

These Cards Have Hearts

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These Cards Have Hearts is a game about taking card games too seriously, making up rules, and friendship. In this game you will enter a card game tournament in a world where card games are the most important thing in the world. Save the world, your friends, or yourself with the power of cards.

Things you need in order to play:

- 3-5 players, one acting as a Facilitator
- Something to take notes with
- At least two six-sided dice (the more the better)

Conducting play:

1. Discuss safety as a group. Decide what type of safety tools you will be using and mention any triggering things that could come up in play that you would prefer be avoided. Make sure everyone at the table feels comfortable with the established boundaries before starting.
2. Make sure everyone has read through this game's rules. (It's only 8 pages you can do it!)
3. Decide who will act as Facilitator.
4. Go through World Setup as a group.
5. Go through Character Creation individually
 - a. If there are only 3 people in your group have the two players go through character creation twice, creating two different characters to play as. Characters controlled by the same player cannot be rivals, but can maybe be friends.
6. Everyone takes turns introducing their characters to the group
7. Everyone names at least one character that is their friend and one who is their rival (a person cannot be both). At least one friend/rival must be a Player Character, but the others can be NPC's.
8. The Facilitator decides what Duels will happen in what order and who is supposed to win them. They do not reveal this information to anyone yet. (You can plan for as many Duels as you like but more than 5 or 6 will make for a very long game.)
9. The game begins with a brief introduction to the tournament environment, immediately followed by the start of the first Duel.
10. After the Duel has ended, players may conduct scenes as they see fit before moving on to the next Duel.
11. Once the final Duel ends, the game is over. You can spend some time discussing what happens with this world or your characters after the events off the game if you like.

Rolling and Moves:

These Cards Have Hearts is a Powered by the Apocalypse (PbtA) game. In PbtA games taking certain actions trigger Moves. If a player takes an action that would trigger a Move, consult the move and take action accordingly.

When a Move requires you to roll it means to roll two six-sided dice (2d6). When it says roll+ something it means to roll 2d6 and apply the character who is rolling's appropriate modifier.

A result of 10+ is a complete success, a 7-9 is a partial success, and a 6 or lower is a failure.

Failures typically require the Facilitator to make a move as hard as they want, incurring some kind of penalty and/or complicating that character's situation in an interesting way.

The Facilitator will never roll dice.

Hopefully this game is not the first PbtA game you have played as I don't believe it is the best onboarding of its mechanics.

World Setup:

- What is the card game your characters will be playing? (Ex. Yu-Gi-Oh, Bakugan, Pokémon, Pow Cards, Card Wars, Magic: The Gathering, or something made up)
 - If you are making up a card game, make sure it has a win/lose condition and something resembling a game structure. Try not to spend too much time thinking about it and figure out the details in play.
 - If you are using an established card game, don't feel limited to just using cards that come from that game! Make stuff up as you go!
- Where is the tournament taking place? (Ex. a school festival, an island, Hell, a mansion, a carnival)
- What is the name of the tournament?
- What sort of person is operating this tournament? (Ex. Eccentric billionaire, Satan, a talking dog)
- What is the prize for winning the tournament? (Ex. money, a wish, a special card)
- What is the secret truth of this tournament that will change the world? (Ex. ancient summoning ritual, powering a doomsday device, gathering magic gemstones) [note: no matter what the secret is, make sure it is something that can be defeated by playing a card game]

Character Creation:

- What is your character's name?
- What are your character's pronouns?
- What is your character's look? (Ex. cool, scary, cute, ragged, firey)
- What is your deck's theme? (Ex. dragons, motorcycles, fish, clowns)
- What is your character's favorite card?
- Assign one of these modifiers to each stat: -1, 0, +1, +2
- Choose a Special Move
- Choose a Finishing Move
- What song plays when you use your Finishing Move?
- Answer these questions for your character:
 - What made you start playing this game?
 - Why do you have to win this tournament?

Stats:

The stats in These Cards Have Hearts are Heart, Skill, Luck, and Money

Heart is your ability to empathise with others and believe in yourself.

Skill is your ability to play the card game well and come up with clever solutions.

Luck is your ability to get by without thinking and naturally intuit things.

Money is your ability to distance yourself from your emotions and access material resources.

Duels:

A Duel is a battle between two characters using their cards. Every Duel must have at least one player character. Duels in These Cards Have Hearts are conversations, usually in-character, narrating actions taken in the fictional card game as they happen. You say the cards you play (maybe describing what they look like or act like visually) and the actions you take, pass the turn to your opponent, and they do the same. There's also banter, commentary from the sidelines, and plenty of internal-monologuing. If you feel lost while in a Duel, the best advice I can give is to try and imagine what would happen next in an episode of Yu-Gi-Oh and play towards that.

Each player starts the duel by receiving +1 Drive. The Facilitator decides who starts in control based on who seems to have the upper hand.

The player who has control is whoever has the advantage at any given point in the Duel. When starting the Duel it's usually best for the player with control to take initiative. They should be prepared to counter all their opponents moves, or if not then they should be taking each hit smirking, knowing that by acting your opponent is dooming themselves. The other player narrates their actions and responses, but they should be at a clear disadvantage with little to no control over the game as a whole.

When the player in control has built up to something big that could swing things toward their victory in a major way roll *Time to Duel*.

While someone else is in control and it feels appropriate for your character to seize control from them, use *Activated My Trap Card*.

When you aren't in control try to make the other player look good. When you banter or monologue, try to talk about how they're outsmarting you at every turn or you just can't keep up with their powerful cards.

(Whenever you gain control in a duel for any reason, explain how you've learned to overcome your opponents strategies/tricks or your own personal struggles in order to turn the tides in your favor. Maybe you learned how your opponent was cheating and discovered a strategy to prevent it, or you've been doubting the power of your deck since losing your favorite card but remember that its heart remains with you giving you its power.)

When it seems appropriate (or if everyone is out of Drive), the Facilitator announces who is going to win the duel (although there are moves that can change that). When it feels appropriate, that player activates their Finishing Move.

When the Facilitator Duels as an NPC they are not allowed to make any kind of Duel moves. When the NPC gains control of the Duel they may act with it until either handing control back to a player when it seems appropriate or they are interrupted by a move. And as a rule, try not to spend too much time on NPC Duels.

There's not really any kind of limit to what you can do during Duels. As long as you're doing something with cards it's probably allowed. Deathtraps, mind-reading, and real magic spells are all fair game if you can justify them as part of some kind of card game strategy. This is largely at the Facilitator's discretion, but if any player has an objection everyone should make an effort to make them feel accommodated.

If you're not participating in the duel and you're able to, take notes about the state of the Duel in a place where everyone can see. The notes don't have to be too detailed, but having an idea of each player's health or what monsters they have in play can be useful for people who have trouble remembering or visualizing things.

Players characters that aren't participating in the Duel can add some in-character commentary and activate certain moves. NPC's can comment as well, but can't activate moves. If there's a lull in the action or the players Dueling seem uncertain, a character jumping in with some commentary can help change the direction in an unexpected way or move things along. Just make sure you aren't talking over anyone.

REMEMBER!!!! Your goal as a player isn't to win duels, it's to make the story interesting. There is no benefit to winning a duel outside of the fiction. Use your losses to make the other players' victories bigger and more exciting. It's what you would want them to do for you.

Drive:

Drive is your character's ability to push themselves and their cards past their limits. Players get 1 Drive at the start of each Duel. Drive carries over between Duels.

Drive can be spent to increase any roll by the amount spent. (Drive is spent after the roll has been made)

Special moves and some other moves require that drive be spent.

Duel Moves:

These are moves that everyone has and can use during Duels.

Time to Duel: When you're in control of the Duel and make the big move you've been leading up to narrate your play and roll:

If your play is all about the trust you put in your cards/friends roll with Heart

If your play is a carefully calculated chain of interactions roll with Skill

If you need to get a random effect to go in your favor for your play to work roll with Luck

If you sacrifice your cards/friends for your play roll with Money

On a 10+ your play works seamlessly, gain 2 Drive and retain control

On a 7-9 the play does most of what you wanted, but your opponent had defenses you didn't account for (that they narrate). Gain one drive and give control to your opponent.

On a 6 or lower your opponent counters you perfectly, they take 1 Drive from you and immediately gain control of the Duel (if you have no Drive your opponent still gains 1)

Activated My Trap Card: When you interfere and take back control in a duel spend 1 Drive and narrate how you were prepared to perfectly counter your opponent.

Say Goodbye to Exodia: When you do something to permanently damage or steal one of your opponent's cards roll with Money

On a 10+ the card is yours to have or destroy

On a 7-9 you get what you wanted, but lose the Duel

On a 6 or lower your opponent takes one of your cards and you lose the Duel

Sideline Moves:

These are moves that everyone has and can be used while spectating Duels.

Earth to Joey: When you see someone you care about struggling in a Duel and shout encouragement to them, roll with Heart

On a 10+ they hear exactly what they need to and win the Duel

On a 7-9 your encouragement gives them 1 Drive, but something causes you to leave this Duel and you are unable to interfere with it in any other way

On a 6 or lower your words can't reach them and they're more lost than ever. They give 1 Drive to their opponent.

What's the Worst That Could Happen?: When you make an absurd guess about something next to impossible happening in the duel, roll with Luck

On a 10+ against all odds it comes to pass exactly how you predicted to the shock of everyone.

Whoever was supposed to lose the Duel will win instead.

On a 7-9 your prediction is partially true. The player who wasn't in control gains control.

On a 6 or lower something big happens. The Duel immediately ends in a draw.

Another Failure: When you verbally attack someone who is in a Duel roll with Money

On a 10+ your words make them slip up, they take -1 forward and you take 1 Drive from them

On a 7-9 your attack makes you more vulnerable than you intended, they lose 1 Drive and you take -1 forward against them

On a 6 or lower you hurt someone you care about

So That's Your Plan: When you use deduction to figure out what's going to happen next in the duel, roll with Skill

On a 10+ it all comes together exactly how you predict, distribute 2 Drive however you want between the characters in the Duel.

On a 7-9 it seems like you were right, but something shocking happens at the last minute that you never could've expected. Choose a player dueling, they gain 1 Drive.

On a 6 or lower you were wrong and look stupid, give 1 Drive to the player character that your character respects the least

Special Moves:

These are special moves to be used during Duels. Choose one at character creation.

Shadow Game: When you reveal your evil plan and unleash your inner darkness to change the rules of the game and/or raise the stakes spend 2 Drive and choose one of the following:

- Win the Duel
- Steal their favorite card
- Take away one of their friends

My Friends Are My Power: When you declare your love for your friends and give a speech about love, justice, or whatever else spend 2 Drive and choose one of the following:

- Rescue someone from danger
- Take back something stolen
- Force them to confront the embodiment of their evil

I Will Stop At Nothing: When you reveal the tragedy that forces you to play this card game and refuse to be defeated spend 2 Drive and choose one of the following:

- After this Duel, have a Duel with any character of your choosing
- Strike fear into their heart
- Reset who wins the Duel to whoever it was originally

Finishing Moves:

These are moves that you make to end a Duel. Choose one at character creation.

Take a Chance: Your finisher is a nearly impossible combination of cards that create something unique and incredible. When you put your faith in your deck to deliver you the final piece, roll with Luck

On a 10+ it's the stuff of legends. You and your opponent may switch any two of your stats

On a 7-9 it isn't perfect, but you defeat your opponent with some style. Gain 1 Drive and your opponent can switch two of their stats.

On a 6 or lower your deck fails you. Your opponent decides what you have to give up to win the Duel. It has to be something you agree to.

Over Before it Even Started: When you reveal how every play you've made since the start of the game was secretly part of your grand scheme to win, roll with Skill

On a 10+ the plan is flawless and your opponent played right into it. Take 2 Drive from your opponent.

On a 7-9 your opponent was smarter than you thought, but not enough to keep you from securing victory. Take 1 Drive from your opponent.

On a 6 or lower your opponent saw through your strategy but either through luck or a contingency you still manage to win. Your opponent takes 2 Drive from you.

My Heart Will Lead the Way: When you use the support given to you by the people you love (Ex. cards they've given you, something they told you, or their psychic projection protecting your mind) roll with Heart

On a 10+ the power of friendship overwhelms your opponent, you and your opponent may change your Special and/or Finishing moves

On a 7-9 you struggle, but your friends give you the last bit of strength that you need, your opponent may change their Special and/or Finishing moves

On a 6 or lower, one of your friends has to make a sacrifice to secure the victory.

Between Duels:

Once a duel has ended, any player may ask for a scene featuring their character doing something between Duels. Things like trading cards with your friends, declaring your certain victory to your rival, or putting sleeves on your cards.

Moves don't trigger in these scenes so they are just something to give you an opportunity to interact in character more.

Principles:

Principles are what guide and inform the way you play the game. To get the most out of These Cards Have Hearts, follow these principles.

1. Make the characters and the fights larger than life.
2. Take the card game way too seriously.
3. Be a fan of the characters.
4. Don't talk yourself out of fun decisions.
5. Ask questions.

The Facilitator:

As the Facilitator you determine what Duels happen in what order, who is supposed to win them, and who starts in control of a Duel. In this game you will not roll any type of dice, or have a player character to play as. You play any non-player characters and narrate what happens when someone rolls a 6 or lower on a move. When you narrate the consequences of failure and play NPC's make sure they fall in line with the game's principles.

NPC's:

NPC's are the characters controlled by the Facilitator. They can be friends, enemies, basically anything but a player character. When player's Duel NPC's the Facilitator should never plan for them to win except in very special circumstances when deemed absolutely necessary.