

Three Kingdoms: Heroes in Wine

Public Playtest Rulebook

A game by Cweeperz

煮酒
論
英雄



“Heroes are the ones who cherish lofty designs in their bosoms and have plans to achieve them. They have all-embracing schemes, and the whole world is at their mercy.”

-Cao Cao

Introduction

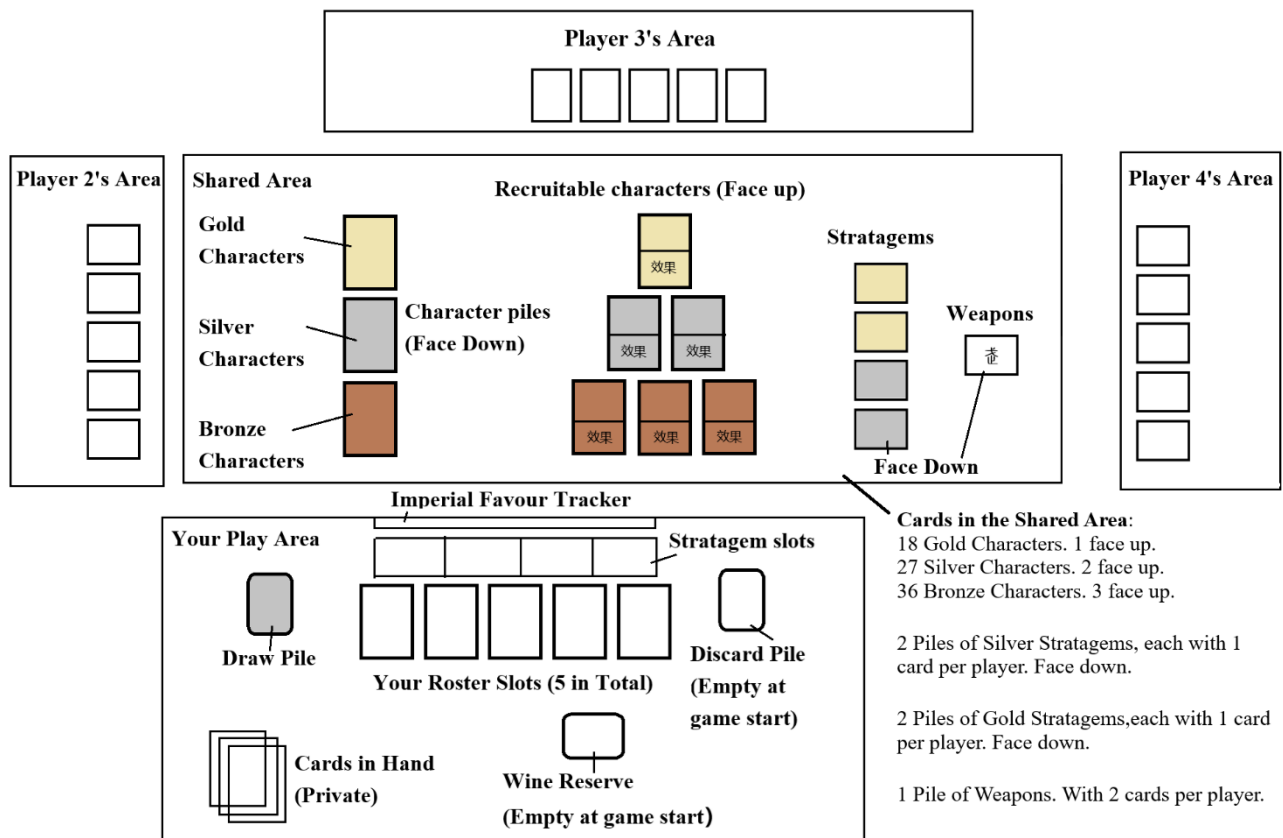
In this game, you will lead your faction during the tumultuous Three Kingdoms period, gathering Heroes to your cause. Each card in your hand is a movement, an opportunity. When used correctly, it will catch the attention of those who are worthy. At the same time, it is also Wine. Wine stands in for resources, popularity, and soft power. Drink at opportune times, and the world will know your dignity. Gather Heroes and claim the throne. Become the greatest Hero of the Three Kingdoms.

What you will need

- Each player will need a set of standard poker cards, with 2 Jokers.
- You will need all cards included in the Print and Play.
- You may add any additional cards from expansions.
- Small chits that can be placed to track Imperial Favour and Intrigue. You will need 2 per player.
- Something cool to represent the Warlord title (optional).

Setup

- Each player shall shuffle their poker deck, placing them face down. This is the **Draw Deck**.
- Shuffle the Gold, Silver, and Bronze characters separately. Place them face down. One player shall draw 1 Gold character, 2 Silver characters, and 3 Bronze characters, placing them face-up next to the character decks. These are the **Recruitable** characters.
- One player shall draw 2 sets of random Silver **Stratagems** and 2 sets of random Gold **Stratagems**, each set containing a number of cards equal to the number of players. In total, there should be 4 small decks of **Stratagems**, 2 of each tier. Shuffle them and place them in separately.
- One player shall draw random **Weapon** cards equal to twice the number of players. Shuffle them and place them in a deck face down.
- The players sit around the **Recruitable** characters, the character decks, and the playmat.
- Determine a first player. They shall start by drawing 3 cards from their draw deck. Then the one to their left draws 4, then 5, then 6. They may now begin their first turn, starting with their **Drawing Phase**.



How to Play & How to Win

The game is played **turn by turn**, clockwise. Should any player have 6 or more **Hero Points** at the end of their **Action Phase**, they may attempt to win by **Claiming the Throne**. If the player who has **Claimed the Throne** begins their turn still with 6 or more **Hero Points**, they win and every other player loses. If not, then they lose at the start of their turn, and the other players earn their places based on the amount of **Hero Points** each possess.

- Each active, unwounded Gold character grants +2 **Hero Points**.
- Each active, unwounded Silver character grants +1 **Hero Point**.
- Controlling the Warlord title grants +1 **Hero Point**. (See Duelling Section)
- Additional **Hero Points** may be provided by having **Imperial Favour**. (See Imperial Favour Section)

Each player turn is split into 3 distinct **Phases**:

Drawing Phase: Draw 3 cards from your **Draw Pile**. Trigger your character effects that occur during this phase, going left to right.

Action Phase: Play 1 poker hand (See relevant section below), and resolve any effects. Additionally, you may use your basic **Drink** effects (See Wine Section), or **Claim the Throne** if you have at least 6 **Hero Points**.

Discard Phase: Should you have cards that exceed your **Hand Size** (By default 5), **Discard** down to your hand size. Trigger your character effects that occur during this phase, going left to right. Finally, should you have any **Wounded** characters that were **Wounded** BEFORE your current turn, heal them¹.

Note: Should your **Draw Pile** ever be empty, shuffle your **Discard Pile** and use it as your new **Draw Pile**.²

¹ Essentially, if you get your characters injured during your turn, they don't heal at the end of it.

² DO NOT shuffle your Wine cards or cards in hand.



Action Phase: Playing Cards

You may play 1 poker hand during your Action Phase, with corresponding effects. Note that Jokers can be any number, any suit.

Single Card: Play any 1 card.

Pair: Play any 2 cards of the same number value.

Three-of-a-Kind: Play any 3 cards of the same number value.

Four-of-a-Kind: Play any 4 cards of the same number value.

Straight: Play at least 4 cards with number values that are in order.

Flush: Play at least 4 cards of the same suit.

Playing these hands has various beneficial effects:

- When you play any hand, you may opt to turn all the played cards into **Wine**. Place the played cards into your **Wine Reserve**.

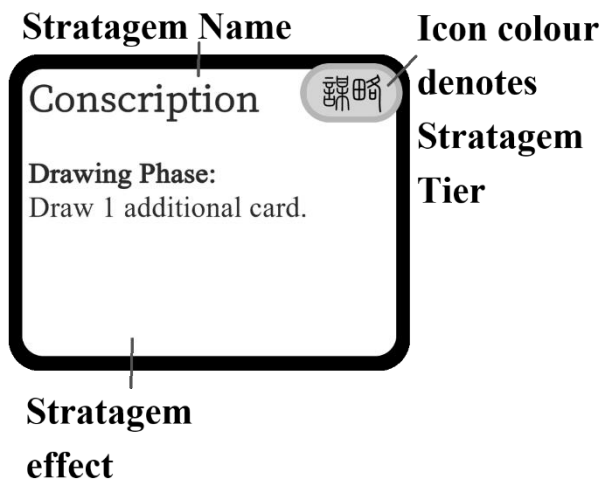
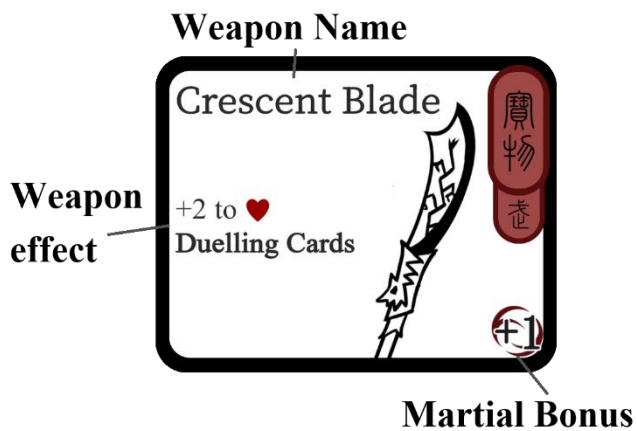
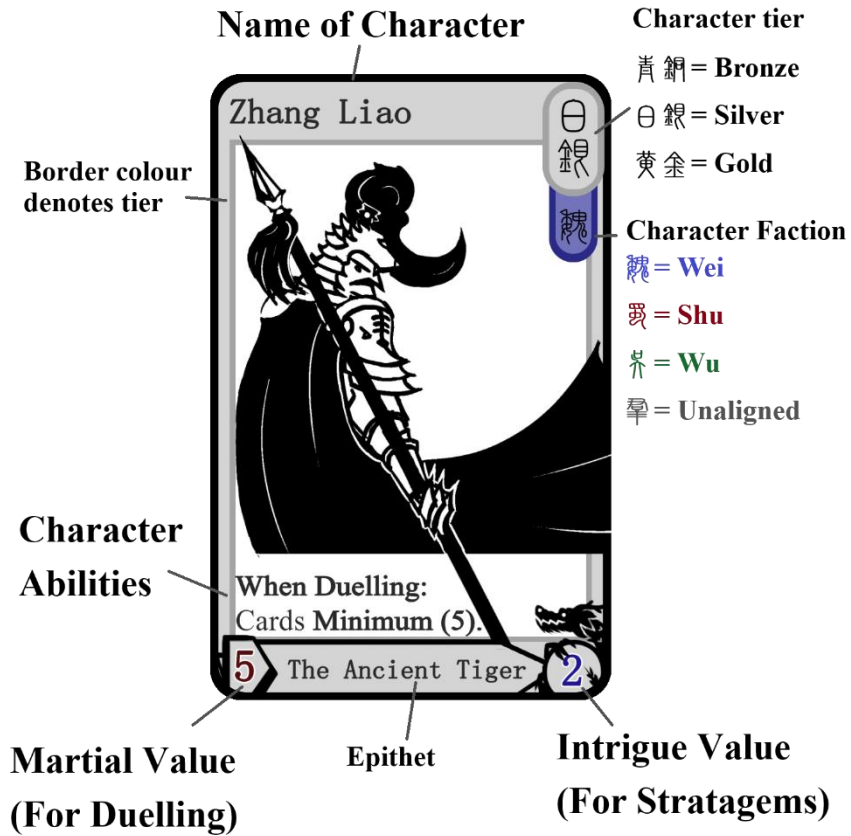
- When you play a **Pair**, you may opt to **Discard** the played cards instead of turning them into **Wine**. If you do so, you may **Recruit** a Bronze character³. Take one from the **Recruitable** Bronze characters, or take one from the top of the Bronze character deck . Add this character to one of your **Roster Slots**⁴.
- When you play a **Three-of-a-Kind**, you may do the same as above, except you will be **Recruiting** a Silver character instead. However, you must have at least 1 character in your **Roster** already to do so.
- When you play a **Four-of-a-Kind**, you may do the same as above, except you will be **Recruiting** a Gold character instead. However, you must have at least 1 Silver or Gold character in your **Roster** already to do so.
- When you play a Straight or a Flush, not only do the cards turn to Wine, but you also gain Imperial Favour. You gain 1 **Imperial Favour**, +1 additional for each extra card you played beyond the minimum of 4.



³ Whenever a Recrutable character is Recruited, reveal the top card of the character deck to replace it.

⁴ When you place the character into your roster, you must place it on the top. Should it cover up any character, the covered-up character becomes **inactive** and will not do anything until it is the top character again.

Anatomy of a Card



Wine and Imperial Favour

Wine and **Imperial Favour** are the 2 tangible resources in the game. Each card in your **Wine Reserve** is worth 1 **Wine** (the number and suit does not matter here, unless explicitly stated). As for **Imperial Favour**, when you gain it, mark it as such with a chit on your **Imperial Favour Tracker**.

Wine can be spent to trigger **Drink** effects. **Discard** Wine equal to the number in parentheses to activate the effect. Unless it states “**Repeatable**”, all **Drink** effects may only be used once per turn. When **Drinking**, you can use any **Wine** card in your **Reserve**.

Beyond playing cards to gain **Wine**, **Wine** is also gained by **Pour** effects. Draw cards from your draw deck equal to the number in parentheses and place them immediately into your **Wine Reserve**.⁵

Basic Drink Effects

You always have access to these actions during your **Action Phase**.

Move: Drink (1) to move 1 character to another Roster Slot. **Repeatable**.

Headhunt: Drink (1) to shuffle all the **Recruitable** characters from 1 tier back into the character deck and replace them with new ones.⁶

Petition the Court: Drink (2) to gain 1 **Imperial Favour**. **Once per Turn**.

Forge: Drink (3) to draw the top **Weapon Card**. **Repeatable**.

Recruit: Drink (4/8/12) to **Recruit** a Bronze / Silver / Gold character. **Repeatable**.

Initiate Duel: Drink (1), plus an additional Drink (1) for each subsequent **Duel** you initiate during the same turn. Resets to 1 at the end of turn. **Repeatable**. See **Duelling Rules** for more details.

⁵ Until they are used or discarded, Wine cards stay in the Wine Reserve indefinitely. Players can therefore use the Wine Reserve to “store” cards they otherwise don’t want.

⁶ Replace the characters before shuffling to avoid getting repeats.



Basic Imperial Favour Uses:

When gaining or losing **Imperial Favour**, mark the change with a chit in your **Imperial Favour Tracker**. When you have enough **Imperial Favour** to hit certain thresholds in the tracker, gain the corresponding **Hero Points** until you drop below the threshold again.

Similar to **Wine**, you can spend **Imperial Favour** during your **Action Phase**.

Commend: Spend 1 **Imperial Favour** to **Dismiss**⁷ 3 Bronze characters to Recruit a Silver character, or **Dismiss** 3 Silver characters to obtain a Gold character. When you Dismiss in this way, you can choose from any of your characters, including ones that are covered up or **Wounded**. **Once per turn**.

Bestow / Withdraw: Spend 1 **Imperial Favour** to give a **Weapon** to one of your characters / take back an equipped **Weapon**. **Once per turn**.



Weapons



Each character can have 1 **Weapon** equipped. Each **Weapon** increases Duelling capabilities considerably. Some may provide **Martial** value bonuses. When a character with a **Weapon** is **Slain**, the **Weapon** is returned to your hand. You would have to use **Bestow** during your **Action Phase** to re-equip it to someone. When a character with a **Weapon** is **Captured**, the **Weapon** is **Captured** alongside them.

When you equip a weapon to a character, place it below the character that is equipped with it. When moving that character via **Move** action, the weapon follows them. Should the character be covered up, the weapon is covered up with them and becomes inactive. You must use **Withdraw** if you wish to reuse the weapon for later.

⁷ To **Dismiss**, place the character into the character deck and shuffle. Should the Dismissed character have a **Weapon** equipped, return the **Weapon** back to your hand for free.

Duelling & Martial Rules

When you initiate a **Duel**, you nominate one of your characters as the champion to duel, then select a player as your opponent. The opponent may now choose to **Accept** or **Decline**.

If they **Decline**, you regain all Wine spent to initiate the **Duel**. Once you do, you may select one of the opponent's active characters, who becomes **Wounded** as they flee from your wrath. The **Duel** did not occur, so it does not increase the **Wine** cost, neither does it trigger any **Duel**-related effects. However, no matter if accepted or not, each character can only initiate 1 **Duel** per turn. Even if declined, your character cannot initiate any more **Duels** until next turn⁸.

If the opponent **Accepts**, they must nominate one **Unwounded** character from the top of their roster as their champion to join the Duel. Their champion cannot be selected if their **Martial** value is 4 or more lower than yours (after all modifiers), as they are too frightened to even fight.

During the **Duel**, both players will have access to a certain number of **Duelling Cards**, drawn from the top of their draw deck. The total number of **Duelling Cards** that will be used by each player is determined by their **Martial** value after all modifiers. These cards will be used to fight over a variable number of **Exchanges**. Your goal is to win as many **Exchanges** as you can. Once the **Duel** begins, both players draw 1 card and reveal it. These are the first **Duelling Cards** of either player.

The player with the lowest Duelling Card will get a choice: They can either **Press** or **Yield**. If they **Press**, they will draw another card and reveal it (this will be their second Duelling Card⁹), adding the new card's value to the one they already have. Then, whoever has the lower total makes the same choice again, until one side **Yields** or runs out of **Duelling Cards**. Should the total number ever be the same, immediately start a new **Exchange**.

If they **Yield**, then the other player wins this **Exchange**. Start a new **Exchange**, with both sides each drawing 1 **Duelling Card** again.

⁸ They may however still fight when opponents initiate **Duels** against you.

⁹ If they only have 1 Martial, then they don't even get a choice. The first card is all you get.



This continues until one side runs out of **Duelling Cards**. Once that happens, determine the winner of the current ongoing **Exchange**, and then tally up the total number of **Exchanges** won by each player. Ignore tied ones. Note that one side may have left-over Duelling Cards. These unused cards each count for half an **Exchange** won, rounding up.

The player with more **Exchanges** won wins, with the **Victory Score** being the lead in **Exchanges** won. The victory result depends on the **Victory Score**:

0: Stalemate. No one wins and nothing happens.

1: Close Victory. **Wound** the opponent.

2: Great Victory! **Slay** the opponent.

3 or more: Glorious Victory!! **Capture** the opponent and their **Weapon**. To **Capture**, place the enemy somewhere in your Roster Slot, including underneath other characters. The **Captured** enemy is **Wounded**. Note: You can opt to **Slay** them instead and add the **Weapon** to your hand.



Finally, the winner also wins 1 **Imperial Favour**. Victory also triggers the **Victory** keyword on some characters, as do **Stalemates** and **Defeats**. Keep an eye out for these effects!

The first character to win a **Duel** each game (or have the enemy cower away when **Declined**) will obtain the **Warlord** title. The title grants +1 Hero Point, and allows you to **Draw (1)** and **Pour (1)** at your **Drawing Phase**¹⁰.

Should the **Warlord** be **Defeated** or **Decline** a **Duel**, the opponent steals the title. Should the **Warlord** be **Slain** outside of battle or be covered up, the title is lost, and can be earned again by anyone. If you use another character to accept a duel instead of the **Warlord**, the title is also lost, and will be earned by whoever wins this **Duel**¹¹.

¹⁰ This means if you obtain the title, you won't get any tangible benefit until the start of your next turn. You got to defend the title!

¹¹ You can still use other characters to initiate Duels during your turn without losing the title though.

Stratagems & Intrigue Rules

As warriors and counsellors flock to your rule, a myriad of strategic plans will be made available to you. Each character's capability to strategize and scheme is represented by their **Intrigue** value, on the bottom right.

Whenever you **Recruit**, cover up, or lose a character, be sure to update your **Intrigue Tracker**. Your **Intrigue Tracker** should display your current total Intrigue of all your characters at the top of your **Roster**.

When your total **Intrigue** reaches the thresholds on the tracker, you may obtain a corresponding **Stratagem**. The first 2 tiers will grant Silver **Stratagems**, while the later 2 will grant much more powerful Gold **Stratagems**. When you reach a threshold, you may look through the deck corresponding to the current threshold and select 1 of them to add to your **Stratagem Slot**, while the unpicked ones go back into the deck. For each threshold, the players are looking through the same deck, so the player to reach each threshold first will be the first to pick and utilize the **Stratagem**. The player to reach it last will thus get no choice.

Should your **Intrigue** fall below the thresholds, the corresponding **Stratagems** become disabled and are flipped upside down. Some **Stratagems** can only be used **Once per turn**. When you use them, they are also flipped upside down. Flipped **Stratagems** flip back at the start of your turn only if your **Intrigue** is still at the threshold used to unlock it.



Keyword Glossary

Some cards have Keywords. They convey the following meanings in a laconic way:

Drink (x¹²): Discard x cards from your **Wine Reserve** to trigger some effect.

Deploy: Triggers some effect upon **Recruiting** this character. Does not trigger when capturing characters.

When Duelling: Some effect is active only when this character is in a **Duel**. If they can modify the value of a **Duelling Card**, you have to use it as the card is freshly drawn. You cannot retroactively use it on older **Duelling Cards**.

Victory: Triggers some effect upon winning a **Duel**.

Stalemate: Triggers some effect upon ending a **Duel** in a stalemate.

Defeat: Triggers some effect upon losing a **Duel**.

Wound: Flip a character upside down. This character's effects do not trigger and they grant no **Hero Points**. They also cannot participate in **Duels**. However, they still contribute their **Intrigue**¹³.

Heal: Return a **Wounded** character to their **Unwounded** state.

Slay: Remove this character from the game.

Dismiss: Shuffle this character back into their character deck.

Pour (x): Draw the top x cards from your draw deck and add them to your **Wine Reserve**.

Redraw (x): Discard at most x cards, then redraw that many.

Minimum (x) / Maximum (x): This appears only as **Duelling** effects. All your **Duelling Cards** below x are set to x / all the opponent's **Duelling Cards** above x are set to x.

¹² The x is used here generically to represent any number. It should not be confused with the x effects in game, which are variable numbers that scale based on the situation, such as the number of characters you possess.

¹³ This is a rule that is still being playtested. It would mirror the Martial value being nullified, but would result in a lot of hassle moving the Intrigue Tracker. Feel free to try it both ways and tell us how you feel!



Advanced Rules

Players may use these rules to spice up their games, so long as they all agree to them before the game begins. They can be mixed and matched as well. You are also encouraged to come up with your own custom games, and maybe even suggest them back for a chance for them to be included here!

Heroic Mode: Instead of the game ending when the one Claiming the Throne is dropped below 6 Hero Points, the game keeps going. Anyone can Claim the Throne, even when others have already done so. The first person to start their turn with the Claim active and with at least 6 Hero Points wins and unifies China under their new Mandate of Heaven.¹⁴

Quick Play: Drop the 6 Hero Point requirement for Claiming the Throne to 5 Hero Points. This will drop game-time by half, but lessen strategy.

Loyal Retinue: Before the game begins, each player may draft a certain number of characters. You may decide the rules and amount. The more drafted, the quicker and more chaotic the game.

All Boozed Up: Each player starts with a certain number of Wine cards.

Realm of Heroes: Heroes all over China are eager to change the world. Increase the Recrutable Character count by a certain amount (For example, 2 gold, 3 silver, 4 bronze, or 3 of each). This will result in a more strategic game, but there may be a lot more reading and thinking.

War Spoils: Ruthless raiders raid ruthlessly. After each Duel, the winner can Draw and / or Pour a certain amount, or gain additional Imperial Favour.

Drink Responsibly: When you Pour and see a card you'd rather not turn into Wine, you can Discard (1) to put that card into your hand instead of your Wine Reserve. This prevents the frustration of pouring away your jokers or cards you needed, though it does remove some deck-management gameplay.

Oathsworn Brothers: Gathering 4 characters of the same Faction grants 1 Hero Point. Gathering 5 grants 2. Unaligned characters (羣) count as any Faction.

¹⁴ This was the original way the game was played. Much more strategy and diplomacy, but also liable to run indefinitely. Games may take much longer than usual.



Frequently Asked Questions

General Questions

Q: What are the corresponding numerical values to the face cards and Ace?

A: Jacks are 11, Queens are 12, Kings are 13, and Aces are 14, except when used in a straight, where Aces can be used as a 1 as well.

Q: Is there any difference between roster slots? Should I put my first character somewhere specific?

A: Generally, the specific slot does not matter. Some characters and weapons care about adjacencies, however.

Q: Each character can only initiate duels once per action phase. Can characters accept duels afterwards / can they accept duels multiple times?

A: Yes. You can accept as many as you want, so long as they are not Wounded or otherwise inactive.

Q: Some characters count how many characters of a specific faction you have. Do they count themselves?

A: Yes.

Q: What are “x effects”? How do they work?

A: Some cards use an x in place of specific numbers. These are variables that scale based on the current board state or gameplay factor. Some effects give +1 or +2 to x effects. This means that you can add 1 or 2 to your effects that use an x.

Q: Why is there so much missing artwork?

A: Drawing takes time T-T. I'll get it done I swear!





Frequently Asked Questions

The Nitty-Gritty



Q: Dian Wei can fight while Wounded. Does he still grant Hero Points while Wounded?

A: No.

Q: Can I choose to not activate Dong Zhuo's ability?

A: No, it's permanent unless you cover him up or get rid of him.

Q: What counts as "an effect or action" for Guo Jia?

A: Any time an opponents' keyword acts on one of your characters, and every time they explicitly nominate you or your characters for any effect. This can only trigger once per interaction, so if Tao Qian targets you, you only get to Pour (2) once instead of 3 times (for the Pour and Draw keywords).

Q: Ma Chao can only be at most Wounded during Duels. Can he still be Slain outside of Duels?

A: Yes. Though this is only currently possible with Jia Xu or Zhang Fei.

Q: My character with the Warlord title was defeated. I used Zhou Tai to incur the consequences instead. Do I still lose the Warlord title? If the enemy used Zhang Xiu, who counts as "the opponent"?

A: Yes. Zhou Tai only suffers the Wound, Slay, or Capture effect. The opponent was whoever actually fought in the duel.

Q: Since Zuo Ci copies character text, does he lose his copy ability?

A: No. He transforms at the end of every single turn, unless Wounded.



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If you have feedback or questions, consider joining our [Discord!](https://discord.gg/QnEXZq5355) <https://discord.gg/QnEXZq5355>

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