



The Looking Glass Wars - PC

By: [Nick_Tan](#)
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And one pill makes you small.

Not to be confused with the spy novel *The Looking Glass War*, the **online card game The Looking Glass Wars** is based on the 2006 book of the same name by Frank Beddor, which is itself based on Lewis Carroll's **Alice's Adventures in Wonderland**. I could also point out how the setting is similar to the dark **video game American McGee's Alice** - the caterpillar, the lava world, Tweedledum, and Tweedledee - but it has little to do with the card game, so let's leave it at that.



For anyone who knows even vaguely about the book, the idea of a game isn't too surprising. Its version of Wonderland has a class system inspired by the standard deck of cards, with queens ruling the kingdom with **their powerful imaginations** and the government ruled by members of the four suits: diamonds, clubs, hearts,

and spades. Naturally, **The Looking Glass Wars** turns this hierarchy system and rich mythology into a unique tactical card game.

Using a deck comprised of Battle cards (creatures), Source cards (mana or "glow"), and Join cards (enchancements), the object of this one-on-one card battle is to garner the most points by covering spots with a pile of "dead" cards, or cards that have been defeated on either your or your opponent's side. The more cards that have been defeated on a particular spot, the more points that spot is worth. So not only is battling necessary for winning, but where you place cards and which cards you place is also important.



Battle cards, the bread and butter of the deck, do not stray too far from the general standards of collectible card games. Each of them has an attack and defense rating, like a Magic: The Gathering summon card, and every turn opposing cards that are adjacent to each other engage in battle. Since the field is hexagonal and stretches infinitely, no card

can be tucked in a corner and every card is vulnerable on six sides. Thus, surrounding a powerful enemy or, better yet, a spot worth several points is essential to any strategy.



Equally as important, a Battle card's attack and defense ratings can be significantly bolstered - say, from 1/3 to 4/4 - by satisfying one of its specific conditions, and if you're lucky, two of them. These conditions range from it being connected to Source cards, adjacent to multiple allies and foes, and/or linked to a Join card like the +3 attack bonus AD-52 or the protective Flower - all requirements that

can be met or un-met with every turn. This single-handedly keeps the tension of each play high, as any move can make or break your **bloody plans** if you're not careful enough or just plain unlucky, especially when decks are only fifteen cards each.

As you might expect, royalty Battle cards like the princess, queen, and king are especially strong; at their peak, the queen is a 5/3, the king is a 0/6 (a fixed rating but he gives all adjacent +1 defense), and the princess is a 3/5. However, it's not all that important to keep any of the royalty cards alive. Since attacking Battle cards have the advantage of dealing damage first, nearly every Battle card can be killed almost as soon as it is played since their attack power

may not even come into play. Subsequently, offense (and some blocking) tends to be the best defense.

The Looking Glass Wars online card game sets a strong foundation for its final build: familiarity, **gameplay** that has good balance between simplicity and depth, consistent tension, brevity, and a bit of luck. Plus it plays right in your browser, so there's no need for special software which should please the series' many fans. If it's able to pull in the reigns of **imagination**, **The Looking Glass Wars** looks to be a surprise hit of the most wondrous kind.

Look for the new Looking Glass Wars book, graphic novels and the game itself on October 15th over at www.lookingglasswars.com.