

The Tragedy of Othello Game FAQs

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Why can I get character coins with all Cassio, Desdemona, Emilia, Othello and Roderigo cards, yet only certain Iago cards will net me an Iago coin?

It's a balance between having enough coins to leave some characters for dead during the game and not making it too easy to get coins since there are so many Iago cards. The number of Convinces and Conspires cards for Iago in Acts I - IV is a good balance at 24, and naturally they're the most villainous.

When may I play character coins?

In general, character coins may be played at any time in the four phases of a round. Before cards are played face down, after cards are played face down, during the reveal, and after all cards are revealed. In each phase, players have a chance to play relevant character coins starting with the player to the left of the lead player. A player must wait until the player ahead of them in the order has played as many coins as they wish, before playing any coins. Once the lead player has played coins or passed their opportunity to do so, the next phase begins. No more coins may be played until the next phase, or until the next player is ready to reveal during the reveal phase. Specifically:

1. *Before cards are laid down*
 - a. *After the lead player plays character coins or passes, every player has the opportunity to put a card face down without interruption from character coins*
2. *After cards are laid down*
 - a. *After the cards are laid down, the player to the left of the lead player has the opportunity to play as many character coins as they choose before the next player. After the lead player plays character coins or passes, the player to the left of the lead player has the opportunity to reveal their card without interruption from character coins.*
3. *During the reveal*

- a. *A player may play a character coin when it is their turn to reveal but before they reveal their card. If they play a character coin that impacts another player and that other player has a character coin that can be played in response to the first player's character coin, then the other player may play their coin.*
 - i. *Example 1 - player 2 plays an Othello "Take the Lead" coin on player 4, who is the lead player. Player 4 has a Desdemona "No Drama" coin and chooses to play it to prevent player 2 from successfully taking the lead character tile.*
 - ii. *Example 2 - player 3 decides to use their Roderigo "Exchange" coin on player 1 to exchange their card. Player 1 has a Desdemona "No Drama" coin, yet chooses not to use it to prevent player 3 from exchanging a card with them.*
 - b. *A player may not play a character coin to interrupt another player as they are about to reveal their card.*
 - i. *For example, the lead player is about to reveal their card, and player 1 wants to play an Othello "Take the Lead" coin. This is not an acceptable play.*
4. *After all cards are revealed*
 - a. *After the lead player has revealed their card and resulting actions are completed, the player to the left of the lead has the opportunity to play character coins as in previous phases, followed by players in order. If the act hasn't ended then players draw new cards and the next round begins.*
 5. *Character coin effects do not supersede standing effects of cards already played.*
 - a. *For example, player 3 wants to play a Roderigo "Exchange" coin on player 1, yet player 1 has already revealed a No Drama card and paid the cost to have No Drama in effect. Player 3 is not able to play the Roderigo coin on player 1.*

When may I improvise?

You may improvise at any time when it is your turn during any phase of a round. When improvising to turn in cards, it may be best to do so right before you lay a card face down in the pre-placement phase in an attempt to get a better card. Use improvise to replace your face-down card in response to what players ahead of you have played. For example, if you played a card face down as the Lead player and someone takes your Lead character tile, improvise to swap your card out for something else that you can score if you can't take the lead back. Or swap in a seize card to seize a card that a previous player just revealed. Or swap out a seize card if the player right before you seized another player and your turn is next.

How does a No Drama card work versus a Desdemona / No Drama character coin?

The end result is the same in that no player's action has any effect on your play or your coin. Both the card and coin are played as an instant play when needed. Either can protect your ability to successfully play a high-scoring Script card you've played face down if someone is trying to Take the Lead for example. Or it can protect a card in your hand if someone has played an Exchange and chosen you to exchange with. A player never needs to play a

Desdemona coin while they have a revealed No Drama card for which they've paid the activation cost, or vice-versa.

What does a Desdemona / No Drama coin stop?

A Desdemona / No Drama coin stops every action that another player attempts to do to you. Whenever another player plays a card or uses a coin that will impact your play or your coin, you may play a Desdemona coin in response and stop that player from doing that action. This coin can also block a player from taking the handkerchief coin.

What happens when someone plays a No Drama card to stop an action and someone else has played a Seize card?

The first player to the left of a player who has revealed a card, gets precedence to play an interrupt. For example, in a 5-player game, player three revealed a Take the Lead card from the lead player five. Player five can play a Desdemona coin, or reveal and pay the cost for a No Drama card, to prevent player three from successfully taking the lead tile. However, player four has a Seize card face down and chooses to seize the Take the Lead card. Since player four comes next in the order after player three, their desired action takes precedence and they seize the Take the Lead card. Player five gets to keep their No Drama card or Desdemona coin to use for another play.

What does a Seize card do?

When you seize a staging card, the seize card serves to block the card from being successfully played by your opponent. Their turn for that round ends and you take a Spotlight token from the unused token pile.

When you seize a script card, the script card is treated as successfully played, with rewards, by you, the player who played the seize card. You add the script card to your collection of successfully played script cards and take the rewards listed on the script card. If the player who revealed the script card has a No Drama card or Desdemona coin, they may choose to block the effect of your seize card.

If a script card is not successfully played by the player that revealed it, if you seize it, the script card is put into the discard pile and treated as a staging card for the purposes of rewards. You do not add the script card to your collection as a successfully played script card.

What does a Spotlight token stop?

When you Steal the Spotlight, you can block:

- *Cassio, Emilia, Iago, Othello, and Roderigo character coins*
- *Improvise*
- *Exchange, Take the Lead, Missed Entrance staging cards, and any card played as an Exit*
- *Confront and Convinces script cards, except those played as curtain cards.*

You cannot block:

- *Desdemona character coins*
- *No Drama and Seize staging cards*
- *Conspires or curtain script cards*

Why would I use a Villainy card?

To leave a character for dead, a player needs to earn and use Iago character coins. The Villainy card reduces the number of Iago coins needed to leave a character for dead, so it is very powerful. Unplayed Iago coins have no value at the end of the game, so this card allows you to use and potentially score them more quickly.

How can I seize a Convinces or Conspires played by the Lead Player who goes last?

If you must reveal before that player, you cannot seize their card. The turn order can be changed during a round if someone has played an Othello coin to Take the Lead, which may lead to new opportunities for playing your seize card. The starting order only changes if the Othello coin is played before cards are revealed.

Tips / Strategy

Seize - When you lay a Seize card face down, pay attention to what the other players ahead of you have revealed so that you can make your choice before your turn. It's awkward when it gets to you and you reveal a seize yet haven't deliberately acted to seize a card. House rules apply of course, and if your playing partners allow it, you can back up and perhaps seize the card that the player in front of you in turn-order played.

Improv - Consider using this when you have a card face down that has reduced potential to get what you want. For example, if you played a Seize staging card with the expectation that a player in front of you would play a Script card you could seize, yet that hasn't happened by the time the player right before you has played, consider using Improv to swap out your Seize to save it for a future round.

Othello coin - It is usually good to wait to use your Othello coin just before you are going to need the Lead so as not to tip your hand and allow others to shift their play around. However, it can be better to play it in the pre-placement or placement rounds as well, depending on what your tactics for that scene are. For example, some players like to know if they'll be able to keep the Lead for their reveal in a two-player game, so they attempt to take it during the pre-placement phase. Of course, the opponent could still use an available action to take the Lead back at a later point in the scene.

