

Slow and Steady Wins the (Drag) Race

A cooperative game for 3-4 players

Introduction!

Welcome to *Slow and Steady Wins the (Drag) Race!* In this cooperative deck-building game, you will work together to help Mary Shelley, your turtle friend, come out of their shell, express their inner drag queen, and compete in a ✨ Drag Race! However, your dear friend Mary faces a lot of social pressure. As Mary's friends, you will help them overcome these social pressures and boost their confidence!

This game is divided into **two phases**: the **Initial Draft** and the **4 Rounds**.

- ♥ The Initial Draft is all about making some tough decisions...*together*. Players identify which cards become their Personal Deck, representing their resources to help Mary in their journey — and which cards become Mary's challenges as they slowly make their way out of the closet.
- ♥ If you "play your cards right," Mary will overcome **4 Rounds'** worth of *challenges*: at the **Drag Race Signup**, while **Finding a Style**, then **Settling Backstage Nerves**, and lastly, when they slay a **Lip Sync Battle!** In this phase of the game, players play their chosen ♥ **Resource** cards to overcome ♥ **Challenges** and gain **Confidence**.

CONTENT WARNING

Slow and Steady Wins the Drag Race discusses the negative experiences that many members of the LGBTQIA+ community face, such as social pressures, discrimination, and trauma. This content may be triggering for some players.

Overview!

The ultimate objective of *Slow and Steady Wins the Drag Race* is to gain as much **Confidence** as possible for **Mary Shelley**. Players work together to gain **Confidence**, represented by the number of **Green Heart Tokens** they collect. To gain **Confidence**, players play ♥ **Resource** cards to overcome ♥ **Challenge** cards. This action represents the collective effort of Mary's friend group to support them at every stage of their journey!

Game Contents!

- ♥ 1 Rulebook
- ♥ 1 Game board
- ♥ 4 Friend Mats
- ♥ 48 Special Cards
- ♥ 20 Basic cards
- ♥ **14 Green Heart Tokens**
- ♥ **19 Orange Power Tokens**

Cards!

This game contains 2 types of cards: **Basic Cards** and **Special Cards**.

Basic Cards



Anatomy of a Basic Card

Basic cards have **fixed power levels** and **no additional effects**. Players can also distinguish Basic cards by their **white borders**.

A Power Level (1, 2, 3, or 4)

The resource and challenge sides of a Basic card **always have the same power level**.

B Resource Side (♥)

The **Resource** side of a Basic card **positively** affects Confidence. This side is in play when a player **plays a basic card** on the board. The number of ♥s filled in on this side represents its **power level**.

C Challenge Side (♥)

The **Challenge** side of a Basic card **negatively** affects Confidence. This side is in play when a Basic card **appears as a challenge** on the board. The number of ♥s filled in on this side represents its **power level**.

D Mary Shelley Art

(D1) On the **resource side** of a Basic Card, players can admire Mary Shelley's **drag persona**. (D2) On the challenge side, players can marvel at Mary's **natural beauty!** No matter how they present themselves, **Mary serves!**

Basic cards are abstract representations of supportive or unsupportive behaviors. We can often find them in our daily lives, such as a casual compliment of a friend's style or a careless negative comment. Basic cards have varying **power levels** that represent their strength, ranging from 1 to 4. **When played by a player, they represent the player's supportive behaviors of varying degrees of positive influence on Mary.** **On the other hand, if Basic Cards appear as ♥Challenges that Mary faces, they represent repressive behaviors of different degrees of negative influence.**

Special Cards



Anatomy of a Special Card

Each Special card comes with **additional resource and challenge effects**. Players can also distinguish Special cards by their **black borders**.

A Power Levels

(0, 1, 2, 3, or 4. With or without +.)

The resource and challenge sides of a single special card **sometimes have different power levels**, like the card shown. A **fixed power level** has no + attached to it. A **variable power level** has a + attached to it, and the number indicates the card's **starting/default power level**.

B Resource Side (♥)

The **Resource** side of a special card **positively** affects Confidence. This side is in play when a player **plays a special card** on the board. The number of ♥s on this side represents its **starting/default power level**.

C Challenge Side (♥♥)

The **Challenge** side of a special card **negatively** affects Confidence. This side is in play when a special card **appears as a challenge** on the board. The number of ♥s filled in on this side represents its **starting/default power level**.

D Mary Shelley Art

Look who's back to brighten your day! :-)

Special Cards are representations of events or encounters: many things in our society, from your family to friends to random internet strangers, can be great sources of support or great nemeses. In addition to a **power level**, each Special Card also has its unique special **effect**. The opposite sides of each special card represent a ♥**Resource** that will help Mary Shelley and a ♥**Challenge** that they will have to overcome. The ♥**Resource** side's **effect** is triggered when a player plays this card. The ♥**Challenge** side's **effect** is triggered when this card appears as a **Challenge** that Mary faces. **If a Special Card appears as a ♥Challenge that Mary faces, it represents a challenge against Mary. If a player plays a Special Card, it represents the player's concrete action to help Mary overcome their ♥Challenges.**

Game Setup!



We recommend players set up the game by sitting around a table. Please empty an area in the center of the table for this game. Place the board in the empty space so that the board is accessible and visible to each player.

1. Make sure to separate the Special Cards and Basic Cards into two piles.
2. Shuffle the Special Cards and place them face-down on the “Special Deck” spot on the board.
3. Divide the Basic Cards into 5 starter decks of 4 cards each. Each starter deck should have:
 - one 1 power card
 - one 2 power card
 - one 3 power card
 - one 4 power card
4. Give each player one starter deck.
5. Give one starter deck to the ❤️ **Challenges** by placing the starter deck on the ❤️ **“Challenge Deck”** spot on the board. ❤️ **Challenges** will be drawn from this Deck during gameplay.
 - If playing with 3 players, only 4 of these 5 decks would be used. Set the unused one aside.
6. Give each player a **Friend Mat**.
7. Each player should place their starter deck face-down on the **Personal Deck** slot on their own **Friend Mat**.



The Game Board


Gameplay!

The game is divided into the **Initial Draft** and **4 Rounds**. In the **Initial Draft**, we strategically build up our deck. In the **Rounds**, we take actions to help overcome Mary's  **Challenges** with our plans by playing cards to **oppose** specific  **Challenges**.

Game Objective/Ending the Game

Each **Green Heart Token** symbolizes one unit of **Confidence**. If we drop to zero **Green Heart Tokens** at the end of one Round and lose more **Confidence** in the next Round, we lose. **Mary cannot pursue their drag queen dreams if they dips into negative Confidence!** On the other hand, we (and Mary, of course) win by **making it through all four Rounds!**

Initial Draft





During the Initial Draft round, the objective is to build up your **Personal Decks** to help Mary. Each player will draw 2 Special Cards from the **Special Deck** and choose 1 to keep in their **Personal Deck**. **The undrafted 1 will go to the Challenge Deck and become a  Challenge** that we will face later.

1. Randomly choose a player to start. The turn order is counterclockwise.
2. Each player draws 2 cards from the Special Deck. Choose 1 to keep in your **Personal Deck**. Put the other one face down in the **Challenge Deck**.
 - Here, *take a look at each card and understand its effect*. **We encourage the players to show other players their cards and plan as a team!**
 - The Special Cards that we DO NOT choose to draft go into the Challenge Deck. This means that they will reappear later in gameplay!
3. Repeat the previous step 3 times.





At the end of the Draft, each player should have 8 cards in their Personal Deck: 4 Starter-Deck Basic Cards, and the 4 Special Cards drafted.

Rounds

Overcoming Challenges

In the 4 *Rounds*, players need to play cards from their hands to help Mary **overcome** the  **Challenges** that will be revealed to the players. A player's card **overcomes** one  **Challenge** by having a power **greater than or equal to** the  **Challenge's** power. A  **Challenge** with **0 power** is automatically overcome at the end of the Round, and players do not need to play a card against it. However, the **effects** of 0-power special cards still need to be activated.

During each Round, players can play a card in two ways:

1. Play to **oppose a  Challenge**: place it in one of the four  **"Resource"** slots directly **opposing** the  **Challenge** it faces. One  **Resource** slot can only take up one player card unless stated in special **effects**.
2. Play it **unopposed**: place it in the **"Unopposed"** slot.

When a card is played to **oppose a ♥Challenge**, the player specifies which ♥Challenge the card attempts to overcome, and places their card in the respective slot. When a card is played **unopposed**, the card's **power** would not go towards overcoming a ♥Challenge. This often serves as **Confidence** gain when all ♥Challenges will be overcome by other players, which will be explained in further detail below.

Players should optimally aim to overcome all ♥Challenges. A player can play their card **opposed or unopposed** at any time. A player's card played **opposing** a ♥Challenge does not immediately overcome it. Instead, once everyone has spent their turn, the players resolve the cards they played against the ♥Challenges to overcome them.

Players' collective objective for each Round is to gain **Confidence**. If and only if players overcome all ♥Challenges, they gain confidence by the cards played **unopposed** at the end of the Round. This means that the **players should come up with a plan to decide which cards should be played to oppose a ♥challenge and unopposed to gain confidence during each Round**. The amount of **Confidence** Mary gains is the total power of the **unopposed** cards played during the Round. Sometimes, players might end a Round with no **Confidence** gained if they spent all of their turns to overcome the ♥Challenges. In other cases, if players can't overcome all the ♥Challenges, Mary **loses Confidence** equal to the total power of those remaining ♥Challenges. **If not all ♥Challenges are overcome at the end of the Round, players cannot gain Confidence, no matter how many cards they played in the unopposed slot.**

Round Gameplay

1. Each player randomly draws 3 cards from their deck. This is their **hand** this turn.
2. Shuffle the ♥Challenge deck. Deal 4 cards **face-up** into the ♥"Challenge" spots on the board. Make sure the ♥Challenge side is legible to all players. These are the ♥Challenges Mary faces for this Round.
 - *For a 3-player game, deal 3 cards instead.*
3. Starting from the leftmost card facing the players, activate the ♥Challenges' effects. If the **effect** draws new card(s) from the ♥Challenge deck, the newly drawn card's effect is also immediately activated.
4. The players now take their turns to play a card **opposed** or **unopposed**. One ♥Resource can oppose **only one** ♥Challenge.
 - Players are encouraged to discuss with other players *how* to overcome ♥Challenges and maximize your **Confidence** gain.
 - A lower-power Special Card can be played **opposingly** against a ♥Challenge. This won't overcome the ♥Challenge, but a player might want to activate the card's effect for strategic reasons.
5. After all players have taken their turns, they resolve the played cards. Players check if the cards they played against the ♥Challenges are strong enough to overcome them. **To overcome a ♥Challenge, the power of the card played against it must be the same or higher than the ♥Challenge's power.**
 - When a ♥Challenge is overcome, turn the card face-down.

6. If any **♥ Challenges** are not overcome, Mary loses **Confidence** equal to the total power of those **♥ Challenges**. If all **♥ Challenge** Cards are beaten in a Round, then the total power of all **unopposed** player cards played adds to Mary's **Confidence** for that Round.
 - Remember that unopposed cards **DO NOT** increase **Confidence** if there are unresolved **♥ Challenge** Cards remaining on the board.
7. Return or collect a number of **Green Heart Tokens** equal to the change in **Confidence**.
8. Once resolved, players discard the cards they played this Round. One player collects the challenges dealt this round and discards them. You can put them together into a discard pile.
9. Each player returns their hand to their **Personal Deck**. Shuffle the **Personal Deck**.
10. **If this is not the fourth and final Round, then continue to the next Round. If this is the final Round, determine whether you have won or lost the game.**

Additional Card Effects/FAQ





- **Merge:** Merge two cards into one. The Special effects of the merged cards still activate as if they are separate, but they act as one card with power equal to the sum of the powers of the merged cards.
- **Break:** Break one card into two copies and split its power into two parts. Each copy activates its **effect**. The only exception is the **Challenge Overthink**. **Do not break Overthink** to prevent infinite loops from forming.
 - **Evenly Break:** Breaking one card into two copies with power split between them **as evenly as possible**. A card with 4 power evenly breaks into 2 cards of 2 power. A card with 7 power evenly breaks into one card with 3 power and one card with 4 power.
 - A card of 1 power breaks into two cards of 1 and 0 power respectively. This means that it effectively breaks the 1 power card into itself and a new 0 power copy. **Remember that 0 power card is automatically overcome at the end of a Round.**
- What if the Working Out is played by the last player in the turn order?
 - If the Working Out card is played by the last player in the turn order, the card played by the first and second player during this Round gets the +2 modifier.
- **Minimum power:** the power of any card **cannot go below zero**.
- A card cannot have negative power. The lowest power that a card can have is 0.



Example Round

Confused? You're turtle-y okay! We have this Example Round which should help us get familiar with the basic mechanics of the game and clear things up. **We strongly recommend reading this section if no player in your group is familiar with the game.**



In this tutorial round, **the four players are Divine, Bob the Drag Queen, Sasha Velour, and RuPaul.** Each of them draws 3 cards from their Personal Deck to form their playing hand.



- **Divine:** One "1 power" Basic Card, one "2 power" Basic Card, one "3 power" Basic Card
- **Bob the Drag Queen:** One "2 power" Basic Card, one "3 power" Basic Card, one "Ponder Life's Meaning/Caught in Makeup" Special Card
- **Sasha Velour:** One "3 power" Basic Card, one "4 power" Basic Card, one "Ask for Help/Take On Too Much" Basic Card
- **RuPaul:** Two "1 power" Basic Card, one "4 power" Basic Card

At this point, the players draw 4 cards from the  **Challenge** Deck and reveal them in the  **Challenge** slots of the game board. These are the  **Challenges** that Mary faces for this Round. **The four players will seek to overcome these  Challenges.**

- **Challenge 1:** One "2 power" Basic Card
- **Challenge 2:** One "3 power" Basic Card
- **Challenge 3:** One "Relaxing Sleepover/Public Shaming" Special Card. When placing Special Cards as a **Challenge**, make sure the blue  **Challenge** side is readable to the players instead of the yellow  **Resource** side.
- **Challenge 4:** One "4 power" Basic Card. **Note that since there are four players, there are four challenges in each round.**

Now, the players look at the four  **Challenges** and activate their Special Card abilities, starting from the leftmost.

- In each Round, noticing the **effects** of the special cards in the  **Challenges** is **important.**
- Fortunately, there's only **1 Special Card** this Round. The first and only Special Card in the  **Challenges** is **Public Shaming.** **Public Shaming** will have a power that's half of **the sum of the powers** of all Special Cards the players play in this Round. **Seeing this card, the players should try either only playing Basic Cards this Round—or playing as few Special Cards as possible to minimize the power of Public Shaming.**

After seeing the four  **Challenges**, Divine, Bob the Drag Queen, Sasha and RuPaul show their hands to each other and discuss their strategies to both overcome all  **Challenges** and have turns left to play **unopposed cards** that gains **Confidence** at the end of the Round.

The players should look at their hands.

- The players have 2 Special Cards this Round: Bob the Drag Queen has **Ponder Life's Meaning** and Sasha Velour has **Ask for Help.** Bob the Drag Queen's **Ponder Life's Meaning** has **2 power.** Sasha's **Ask for Help** acts as two "2 power" cards. Some careful planning is important to not make **Public Shaming** too strong to overcome...

- **Ask for Help** is powerful as it acts as two “2 power” cards. This means that Sasha Velour can play it to **oppose** two **♥ Challenges**. Or, if Sasha can overcome all **♥ Challenges**, she can play it **unopposed** to gain 4 **Confidence**. Alternatively, Sasha can also play it to oppose **one ♥ Challenge** and use the other one **unopposed**, which allows the group to gain **Confidence** at the end of the Round if all **♥ Challenges** are overcome.
- If Sasha Velour plays **Ask for Help** and Bob the Drag Queen does not play his **Ponder Life’s Meaning** Special Card, **Ask for Help** can **overcome** both the “2 power” Basic Card **and** the **Public Shaming** Special Card. This is because **Public Shaming**, at the end of the Round, would only have 2 power ($4 \div 2 = 2$) from when Sasha plays **Ask for Help**, but this is fine as **Ask for Help** acts as two “2 power” cards and can deal with **Public Shaming** and another 2-power card!
- When Sasha plays the **Ask for Help** Special Card, players would need something to represent this extra 2-power card. This is where the **orange circle tokens** are used. **Sasha places two circle tokens in the ♥ “Resource” slot where players want to play the extra two-power card.**

This is what the players decide to do this Round:

- After they discuss their strategy, Divine plays her “3 power” Basic Card against **Challenge 2**: One “3 power” Basic Card.
- Bob the Drag Queen then avoids playing a Special Card to increase the power of **Public Shaming** and plays her “3 power” Basic Card **unopposed**. This means that she places it in the “Unopposed Cards” slot. **Why she decides to do this will be evident later...**
- Sasha then, as planned, plays her **Ask for Help** Special Card against **Challenge 1 and Challenge 3. Now only Challenge 4 is left.**
- RuPaul, finally, plays her “4 power” Basic Card against the remaining **Challenge 4.**

This is why Bob the Drag Queen was able to play her card **unopposed earlier**: Divine, Sasha, and RuPaul overcame all four **♥ Challenges** in their turns, which is great! This means Bob the Drag Queen can use her turn to play a card **unopposed** to gain **Confidence**!

- As everyone’s spent their turns, we come to the **End of the Round** where players now resolve the cards they played. Sasha’s **Ask for Help** overcomes **Challenge 1 and Challenge 3**. Divine’s Basic Card overcomes **Challenge 2**. RuPaul’s Basic Card overcomes **Challenge 4**. Bob the Drag Queen played her Basic Card **unopposed**. As all **♥ Challenges** are overcome, they now gain 3 **Confidence** equal to the power of Bob the Drag Queen’s **unopposed** card for this Round. **Great job helping Mary!** The players take 1 **Green Heart Token** for every **Confidence** gained and place them on top of the heart-shaped slot on the board.

Note that ♥ Challenges are resolved only at the end of a Round. Players should not remove any ♥ Resource or ♥ Challenge card from play during a Round.