, horizontally, vertically or diagonally. If you do, the Kittens of that group will "graduate" into Cats. (fig.3)

Remove the pieces from the board. Any Kittens are removed from the game and placed in the box *(Kittens love boxes)*. Then, replace those Kittens with adult Cats from the reserve and place them into your pool of pieces (not onto the board). You will ALWAYS have 8 active pieces (not counting ornaments). You can even make a line of both Cats AND Kittens.
(see Cats on page 3.)

Alternatively, if all 8 of your pieces are on the bed, you may graduate any one Kitten, by removing it from the game and placing a Cat from the reserve into your pool. Should it be strategically important to leave the Kitten on the board, you *could* place a Cat back into your pool, instead of graduating a Kitten.

In the rare case of lining up more than three in a row, or multiple connected 3's, choose which group of 3 to graduate, leaving the remaining pieces on the board. (fig. 4) OR, if you have both a 3 in a row *and* 8 pieces on the board, choose which you would activate.

fig.1a **Placing**

Adding the White Kitten does not create a line of three. Instead, anything adjacent (yellow area) is pushed one space away.

fig.1b **Booping**

Pieces can be pushed right off the tree! No secondary chain reactions occur *(so Kitten (a) doesn't move).*

fig.2

When the Black Kitten is played, Kitten (b) gets booped, but the other Kittens don't move because they cannot be booped into each other. The line of two (or more) prevents it.

fig.3

White lines up three Kittens in a row - and removes them from the game. Three adult Cats are now placed into the player's pool.
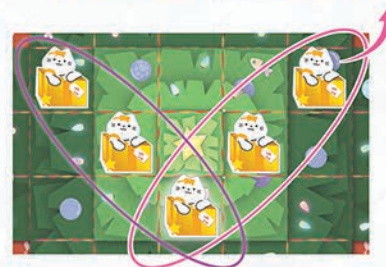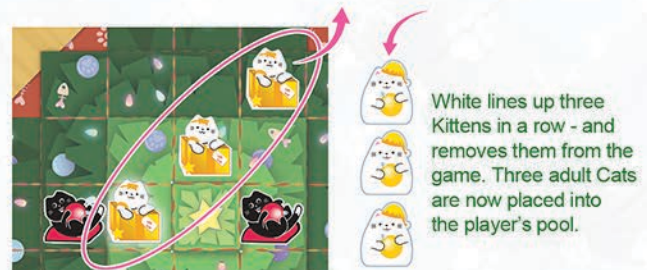

fig.4

When your move creates more than one opportunity to graduate pieces, choose one of them. Remove those pieces from the board, leaving the others in place.

Cats

Once you have adult Cats in your pool, you may choose to play either a Cat or a Kitten on your turn. Cats work the same way as Kittens, except that **Cats CANNOT be booped by Kittens.** However, Cats can boop other Cats, as well as Kittens.

When you line up 3 of your pieces with a combination of Cats and Kittens, you still remove all three pieces from the board and graduate any Kittens. (fig. 5) The Cats in the group go to your pool, as do any newly graduated Cats.

fig.5

It's okay if Cats are part of your line of three. Remove all three from the board. Here, both the Kittens graduate into Cats - and are placed, along with the Cat from your line up, into your pool.

Ornaments

> **The Golden Rule:**
> **If you don't have an ornament on the tree, you must begin your turn by placing one of your color ornaments on the tree.**

Ornaments are the Naughty new way to win (or lose) a game of boop. Each player begins the game with 3 ornaments of their color. You will always have one - *and only one* - ornament of your color on the tree at a time. Therefore, per the Golden Rule above, if at the start of your turn you do not have an ornament on the tree, you must place one - including your very first play of the game!

Ornaments must be placed on the Decorating tier (tier 2) in any unoccupied space. *(The hoomans are placing them high to keep them out of paw's reach. Ha. Silly hoomans.)* On the rare occasion that the Decorating tier has no open spaces, place your ornament on any open space on the next tier down.

After placing an ornament, the player then plays a Kitten or Cat as normal to complete their turn.

Ornaments may be booped by both Kittens and Cats, either into an empty space on the same tier or to a tier below. However, an ornament may not be booped from a lower tier to a higher tier. It simply remains in place. (Therefore, there is no way for an ornament to occupy the top tier.)

### Booping Your Opponent's Ornament Off the Tree:
When a player boops their opponent's ornament off the edge of the board, they capture the ornament and place it in their scoring area (the gold ribbon corner nearest them on the board). Capturing all three of your opponent's ornaments wins you the game!

Booping YOUR OWN Ornament Off the Tree:
To avoid your opponent capturing it, you may boop your OWN ornament off the tree. It simply returns to your pool without being scored. This can be an important defensive strategy.
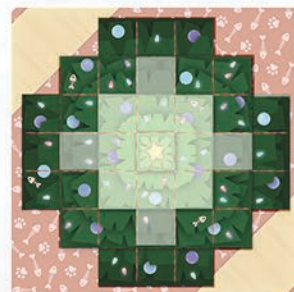
When placing an ornament, it must enter play in one of the 8 spaces on the 2nd tier.
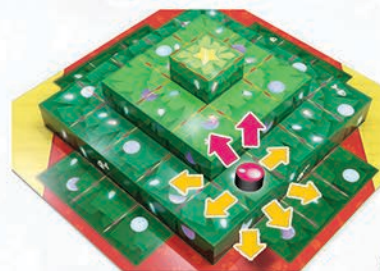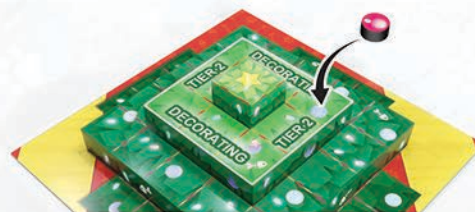
Ornaments can't be booped up a tier.

But can be booped along the same tier or down a tier.
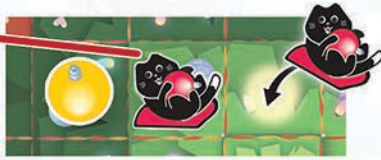
Or even right off the tree.

Ornaments can be booped off the tree from any of these spaces on tier 3 & 4.

CATS CAN POUNCE TO CAPTURE ORNAMENTS!:

If a Kitten would be booped into a space occupied by an ornament, the boop is blocked and the Kitten does not move.

This Kitten will not boop away because the ornament blocks it.

However, once Cats are on the board, things get more complicated. If a **Cat** is booped onto a space occupied by an ornament (a "Pounce"), it will capture it. Then place the Cat back into your pool. Pouncing on your own ornament safely returns it to your pool. If it is your opponent's ornament, you capture & score it! So, try to avoid placing your ornament next to an opponent's Cat - unless you plan to boop things into safer positions during the second part of your turn.

Booping a Cat into an ornament will capture it!

Notes for Clever Cats

🐾 The top two tiers of the board can be more powerful, as they are furthest from the edge making it harder to push your pieces off the board. However, don't be afraid of pushing your own pieces out of the tree. It might be strategic to put them back into your pool for subsequent plays.

🐾 Two pieces in a row is *one way* to set up a line of three. But you can also try a sneakier way by setting up an L shaped pattern - and booping your piece into the center! *Note: the 3D nature of the tree can make this VERY hard to see.*
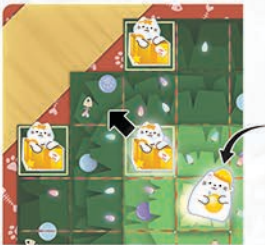
🐾 When you have Cats, be mindful of placing them ALL on the tree, especially if your opponent has none. Since Kittens can't push them, they will be stuck in place.

WINNING:

NICE: When you line up three of your Cats in a row, horizontally, vertically or diagonally, you WIN. Alternatively, a player can WIN by having all 8 of their Cats on the tree at the end of a turn.

NAUGHTY: When you capture all three of your opponent's ornaments, you WIN.

IMPORTANT: Only check for a WIN after all booped pieces complete their movement.
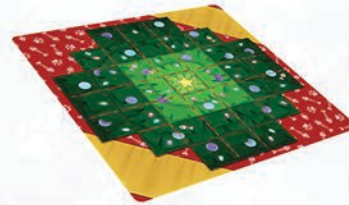
Is playing on a 3d board making your head spin? Try playing on just the puzzle board! (Remember, ornaments can't be booped towards the center.)

... and to all, a good night!