



HIDDEN LEADERS

Rules

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OVERVIEW

The island of Oshra is in turmoil. Following the death of the Emperor, the conflict between the Hill Tribes and the Imperial Army escalated. While the Water Folk try to maintain balance between the old rivals, the Undead aim to cause an outright war. All hope rests on the six children of the Emperor. Who will claim the throne?

GOAL OF THE GAME

In Hidden Leaders, each player takes on the role of 1 of 6 hidden Leaders. All Leaders are aligned with 2 of the 4 factions: the **Hill Tribes** (green mountain icon), the **Imperial Army** (red shield icon), the **Water Folk** (blue water icon), and the **Undead** (black skull icon).

During the game, players influence the power of the **Hill Tribes** (green mountain icon) (green marker) and the **Imperial Army** (red shield icon) (red marker) by playing Hero cards.

After a certain number of Heroes have been played, the game ends. The position of the 2 markers results in a victory for 1 of the 4 factions.

The player(s) who are aligned with the winning faction can win the game. If that's only 1 player, they win. If several players are tied, the tied player with the most Heroes of the winning faction in their party wins.

GAME COMPONENTS



6 Leader cards



77 Hero cards



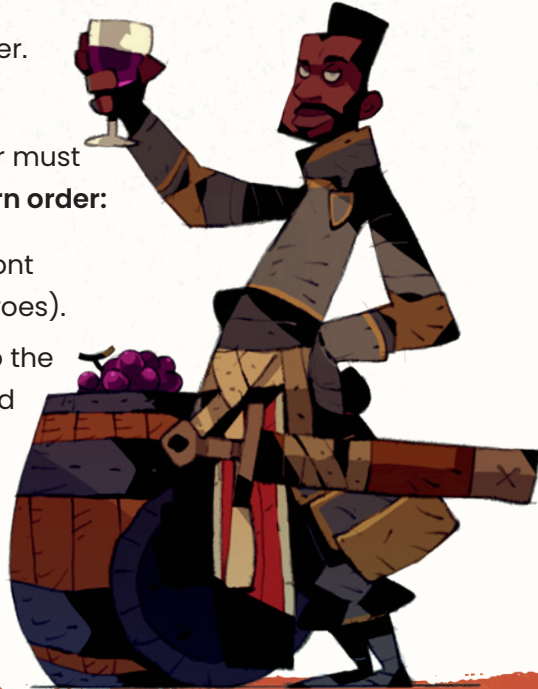
1 Board, 2 Markers



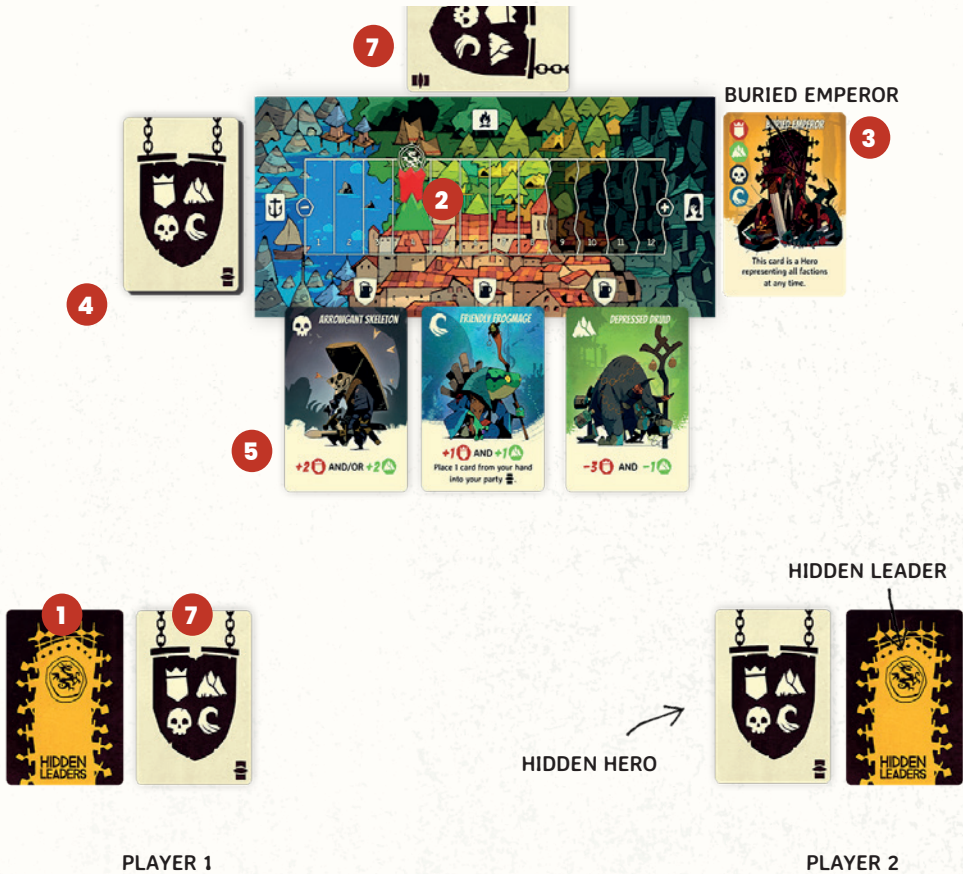
6 Support cards

GAME SETUP

- 1** Shuffle the **6 Leader cards** and deal 1 to each player face down.
You may look at this card any time but must keep it secret.
Your Leader card defines the 2 factions you are aligned with.
- 2** Place the 2 markers (red and green) on the **starting position**  of the power track.
- 3** Find the special "**Buried Emperor**" Hero card and place it face up next to the **Graveyard**  slot on the board to form the Graveyard.
- 4** Shuffle the remaining **Hero cards** and place the pile face down next to the **Harbor**  slot on the board to form the draw pile.
- 5** Draw 3 Hero cards from the Harbor  and place 1 face up next to each of the 3 **Tavern**  slots on the board.
- 6** Randomly choose a starting player.
- 7** Deal each player **5 Hero cards**.
After looking at them, each player must **perform the following steps in turn order**:
 - a.** Place 1 card face down  in front of them (into their party of Heroes).
 - b.** Place 1 card face down next to the **Wilderness**  slot on the board to form the discard pile.
 - c.** Keep 3 cards as their starting hand.



EXAMPLE SETUP FOR 2 PLAYERS



We recommend that new players make the following two adjustments. These will make it easier to get started.

1. Remove all advanced cards, indicated by a (+) on their left side, from the game. 53 Hero cards should remain.
2. The game end is triggered with 1 fewer card than indicated in the table on page 11.

GAMEPLAY

The game is played over several rounds in clockwise order.

A PLAYER'S TURN

During your turn, perform the following 4 steps in order:

1. Play 1 card from your hand into your party and perform its abilities.
OR
Discard up to 3 cards into the **Wilderness** 🔥.
2. Draw from the **Tavern** 🍷 and/or **Harbor** ⚓ until you have 4 cards.
3. Discard cards into the **Wilderness** 🔥 until you have 3 cards left.
4. Refill empty **Tavern** 🍷 slots with cards from the **Harbor** ⚓.

1 Play 1 Hero card from your hand and add it to your party, then perform its abilities

Play the chosen card **face up in front of you**. All Heroes in front of you form your **party**. Then move the green and/or red marker(s) left (-) and/or right (+) on the power track as indicated on the card.

Perform any additional abilities stated on the card.

Note: Markers' movement is limited by the beginning and end of the power track.

OR

Discard up to 3 Hero cards into the Wilderness 🔥

Instead of playing 1 Hero card, you may discard up to 3 cards from your hand into the **Wilderness** 🔥.



2 Draw from the Tavern 🍺 and/or Harbor ⚓ until you have 4 Hero cards in your hand

You may draw these cards in any order from the **Tavern** 🍺 and/or **Harbor** ⚓. *Note: Do not refill empty tavern slots during this step. This is done in step 4.*

3 Discard into the Wilderness 🔥

Discard hero cards from your hand into the **Wilderness** 🔥 face down until you have 3 Hero cards left in your hand.

4 Refill all empty Tavern 🍺 slots


Refill slots by drawing cards from the **Harbor** ⚓. Place them face up. *Note: If the Harbor ⚓ runs out of cards, and you need to draw a card, shuffle all cards in the Wilderness 🔥 and use them to form a new Harbor ⚓.*




HERO ABILITIES


The abilities of a face-up Hero card must be performed immediately after playing it into your party. This includes moving the red and/or green marker(s) as well as any printed text. If some of the Hero's abilities can't be performed, you can still play the Hero into your party and simply ignore the abilities you cannot perform.

Example: "Bury an Undead Hero." You can play this card even if there are no Undead Heroes face up in any party. If there are one or more Undead Heroes in the game, you have to bury one, even if it is your own. The card may even target itself.

Bury: Place a card from a player's party face up into the  except if explicitly stated otherwise by the card.



Discard: Place a card in the  face down.

Exchange: Swap the places of 2 cards without performing their abilities and without turning the card over unless explicitly stated by the card.

Place: Put a card into a location (into your party, into the , etc.) without performing its abilities unless explicitly stated by the card.



Draw: Take the top card from the pile mentioned or a random card from another player's hand.

At random: Shuffle the targeted cards and draw one of them.

Turn over: Change a Hero card from face down  to face up  or vice versa.



HIDDEN HEROES

- During game setup, you add 1 of your 5 initial hand cards face down  to your party. This is a Hidden Hero.
- During the game, some Hero abilities allow you to add new Hidden Heroes to your party, turn Heroes over, or look at other players' Hidden Heroes.
- **When a Hidden Hero is revealed** (turned face up), their ability will **not** be performed unless explicitly stated by the card.
- **Hidden Heroes do not count** toward the total number of Heroes needed to **trigger the end of the game**. However, they do count when resolving ties to determine the winner.
- Hidden Heroes have to be grouped as an overlapping stack in your party. Other players should be able to see in which order they were placed. You may not shuffle your Hidden Heroes unless stated by an ability. 
- You may look at your own Hidden Heroes at any time, but must put them back in the same order.

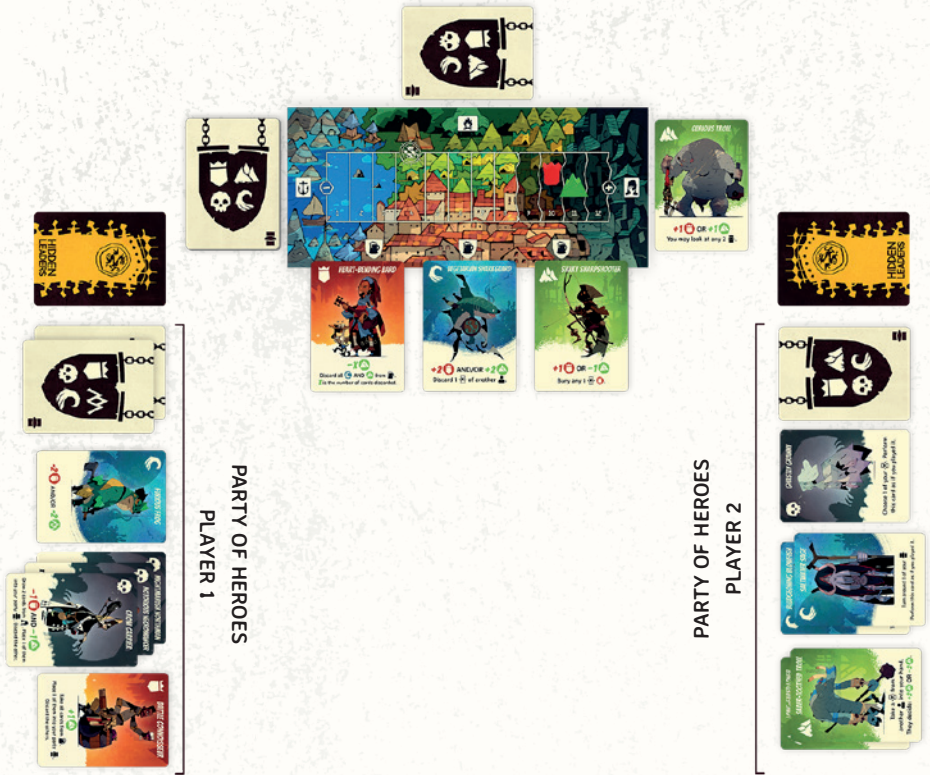


Open, face-up Hero
in a player's party



Hidden, face-down Hero
in a player's party



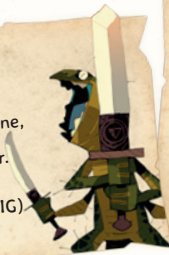


This is how a 2-player game might look after 5 rounds.

#PoetryContestHL

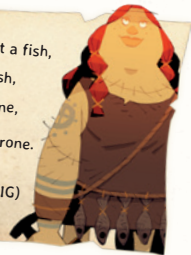
The triple sword lizard,
Laughs his way into war,
For he knows when he's done,
He'll return home with four.

by @very.awful (IG)







The Firm Fish Farmer caught a fish,
It seems to be a delicious dish,
Just in case, she kept the bone,
To fight the way up to the Throne.

by @mfranckenstein (IG)



GAME END

The game ends at the end of **any player's turn** when a player has at least the following number of face-up Heroes  in their party:

2 PLAYERS	8  Heroes
3 PLAYERS	7  Heroes
4 PLAYERS	7  Heroes
5 PLAYERS	6  Heroes
6 PLAYERS	5  Heroes



Hidden Heroes  do not count.

Note: It is possible that a player other than the currently active player reaches the necessary number of face up Heroes (because of a Hero's ability). In this case, the game end is also triggered.

End game example: To end a 4-player game, one player must have at least 7 face-up Hero cards. Andreas has 5 face-up Heroes, Lisa 6, Markus 4, and Raphael 5. On Raphael's turn, he plays the "Spirited Shaman" and turns 1 Hidden Hero from Lisa's party face up. At the end of Raphael's turn, Lisa has 7 face-up Heroes, so the game ends.

Alternatively, Raphael could have ended the game by playing the "Doubtful Priest", which would have allowed him to play another Hero. Thus, he would have had 7 face-up Heroes at the end of his turn.



DETERMINING THE WINNER

Only 1 of the 4 factions can be victorious. When the game ends, determine which faction won the conflict by checking for the victory conditions in the following order:

- 1 **Undead** ☠️ win if the red and green markers are both on spaces in the dark war area of the power track.
Note: An Undead victory trumps the victory conditions of the other 3 factions.
- 2 **Water Folk** 🌊 win if the red and green markers are on spaces next to each other or are on the same space.
- 3 **Imperial Army** 🏹 wins if the red marker is at least 2 steps ahead of the green marker.
- 4 **Hill Tribes** 🏔️ win if the green marker is at least 2 steps ahead of the red marker.

Next, each player discards their hand of cards and **reveals their hidden Leader card.**

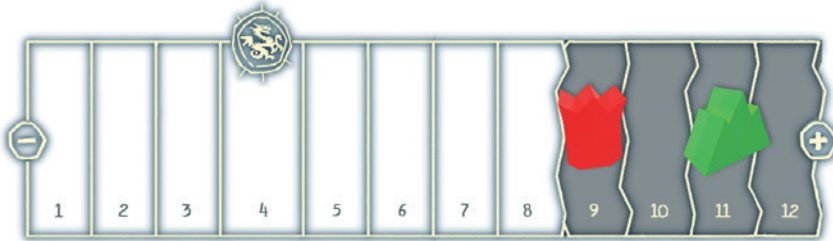
If only 1 player has a Leader who is aligned with the winning faction, they win the game.

If 2 or more players are aligned with the winning faction, continue as indicated in the **"Resolving Ties"** section on page 14.

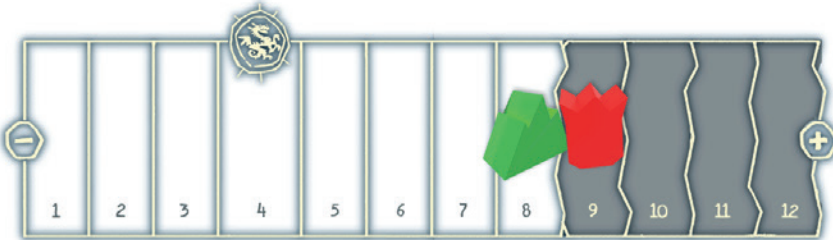
If no player is aligned with the winning faction, no player wins the game.



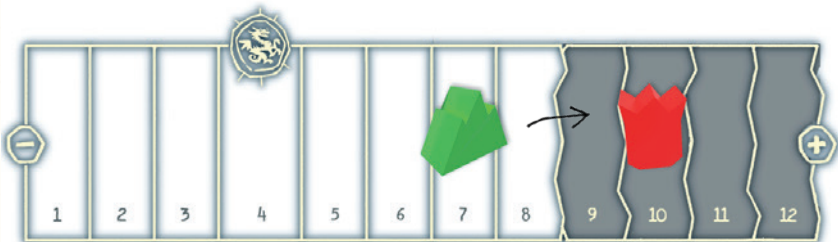
EXAMPLES FOR DETERMINING THE WINNING FACTION



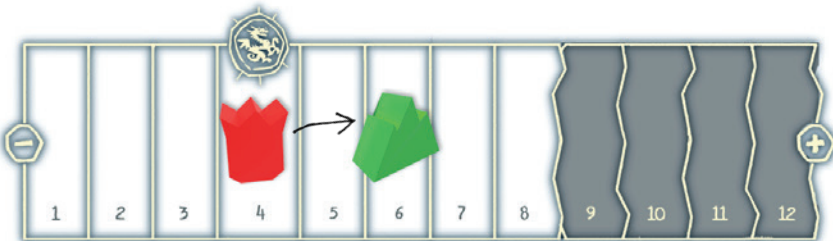
Undead 🧟 win: Both markers are in the dark war area.



Water Folk 🌊 win: The markers are next to each other and only the red marker is in the dark war area.



Imperial Army 🏰 win: The red marker is in the lead by more than 1 step and only the red marker is in the dark war area



Hill Tribes 🏞️ win: The green marker is in the lead by more than 1 step and both markers are not in the dark war area.

RESOLVING TIES

If 2 or more players are aligned with the winning faction, resolve the tie between these players in the following order:

- 1** The player with the **most Heroes of the winning faction** in their party wins. All face-up (☞) and face-down (☛) Heroes are counted.
- 2** The player with the **lowest total number of Heroes** in their party wins (☛+☞, regardless of faction).
- 3** Tied players compare the number in the bottom-left corner of their Leader cards. The player whose **Leader card has the highest number** wins.



GLOSSARY

Leader: Each player receives 1 Leader card at the start of the game. Your Leader defines the 2 factions you are aligned with. Always keep your Leader a secret from the other players.

Hero: Each Hero belongs to 1 of the 4 factions and has certain abilities (except for the Buried Emperor). On your turn, you may play one Hero card.

Party: When you play a Hero card, place it in front of you. All Heroes in front of you, both face up and face down, create your party.

Factions: There are 4 factions, each represented by a color, symbol, different Heroes, and a unique victory condition.

Buried Emperor: This special Hero card begins the game face up in the Graveyard. Other Hero card abilities may allow you to bring him into your party or hand. For the purposes of targeting via Hero abilities and resolving ties when determining the winner, this card counts as a single card from all 4 factions. This card may be played from your hand like any other Hero card but has no ability or additional effect. Thus, this card cannot be copied by other cards.

Markers There are 2 markers (red and green). They are moved left (-) and right (+) on the power track of the board to determine the winning faction.

Leading/Trailing marker: The marker that is farther to the right on the track is the leading marker, while the one that is farther to the left is the trailing marker.

Note: If both are on the same space, then neither is leading or trailing.

Find more examples and edge cases on www.hidden-leaders.com



SUMMARY

GAME SETUP (p. 4)


- 1 Deal 1 Leader to each player.
- 2 Place the 2 markers on the board, 3 Hero cards in the Tavern, and the “Buried Emperor” in the Graveyard.
- 3 Deal 5 cards to each player. They discard 1 and place 1 face down into their party.


A PLAYER'S TURN (p. 6)


- 1 Play 1 card from your hand
OR discard up to 3 cards.
- 2 Draw from the Tavern and/or Harbor until you have 4 cards in hand.
- 3 Discard down to 3 cards in hand.
- 4 Refill the Tavern.





TRIGGERING THE GAME END (p. 11)

The game ends at the end of any player's turn if at least 1 player has a minimum of the following number of face-up Heroes  in their party:

2 PLAYERS 8  Heroes


3 PLAYERS 7  Heroes


4 PLAYERS 7  Heroes


5 PLAYERS 6  Heroes


6 PLAYERS 5  Heroes

DETERMINING THE WINNER (p. 12)

Undead  win if the red and green markers are both on spaces in the dark war area of the power track.

Water Folk  win if the red and green markers are on spaces next to each other or are on the same space.

Imperial Army  wins if the red marker is at least 2 steps ahead of the green marker.

Hill Tribes  win if the green marker is at least 2 steps ahead of the red marker.

RESOLVING TIES (p. 14)

The player who is aligned with the winning faction wins.

- 1 Tied player with the most Heroes of the winning faction wins.
- 2 Tied player with the lowest total number of Heroes wins.
- 3 Tied player with the highest number on their Leader card wins.

