

Romance of the Three Kingdoms II (Import) Strategy Guide

by admtnaka

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Romance of the Three Kingdoms II

A Guide by Greg Hartman

Contact: good_catholic_boy /at/ yahoo /dot/ com
aolim: goodcatholicboy9

-please do not contact me if you are lame
-if you are emailing me, please put something in the topic to indicate that you are asking about this faq. i am very wary of emails from people i don't know (you should be also). you may also feel free to contact me via my im name, but experience is teaching me that this method is very inefficient, so it is generally better to send me an email.
-i find it weird to say this, but the only language i can speak with any degree of clarity is english. please, if you are contacting me, do so in english (although if you require an answer that is only half-intelligible, german might work also). definitely do not bother emailing me in any other language; i won't even respond.

Version History

Version 1.0 (6/25/03)

Version 1.1 (7/10/03)

- fixed minor error in "threat" command section
- fixed many typos, syntax, and other annoying errors
- added more misc tips/strategies

Version 1.11 (8/03/03)

- several very minor syntax errors corrected
- error in "trust" section corrected
- (very) brief credits section added

Version 1.12 (1/03/04)

- correction about adviser intel (section V, 7)
- addition to credits section
- minor typographical corrections
- minor correction about difficulty levels
- yet one more refinement on the 'threat' section

Version 1.13 (1/04/04)

- glaring typo corrected

Version 1.14 (1/12/04)

- change in legal stuff

Version 1.15 (2/07/04)

- change in contact info

Version 1.16 (2/09/04)

- change in legal
- some clarifications made throughout

Version 1.2 (2/26/04)

- rewrote that god awful intro, removing the word "playability"

Version 1.21 (2/12/06)

-minor correction regarding surrendering
Version 1.22 (4/23/06)
-added a point regarding a new ruler with no follower.

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I. Intro

In my opinion, RoTK2 is probably the best version of Romance that was released for the SNES. Although the series added a great deal of new features in the third and fourth installments, I have never found them as enjoyable as the second. Romance 2 does have it's faults, notably in AI (the computer is not very aggressive at all, with the exception of a few rulers) and in gameplay (battles are too skewed towards the defenders, most significantly in the fact that they have the ability to field twice as many soldiers as the attackers, assuming no allied support on either side). Nevertheless, as I look back, I realize that I don't like Romance 3, and I never really got into 4. Maybe it's the game's simplicity, maybe it's something else, but I prefer it just the same.

This, incidentally, is my first ever faq/walkthrough/etc, so I would greatly appreciate any feedback (even if it's "this faq stinks"), so long as it is honest. If you have any additional info to share, send it to me and I will post it in the guide, with proper credit of course.

Having said that, Romance of the Three Kingdoms Two lets a player control a faction in 2nd or 3rd century China in an effort to reunite the country during the Three Kingdoms Period. All facets of whichever kingdom you choose will be under your control.

II. Setting up a Game

There are Six Scenarios from which you can choose to play.

1. Dong Zhuo Triumphs in Louyang - 189 AD

Probably the scenario with the most parity between rulers. Sun Jian (province 21), Cao Cao (pr 9), and Yuan Shao (pr 6) all are probably the most powerful from the opening of the scenario and are the most suitable choice for beginners. Although Dong Zhuo (pr 10, 11, 12), starts with the most overall soldiers and lands he can

be somewhat of a challenge due to his generally crummy followers and low charm rating. Liu Yan (pr 33, 30, 32) is also good for a beginner because he starts out quite powerful and far away from any other major opponent. Liu Biao (pr 20), Tao Quian (pr 16), and Yuan Shu (pr 19) are on somewhat of a middle ground, while Gongsun Zan (pr 3) Liu Bei (pr 4) and Ma Teng (pr 14) are the scenario's challenges. Of these three, however, the only one who is really hard to play as is Gongsun Zan; Ma Teng starts off completely isolated and unthreatened and Liu Bei isn't threatened by anyone powerful off the start and begins with Guan Yu and Zhang Fei, two of the best warriors in the game. Hain Fu (pr 7, called Han Fu in all other Romance games), Kong Rong (pr 8), Wang Lang (pr 24), and Liu Yong (pr 28) are all unplayable in this scenario, although i'm not sure why. They all pretty much stink, so I guess only someone who was a real veteran would want to play as them anyway.

2. Rivals Struggle for Power - 194 AD

Another reasonably balanced scenario, although less so than the first. Cao Cao (pr 10,11) is probably the most powerful overall and thus the easiest ruler to be. Sun Ce (pr 24) is another good strong choice. Yuan Shao (pr 6,7) is reasonably strong but many of his officers suffer from mediocrity. Liu Zhang (pr 33,32,34) is in basically the same position that Liu Yan was in last scenario and is yet another strong choice, as is Ma Teng (pr. 14) who has gained a ton of followers since the first scenario. Liu Biao (pr 20,21), Liu Bei (pr 16) and Yuan Shu (pr 19, 17) are pretty much in the middle of the road. Lu Bu (pr 9) starts decent, but stinks as a ruler and is hard to do much with. Li Jue (pr 12) is pretty much awful and makes a very tough game. Gongsun Zan (pr. 3) is tough too, but at least he starts with Zhao Yun, another of the best generals in the game. Zhang Lu (pr 29), Kong Rong (pr 8), Yang Feng (pr 5), and Liu Yong (pr 28) are all unplayable. This is somewhat disappointing because Zhang Lu could make an interesting (but challenging) play. Again this scenario is balanced, so if you play well it is completely possible to win with just about any ruler.

3. Aged Liu Bei Hides - 201 AD

This scenario is actually still relatively balanced, although all the major rulers have quite a lot of power. Once again, Cao Cao (purple) is the strongest on the map and the best choice for an easy game. After him, Sun Quan (red) is probably the next strongest. Liu Bei (green) has only one province, but it is pretty stacked with good officers and is, overall, not a bad choice either. Liu Zhang (orange) and Ma Teng (purple spotted blue) are still good choices, as they can't really get threatened from the start. Liu Biao (blue spotted green) has 4 provinces, but they're not that awesome. He's still easily as good a choice as Liu Bei though. Yuan Shao (yellow) might look tempting, but he's actually pretty crummy in this scenario. He personally won't live very long, and Cao Cao usually let's him have it fairly early into the game. His officers are still pretty weak compared to the other rulers. Zhang Lu is selectable in this scenario and is good for a challenge that is more or less doable.

4. Cao Cao Covets Control of China - 208 AD

This scenario throws parity out the window. Completely. Cao Cao is by far the most powerful ruler, ruling essentially all of northern China. After him Sun Quan (red) is probably the most powerful, followed by Liu Zhang (orange) and Ma Teng (purple/blue). Liu Bei still only has one province (19) but it's full of generals and has a bunch of good hidden officers, making him a reasonable choice. Liu Biao has been replaced in this scenario by Han Xuan (pr 21), Zhao Fan (pr 22), Liu Du

(pr 23), and Jin Xuan (pr 20). All of these rulers stink, although some do have decent officers (especially Han Xuan, who has Huang Zhong). Incidentally, if you want a challenge (and i mean a challenge) try playing as Jin Xuan. It's next to impossible to win with him. Zhang Lu (pr 29, still) is tough, but still a little better than the chumps in Liu Biao's old lands.

5. Nation Breaks into Three Divisions - 215 AD

Well this scenario goes back to relative parity once again. Cao Cao (purple) is still clearly the strongest, but Liu Bei and Sun Quan (green and red, respectively) are still reasonably close to him. Just by looking at the map you should be able to tell that Meng Huo (yellow) is going to be a tough play. I prefer playing this scenario to the next because the conflict that takes place around the central province (19) is actually relatively interesting.

6. The Three-Way Contest - 220 AD

This scenario is really very similar to the last one. Cao Pi has succeeded Cao Cao and gained control of provinces 19 and 20. Sun Quan is still more powerful than Liu Bei, and probably an easier choice. Meng Huo remains in the south, still very weak compared to the other rulers. In all honesty i almost never play this scenario, it just doesn't do it for me.

Once you pick your scenario and ruler you'll be asked for a difficulty level (1-3). The differences between difficulties can be subtle, yet they are definitely significant. Firstly, I notice almost no difference in AI between difficulty levels. This does not necessarily mean, however, that the computer controlled rulers don't get soldiers faster on the higher difficulty levels (they might, it's been a long time since i've played an entire game on 1, so i don't know). I suspect though that their armies get bigger more quickly on higher levels, but this probably comes from getting larger bonuses from the game randomly.

What's this about bonuses, you might ask? Well, basically, the game cheats. Computer rulers gain either gold or rice at the game's discretion throughout the game. The amount of these bonuses varies depending on the ruler. For example, Cao Cao, whom the computer plays the best, gets the largest bonuses. Dong Zhuo, whom the computer plays quite poorly, gets a low bonus (so low it might actually be negative). Regardless, the game is always awful about buying arms, even on the highest difficulty levels, so use this to your advantage in war. I notice no difference in diplomacy based on difficulty either.

So what are the differences then? The biggest difference that I can see takes place in battle. Generally, it would seem that your troops become less and less effective as the difficulty level raises. My own belief is that on the lowest difficulty, your troops are given a mild advantage independent of all other factors, on the middle difficulty, no advantage is assigned to either you or the computer, and that on the highest difficulty, the computer is assigned an advantage. This is a huge pain on the highest difficulty level, especially when you are conquering a ruler that has a high war ability. Taking Lu Bu off of the defending castle, for example, will likely take at least 500 men, and that's if they are really good generals attacking simultaneously. On the other hand if you have a really good general defending a castle on the lowest difficulty level you will probably never lose the city. Another significant disparity between the skill levels is how quickly and efficiently the computer rulers train their troops. On the lowest level, they tend not to do a very good job; on the higher levels, the computer's troops get trained almost as quickly as the

players.

There are also other more subtle differences. Domestic qualities of your province (land value, flood control, people's loyalty) go up much more slowly on the third level than they do on the first. I also find it generally more difficult to recruit generals from other rulers on a difficulty that isn't 1. Finally, the chances of successfully using the spy commands, especially 'tiger-wolf,' seem to be lower on the higher levels. In total, changing the difficulty seems to change very little besides a multiplier here and there. I guess it's the easiest way to program varying difficulties without expending too much effort.

Lastly, you will be asked if you want to view other province's wars. I generally always set this to yes, because, of course, the results of the wars are different when they are simulated. The biggest single change you'll notice is that damage done to units is much less averaged off. For example, if Cao Cao conquers Kong Rong and you watch the battle, one unit might take 30 damage, another 20, and another 10. If you simulated the battle they would all take 20 damage. In all reality, it's not too critical if you view battles or not, it's simply a matter of personal preference.

III. The Command Screen

The game turns progress in months, with each province being able to strategize once a month. All the leaders go in a particular order that is closely based on total troop strength that is calculated in the beginning of the month. The ruler with the lowest strength plots his strategy first, the ruler with the most plots his last. There are other factors that influence this order, such as total officers and total provinces (i think), but troop totals play the largest role. It is a big advantage to go last, by the way, especially in the later scenarios where many of the rulers have many provinces. This is because of how the 'tiger-wolf' spy tactic works. If you go first, for example, you might incite a rebellion successfully against one of your rivals (that is, trick one of his governors to become a ruler in his own right) but if he goes after you, he can (and occasionally will) just switch the governor to get around your plot. If your turn of the month is after the ruler whom you plotted against, he won't go again until the next month, and his governor will have already rebelled before he can transfer him out.

Regardless, once it is your turn to go you'll be greeted by the command screen, which has all of your province's info in a little box in the center of the screen and all of your possible commands listed at the top.

A. Explanation of Provincial Info

1. In the upper left corner of the screen is a little yellow crown with a name next to it. This is the name of the ruler of your empire.

2. Just below your ruler's name is a little blue symbol that is apparently a kind of hat (it looks more like a box to me). Regardless, this is the name of the governor of the particular province. If this is your capital (home province) the names for both ruler and governor will be the same.

3. To the right of the governor and ruler's names will be a picture of the governor of this particular province. If this is your capital, it will be a picture of your ruler (obviously). As a side note, it is possible to generally tell if an officer is "good" based on his picture. The game comes with several generic looking faces that go with many of the mediocre officers in the game. Most of the really talented officers have their own unique mug shots. Of course, some of the really lousy officers have pictures too (Cao Bao comes to mind) so this method isn't foolproof, but it's still a good general gauge.

4. To the right of the governor's picture will be the date and season, the province number and name (really only the number is important) and, if you have your advisor in this province, a picture of a scroll and his name. Note that in this game, unlike other Romance of the Three Kingdoms games, you can only have one advisor throughout your entire empire. He absolutely should be in your capital. Keep your advisor and ruler together at all times, because most of the commands you need an advisor for can only be used in your home province anyway.

The following info is in that large tan box in the middle of the screen

5. Pop. stands for the population of the province divided by 100. 3500 thus becomes 350,000, in real numbers. Generally, the higher this number the better. The more people you have, the more taxes you collect. Drafting, the plague, warfare, and floods will decrease your province's population. Every January it will increase (by a percentage, i think). Most of the really high population provinces are in central China. (19 20, 10, 21). There are, however, other high population cities in other places (23 and 22, for example). Population matters a lot, so try and get large provinces. Incidentally, when i talk about populations or soldiers or rice, i will be using the onscreen numbers, and not the actual numbers; don't be confused.

6. Soldr. - The amount of soldiers divided by 100. Early in a scenario (i mean like the first year or two) you are reasonably safe from attack and sometimes ready to expand, with 300 soldiers. Of course this varies depending on who is bordering you, but early in the game 300 is a lot. Because of the way battles work, if you have more than 500, you are very safe from invasion, because the attackers can never bring more than 5 generals/500 troops unless they arrange a joint attack. The computer will almost never attack a city with more than 500 troops because of this.

7. Gold - Amount of gold in the province. Gold is used to hire troops, buy arms/food/horses, reward/recruit officers, etc. You gain gold from taxes in January.

8. Rice - barrels of food in the province. For every month of warfare 1 soldier needs 1 barrel of rice. Therefore if you have 500 troops and 100 rice in a city you are in a lot of trouble if someone attacks you. The computer will exploit a situation like this, so make sure that you always, always, always have at least much rice as soldiers in a city. You gain rice from your harvest in July.

9. PL - people's loyalty. The most important of the domestic qualities in a city, it is also the easiest to raise. Giving food to the people will raise it; drafting, getting attacked, collecting a special tax, or a disaster will lower it. Do not let it fall below like 30, because if it does your people might riot (especially if your governor's charm or your ruler's trust are low). Generally, get this value to at least the high 80s by july of the first year of your scenario and keep it around

100 the rest of the game (not hard at all). It affects how much rice you collect in tax in July and how much gold you collect in January.

10. Gnls - Total number of generals in the province, counting the ruler and advisor, but not free generals.

11. Land - Land value in the province. This increases when you invest money into the land value under the internal affairs command group, and decreases when you are attacked or a natural disaster befalls your province, such as locusts. I lost the manual a long time ago, but I seem to remember it claiming that this only affected your harvest in July, and, well, that's wrong. High land value also yields high gold collections in January. It maxes out at 100, and you should have no problem reaching that within a year or two, depending on how many troops you are hiring and your difficulty level.

12. FlCl - Flood Control (great abbreviation guys). This basically functions the same as land value, except that it also controls how much damage your province takes as a result of floods or typhoons. For some reason it also increases both your harvest and gold collection. Keep it high, but it's not super super critical.

13. Hrse - amount of horses in your province. Horses are not used for warfare, but are given to individual generals either to reward them or to persuade them to join your army. Horses cost exactly 100 gold to buy and cannot be transferred from one province to another. Generally, I use them to reward officers early in the game to save money, but then never buy them again for reasons I'll describe later. There are better things to spend 100 gold on.

14. Trst - Trust in your ruler. This number is the same for all of your lands, and is complicated to explain. It starts at 50 for all rulers. This value affects a lot of different things. Most importantly, it affects how your officers think of you. If this value is low, their loyalties will drop just about every turn, even if they have high compatibility with your leader (I'll get to compatibility later). You will also find it much harder to recruit officers from other leaders and very difficult to form alliances with anyone (not as important as it sounds). When trust reaches about 75 all your officers loyalty will not go down. Ever. I shouldn't say that. They won't go down unless another ruler uses some type of spy plot against you, which is rare. The problem with trust is that it goes down really easily and is hard to increase. The only actions that will increase trust are sending reinforcements to an ally when he is attacked (fairly big increase, especially if you send a lot of troops and succeed in defending the province) or being part of a joint invasion that another ruler has set up. Let me repeat this. If you ask someone to help you by joining your attack on another province your trust will *not* go up. Only if he asks you and you actually come through on your word. You'll also get a three point trust increase if you choose not even to read a message intercepted through your province, provided the messenger is from your ally. This, of course, requires you to trust either that your ally isn't trying to plot against you or that all your followers are loyal enough not to be affected by a plot.

A ton of things make trust go down. Collecting a special tax will always drop it. Never, ever collect a special tax; it's essentially selling your trust for pennies. Anytime someone sends you a diplomatic messenger, you'll have the option of accept, refuse and capture. If you ever choose capture you will lose trust (not much, like 3 or 4 - sometimes it's still worth it to try and capture someone if you know

they are a good officer with very low war ability). Generally, if you don't want to ally with someone, show some restraint and just refuse. If someone is going through your province and gets intercepted by you and he is an officer of your ally you can't try and capture him without losing trust, even if he is attempting to recruit one of your officers! In this case, just seize the letter. If your ally is caught trying to recruit your enemies' followers, you can't do anything except ignore it without losing trust. If the messenger does not belong to your ally, there is more flexibility - you can capture those that are going after your followers and seize the letter from those recruiting elsewhere (you might even be able to try and capture him, i'm not sure) without a trust penalty.

Many diplomatic actions reduce trust. Attacking someone you are allied with obviously lowers it a lot, as does betraying your ally in combat (again, show some restraint). Unfortunately, all these rules (including the ones above) apply to both rulers you are allied with and those with whom you have marriages with, whether or not you initiated it. On top of this, all marriages are permanent, and cannot be cancelled for any reason. In short, if you have a marriage with someone, you will never be able to conquer them without destroying your trust rating. This means that you won't be able to win the game without ruining your trust. This means don't agree to marriages ever. No matter what. Finally, recruiting from your allies excessively or carrying out spy missions against them (especially against their governors) lowers your trust. The same applies for rulers you have arranged marriages with. Stinks, doesn't it? Well there is one good part about trust, and that is that if you find the hereditary seal your trust will automatically max out at 100. Unfortunately you won't find the seal until you've conquered at least half of China, so you still have to behave yourself for most of the game.

15. Cost - This is the number of barrels of rice you have to sell in order get 100 gold. When selling a lower number is obviously better, when buying a larger one is better. The highest i've ever seen it is 88. The lowest i've seen it ever is like 15, which is amazingly good if you have a lot of rice in your territory. "Good" prices for selling are the 30s. "Fair" selling prices are in the 40s. Keep in mind that even if you have an awesome rate, there still might be no merchants in your territory. To my knowledge prices are random, but they tend to hover around one number for a while before changing more dramatically.

16. FrGl - Free Generals that are in your province. A Free general is a general that is not currently serving any particular ruler. A free general can appear in your province in three ways. First, he can be uncovered by using the search command. Other times free generals from other provinces will wander into your land. Finally, sometimes the computer will hide a general in your province to act as a spy. They only do this when they really hate you, and it is not hard at all to figure out what they are doing if you know what followers he has (oftentimes they'll send someone that is so obviously their follower that it's funny). If you are uncomfortable about recruiting someone you can always wait a few turns. Hidden generals never move from province to province, whereas free generals will move after a certain number of turns. Of course, if you don't trust someone and then he wanders somewhere else you can't recruit him. It's almost always safe to recruit these guys, unless of course the general happens to be your hated enemy's son.

1. View Commands

1a. Province - views another province. If you are viewing one of your own provinces, it won't expend an officer's turn. If you are viewing an enemy's province, it will expend a turn. Everyone views a province equally well, so use your worst general to view if you can.

1b. General - views a general in this city, bringing up a list of officers and finally the general info box. This never uses up a turn. Some quick notes on what each of the numbers mean:

lylty - how loyal the officer is to you. Generally, an officer is very unlikely to leave you if his loyalty rating is higher than 90. It is still reasonably likely that someone will leave you if their loyalty is in the 80s, so make sure to reward often. Incidentally, you should never attack anywhere with officers whose loyalties are not in the 90s, because the game is extremely proficient at bribing them. Finally, it is also not advised to attack anywhere with either Lu Bu or Wei Yan (especially Lu Bu) because these two clowns will desert you like it's their job once they get into a battle. If loyalty ever falls to around 30 there is a good chance the officer will just leave you and become a free general. If loyalty sits around 60 for a while eventually one of the computer rulers will recruit him from you. Reward often.

arms - the arms rating of his unit. If he has no soldiers at all this will be 100. Basically this is the percentage of soldiers in his unit that have arms. It is really easy to keep this at 100, just send him to the market one turn and have him buy the maximum amount of arms. The only way it goes down is if soldiers die in combat. The computer tends not to buy arms until quite late in the game, so use this to your advantage in war.

skill - the training level of his soldiers. Never attack unless this is 100. Skill is generally pretty easy to raise with the train command, so make sure to max it out as soon as possible.

soldr - the number of soldiers assigned to this general's unit. The max is 100.

intel - the officer's intelligence. An intel of 80 or above allows the general to become your state's advisor. High intel also makes improving land or flood control of a state go more quickly.

war - how effective your general is at leading troops in the field and also how good he is at personal combat. War ability also affects how effective your officer is at training soldiers or moving goods between provinces.

charm - how charming your officer is. Charm is used for giving to the people and for rewarding or recruiting officers. Most of the time, officers with high intel also have reasonably high charm, but this does not hold true always.

age - the officer's age. Officers have a high chance of passing away when they are older, although many officers die in specific years due to "evil omens."

Years of service seems mostly irrelevant and is probably just for your own personal reference. It would seem that more years of service would

lead to the officer being more loyal, but i don't notice any direct correlation myself. Years of service only count from the start of the scenario you are playing. Thus even though Xiahou Dun has been serving Cao Cao for 5 years by 194 AD, if you start playing the second scenario his years of service will start at 1.

1c. Summary One - lists all the officers in the province and displays their loyalty, intel, war ability, and charm. It never uses up someone's turn to use it.

1d. Summary Two - lists all the officers in the province and displays their years of service, arms level, training level, and number of soldiers. Very useful, and never uses up anyone's turn to view it.

1e. Territory - lists all the provinces in your empire, their governors, the amount of rice and food, how many soldiers are stationed there, the people's loyalty and the number of your officers present. Provinces with an asterick by their number are delegated to the control of their governor. This is another free command.

2. Army Commands

2a. Hire - hires soldiers in the current province. It uses up one officer's turn; his abilities do not affect how well he drafts the troops. Every soldier you hire costs 10 gold and 1 rice, and lowers both the population and the people's loyalty. After you hire the soldiers you will be brought to the assign screen. The total amount of troops in a province can never outnumber the population. This means if there are only 750 people living in a province, you can't draft any soldiers that would raise your army's size to over 750. The only exception to this rule is if you move an army into a really small province (ie. move 1000 soldiers into a province with 500 civilians). You can have this large of an army present, but you won't be able to draft any new recruits.

2b. Assign - reassigns soldiers amongst your officers. Generally it is best to assign the most soldiers to your most loyal followers first (use the buttons on the right to sort the generals however you see fit). If all your officers are very loyal (or at least equally loyal) give soldiers to the men with the highest war ability, as they are by far the most effective fighters. Having one unit led by an officer with a high intel is also a good idea, because these officers excel at fire tricks. This command uses an officer's turn and any general is as good as the next at reassigning.

2c. Train - trains the soldiers that are in your province. You do not need to have officers assigned to a general in order for him to train. The more officers you have training and the higher their war abilities, the greater the resulting increase in skill. All officers who participate in the training will have used up their turn.

2d. War - invade a neighboring province. First select a province to attack, then who will go. You will then be asked to pick someone to command the unit. Generally you want someone with at least decent war ability to command because if your commanding unit gets badly beaten and has to retreat you will lose the battle. Do not let Lu Bu or Wei Yan command your army, ever. Also do not let anyone whose loyalty is not very high command, because if the enemy bribes him you automatically lose the battle. For more on war see the battle section. Obviously, going to war uses up the officer's turn.

3. "Person" Commands

3a. Recruit - this command attempts to recruit an officer to join your ruler's army. If this is the home province you can recruit any officer from any other ruler, if this is not your capital you can only recruit free officers who are in your province. Obviously, officers with lower loyalties are easier to recruit. I usually don't even try to recruit someone unless his loyalty is in the lower 80s or less, as the success rate will be quite low. After you pick the officer you want to recruit you will be asked which method you will use to recruit him. 'Personal Appeal' requires sending your ruler, 'horse' requires having at least one horse to give, 'gold' requires having 100 gold to give the officer, and 'letter' requires nothing. The manual claims (i think) that using a horse is better if the person you are trying to recruit has a high war ability, that personal appeal is better if he has high intel, and that letter is better if he has high charm. Some other guides agree with this. I do not. I notice no difference in success rate at all between any of the different methods, so I always use a letter.

Many factors seem to affect whether or not your attempt to recruit an officer is successful. The officer's loyalty is obviously the major factor, but others seem to be important. The messenger plays a role, and although they are sorted by charm, I have noticed that the guy with the highest charm is not always the best at recruiting officers, so if you are serious about recruiting somebody you should try sending several different messengers. Compatibility is also very important.

***A Quick note about compatibility:

Compatibility affects a lot of different factors when it comes to personel in this game. Unfortunately, there is no onscreen number that shows any particular officer's compatibility with your ruler or other officers, so you'll have to figure it out mostly through trial and error. Compatibility greatly affects how loyal officers are to you. Example: Guan Yu, who has very high compatibility with Liu Bei is captured by Dong Zhuo (fairly unlikely). Cao Cao then recruits Guan Yu from Dong Zhuo, since his loyalty is probably about 20. Guan Yu has poor compatibility with Cao Cao, so his loyalty is very likely low (probably about 60). Ma Teng then recruits Guan Yu off of Cao Cao. Ma Teng and Guan Yu are very compatible, so Guan Yu's loyalty will probably start either in the high 80s or low 90s with Ma Teng. Compatibility also affects how often a general's loyalty decreases, and how much it decreases when it does. Officers with very low compatibility towards their current rulers tend to decrease in loyalty very quickly.

So how can you tell who is compatible with whom? This is slightly more complicated. As far as I can tell every general in the game leans at least slightly towards one of the three kingdoms: Shu (Liu Bei), Wu (Sun Jian/Ce/Quan) or Wei (Cao Cao/Pi). Guan Yu, for example, is very strongly Shu, so any other leader who is strongly Shu, like Ma Teng, is a ruler Guan Yu will get along with. Someone who is less strongly tied to a particular kingdom, Ji Ling, for example, won't have a high loyalty immediately after being recruited with any leader, but it won't be low either. Yuan Shao, Liu Biao, and Dong Zhuo are probably the most important "neutral" compatibility rulers, although Liu Biao is somewhat pulled between both Wei and Shu. In the long run, once you know who to recruit, it is an advantage to be a ruler that is strongly either Wei, Wu, or Shu. Most of the best generals are strongly tied to one of the three kingdoms, and if you can recruit the right ones you will have to worry less about loyalties.

I still haven't answered the question. The best way to check an officer's compatibility is to play scenario 5 or 6 and see who he ends up with at the end of the game. For example, if you play as Liu Bei in

scenario 5, you'll notice that he has many of Liu Zhang's old followers. It is safe to assume, then, that these officers are compatible with Liu Bei in all other scenarios, and, also, that Liu Zhang, as a ruler, is fairly strongly Shu. Thus Liu Zhang's followers would be loyal to Liu Bei, and people that are supposed to follow Liu Bei in later scenarios (like Zhuge Liang) will be loyal to Liu Zhang, whether or not there is historical reason for them to do so.

Anyway, back to recruiting; compatibility with your ruler will play a large role in how successful you are in recruiting any given general. I suspect that the messenger's compatibility may also play a role, but I am less sure about this. Trust also plays a major role in your chances, but it might only be your trust relative to the other ruler. This is actually usually bad, because the game also cheats with trust, giving the best rulers, like Cao Cao, trust bonuses as time goes on. He will still be penalized for breaking treaties and the like, of course, but in times of peace his trust will go up seemingly for no reason.

Recruiting always uses an officer's turn, even if after hearing your adviser's advice you decide not to send your messenger. For best results, be fairly persistent while recruiting, try using several different generals. Whew.

3b. Search - searches the province for free generals that are in hiding. I'm pretty sure that new generals go into hiding every January, so it's probably best to search then. Searching doesn't use a turn if, after hearing your adviser's opinion on the matter, you decide not to search; otherwise it will use the selected general's turn. For the most part, any general will do.

3c Appoint

1. Governor - appoints someone the governor of a province. When you conquer a new province the commander automatically becomes the governor; this command will let you appoint someone else to replace him. Charm and war ability are the only abilities that matter for a governor for the most part. If the province can't get attacked and you are only going to have one officer in the province, however, intel is more important than war ability. If the province gets attacked the governor will be the commander on the defensive side and will almost always be guarding the castle, so he should be at least competent at war if you are in danger of being attacked.

2. Advisor - appoints someone the advisor of your empire. You can only have one advisor, and it usually should be the person who has the highest intel throughout your state. Your advisor should always be in the same province as your ruler, as it will make recruiting and spying much easier. You can appoint anyone with an intel of 80 or higher advisor, and even if 80 is the highest intel anyone has, you should definitely have an advisor, because even if you never listen to him he can still let you know if one of your governors has a tendency towards rebelling or if a spy is in your midst. At 80 though, don't bother listening to much of what your advisor has to say otherwise, as it's mostly random garbage. A useful advisor will have an intel of at least 90, probably better 95. If an advisor doesn't have an intel of at least 90 he will be wrong so often so as not to be useful. Even with very high intels advisors can still be wrong several times consecutively (i've seen Pang Tong be wrong 4 times in a row and his intel is 98). Zhuge Liang is the only officer in the game with a perfect 100 in intel, and he is never wrong. Get him if at all possible. Neither of these commands requires you to expend a turn.

3d Dismiss

1. General - fires a general from your service. He will become a free general in either your province or a neighboring one. The only time you will ever really fire a general is if your advisor has alerted you that he can no longer be trusted (usually because he is actually a spy for one of the other rulers). You can also fire someone with really low loyalty in hopes of recruiting them again, but this is rarely worth it unless their loyalty is somewhere around 20 or 30.

2. Advisor - relieves your advisor of his duties. This command is essentially useless; you don't need to fire your current advisor to appoint a new one, and if you don't have someone else to appoint you shouldn't be dismissing your current advisor. Neither of these commands require you to expend someone's turn.

3e. Delegate

1. Delegate - Delegates a province to be ruled by the governor. You will no longer have to control the province. This is useful when you have a lot of provinces that can't be attacked where you'd only be hitting home anyway. Generally, I delegate all the provinces that can't be attacked and only control the ones that border my enemies. You have four choices for policies "full command" (which in this game is the same as "balanced"), "internal" (focuses on improving the province), "personel" (focuses on getting/rewarding officers), and "military" (self-explanatory). If you have just one officer in the province it doesn't much matter which one you pick. If you think that you'll save yourself a ton of time by sending a bunch of disloyal generals into one province and delegating it on "personel" you're going to be disappointed. Even on this setting the delegated governor is still terrible about keeping your loyalties decent. I usually just pick "full command." You can also order the province to send goods to a particular state (useful) or to attack an enemy territory (not useful - you won't be impressed by their performance).

2. Cancel - ends delegated orders for a province. You will regain control of it. The only way to change policies is to cancel and redelegate it. Neither of these commands requires a turn to be spent.

3f. Reward (uses governor/ruler's turn) - you have two basic choices (three if you have an advisor). Gold allows you to give up to 100 gold to one of your officers. How much their loyalty goes up is based on your governor's charm and how much money you choose to give. Horse is very similar to gold. Giving a horse does about the same thing as giving 100 gold. Giving writings to a follower does not affect his loyalty at all, but it will increase his intel by one point, up to the level of your advisor (minus one). Thus if you have Zhuge Liang as your advisor (intel 100) you could in theory raise Cao Bao's (or any other officer's) intel to 99. Rewarding is probably what you will be doing more often than anything else. Unless you need your ruler to do something else that turn (like buy arms) he should probably be rewarding someone, unless of course everyone's loyalty is 100. Rewarding with writings is more or less a waste of time, as intel is not really worth raising (after all, you already have an advisor that is better than you could make someone else).

4. Trade

4a. Sell Rice - Sells rice for gold at the rate displayed as "cost." A rate of 50 means that you have to sell 50 rice to make 100 gold. Uses an officer's turn, anyone will do.

4b. Buy Rice - Buys rice for gold at the rate displayed as "cost." A

rate of 50 means that you will have to pay 100 gold for 50 rice. This also uses an officer's turn, anyone will do.

4c. Buy Horse - Buys horses at 100 gold/horse. In my opinion it's not worth it since I don't see any advantage in buying horses, but some may disagree. It uses someone's turn, anyone will do.

4d. Buy Arms - Buys arms at the price of 1 arm/1 gold. You have to send the person you want to have the arms to the store to buy them himself. This is very important, as it adds a lot to your unit's ability to fight in a war. It uses your turn to buy your unit arms.

5. Int. Afrs

5a. Land - invest money into developing the land value of your province. This is important for both your harvest and your tax collection in January. The higher the intel of the person investing, the more successful it will be. All officers involved in developing land use their turns.

5b. Flood - invest money into developing the flood control of your province. This is important for harvests, tax collection, and actually controlling damage due to floods. The higher the intel of the people investing, the more successful it will be. All officers involved use their turns.

5c. Give - gives food to the people in order to raise their loyalty to your ruler. This increases both harvest and tax collections in January. The charm of the officers giving food as well as the charm of your governor will determine how big of an increase the people's loyalty will experience. Officers that give food will use their turns.

5d. Tax - collect a special tax from your people. This will lower your people's loyalty and also your trust. Never, ever, ever do this. It's not worth sacrificing your trust for a few hundred gold and a few hundred rice.

6. Diplomacy

6a. Ally - attempt to ally with another ruler. Allies are less likely to attack you (to varying degrees depending on the other ruler), and can assist you in battle either by helping you invade another province or by sending reinforcements to you should you be attacked. Alliances are most helpful when you are trying to build your trust, relatively weak (overall or on a particular front), or need some help to invade a particularly nasty province, such as Liu Biao's capital, which always seems to have at least 1000 troops. Alliances can be broken at any time with no penalty to trust, provided that you use the Cancel command, rather than simply attacking your former ally. The officer you choose as envoy will use his turn.

6b. Joint - attempt to plan a joint attack on a third ruler's province. Even if the ruler agrees to help you he might decide at the last second not to send any men. Remember when you do attack that you'll need to send enough food to supply both your men as well as his. Assuming your victory, you will give him 10% of the gold and rice in the conquered province in appreciation for his support. He will gain trust, you will not. Your envoy will use his turn. You must already be allied with the ruler you plan on asking to help in your invasion. After getting an

acceptance from the other ruler, you can either attack the same turn or the next. After your next turn has passed, the agreement will expire. There is no penalty for planning a joint invasion and not actually launching the attack.

6c. Marry - attempt to set up a marriage between your family and the family of another ruler. This is almost always a terrible idea. A marriage seems to function as a permanent alliance with the ruler without any of the benefits, such as joint attacks. Your trust will reduce as if you were allied with the ruler if you were to attack him. Marriages are permanent and cannot be cancelled. Your envoy will lose his turn. If you seal the marriage, the other ruler's hostility towards you will drop dramatically, but it's really not worth it.

6d. Gift - offer a gift to a ruler. It will always be accepted. Gifts are anywhere between 100 and 1000 gold. The higher the charm of your messenger, the lower the ruler's hostility towards you will become. Although this is a good (and more or less the only) way of reducing a rival ruler's hostility towards you, it's not especially useful. If you are powerful enough the computer rulers will probably ask you to ally, and if you aren't powerful enough you're better off spending money on making yourself powerful rather than giving it to your rival so he can hire troops to invade you. The deliverer of the gift will use his turn. It is occasionally useful to give gifts in order to secure a strong ally for use in a joint attack, but otherwise try to avoid giving gifts.

6e. Cancel - cancel an alliance with a ruler. There is no penalty for doing this at all, besides his hostility increasing. There is no penalty in trust if you cancel an alliance and attack your former ally in the same turn. This is the only way to cancel an alliance without losing trust. You don't need to use an officer to cancel an alliance.

6f. Threat - Threaten a ruler in hopes that they will surrender to you. This almost never works unless your trust is high, the ruler is pathetically weak and you are super powerful. It also seems to work well if the other ruler has almost no provisions. I imagine compatibility is also a factor, since you are essentially recruiting another ruler. If he surrenders, his province becomes yours and he becomes your officer. If you fail, he's likely to try and capture the envoy. The envoy will lose his turn. The only reason to do this is if you are just dying to have Liu Yong (or equivalent) as an officer. I have heard (although I haven't really looked into it) that none of the three kingdoms rulers will ever surrender, no matter how bad their situation is. Finally, if a ruler does surrender to you, make sure not to make him a governor, since they always seem to be apt to rebel.

**Thanks to the email from ProZe. Apparently Liu Bei will surrender if he is weak enough.

7. Spy

7a. Hide General - This command allows you to hide a general who has 100 loyalty in one of your rival's provinces. The hidden general becomes a free general in the other ruler's province and will probably be recruited in a few turns. Hiding a general is actually a very good way to weaken an opponent. Hidden generals lower all of the loyalties in the other ruler's province very quickly. On top of this, if you invade an enemy and he assigns soldiers to your spy, your spy can immediately change sides, just bribe him with 0 gold. Don't be stupid and hide a general who already has troops assigned to him. The computer will just hire him

anyway and reassign the soldiers, making you look like a dummy. The verify option allows you to send a message to the general to make sure he's still going along with the plot. Withdraw allows you to remove the general without invading. Rulers that are "good" or have an advisor with a high intel are more likely to figure out what is going on and dismiss your general. In this case he'll just return to your province. The only problem with hiding a general is that sometimes another computer warlord will just recruit him off the first ruler. This is stupid and should have been accounted for somehow, but it isn't. Oh well. Rarely, but occasionally, your general will like it better where he's hidden and just stay there as an officer. Make sure you hide someone you have high compatibility with.

7b. Rival Tigers - This plot is supposed to raise hostilities between two enemy rulers, in hopes that they will attack each other. It's more or less pointless. Even if it works on both leaders, their hostilities barely move, and the game so rarely attacks after a certain point that you'll probably never use this. I can't remember the last time I even bothered to try it. There are better things to do with your time. Especially since it takes up two officers' turns.

7c. Tiger Wolf - This is probably the most rewarding spy tactic in the game. Basically you find one of your rival's governors and trick him into rebelling against his ruler and establishing his own empire. Now, very rarely do these new rulers ever do much of anything, but they are very annoying, especially if they occur in the middle of someone's territory. Given enough effort on your part to persuade them, you can get a lot of officers to actually rebel. Scenario 4 is perfect for this because Cao Cao has so many provinces compared to the other rulers. The rules for this are very similar to recruiting, once you get your advisor's opinion on the success of your mission, your general will have used his turn whether or not you send him. Definitely worth trying though.

7d. Betrayal - This is an attempt to convince one of your rival's officers to switch to your side upon your invasion of his ruler's land. It is reasonably successful and also relatively powerful, especially if you are attacking a province with more than 700 soldiers. It is fairly tricky to get someone with a loyalty higher than the 70s to agree to do it. Unless of course it's Lu Bu or Wei Yan. But if it's them you can probably just bribe them without bothering with the plot. It uses officers turns the same way as tiger-wolf.

7e. Forgery - Here you send a forged letter to an officer in an attempt to lower his loyalty with the ruler. This is most effective if done several times a month for several consecutive months, then either recruiting the officer or arranging a betrayal. On difficulty 1 or 2 it's not really worth the effort as it takes a lot of time and manpower to work effectively and it's usually easier just to capture the general in battle. On 3 it might be more worth it, especially if he is an officer with a very high war ability. It also uses officers' turns like tiger-wolf.

8. Move Commands

8a. Move General - moves a general and all soldiers assigned to him to another province. If you move into an empty province you will gain control of it and have to appoint a governor.

8b. Move Goods - transports money and/or rice to another friendly

province. If you select a general with poor war ability to do it, the chances for the goods to be stolen by either bandits or another ruler (assuming, of course that you are going through his territory) raises dramatically. The computer chooses the path your general will take, and it seems to be pretty much the fastest way, even if it is through an enemy's territory.

IV. War

A. The Commands

1. Move

1a. Normal - moves your unit in the desired direction. You stop moving no matter how much mobility remains if you move adjacent to an enemy unit or get ambushed. Your mobility depends on the training level of your men, and maxes out at 6 (100 skill). Fields take two mobility; forests, hills, and the castle three; and water five. If you rest a turn (by not using any command at all) you will gain one mobility point. When attacking, moving a unit on the defending castle means instant victory.

1b. Move Enemy - attempts to move an enemy to the square you are going to vacate as you move elsewhere. The enemy must be adjacent to you in order to do it. It is useful if your unit is in a square that is on fire, otherwise it's pretty pointless unless you are being especially clever in a battle. Officers with a high intel are the best to do it, and it works most effectively against officers with low intels.

2. Attack

2a. Simult. - Begin an attack where every other unit also adjacent to the target will join in. Casualties are generally very low on the attacking side, unless the unit you are attacking is especially powerful. This is the most efficient and best way to eliminate a strong opponent.

2b. Normal - Engage the enemy unit with your unit only. Generally one normal attack is more powerful than any single attack from a simult. attack, but the attacker's casualties will be noticeably higher. This is really only good when you can't do a simult. attack because no other unit is nearby or on the map at all.

2c. Fire - attempt to set the ground or an adjacent unit on fire. Units that become trapped in the fire (ie have no available move out of it) will take heavy casualties that are surprisingly random. If the unit has about 20 soldiers left it will usually opt to retreat. If a unit has less than 1 soldier (ie 0 and change) and can't retreat or move out of the fire, the leader of that unit will perish in the flames. Fire can be very effective if used properly. The castle is very hard to set on fire. The higher your unit's leader's intel, the higher the chances of him successfully setting the unit on fire. (i have a hunch that war ability may also play a role, but again, i can't be sure).

2d. Charge - charge at the enemy unit. Both units will take heavy casualties, but if your unit is overpowering, it is definitely worth it. Most of the time you will break through to the other side of the enemy unit. The times you don't you'll probably wish you didn't charge, because you will very likely take a lot of casualties. Charging is good for eliminating a weak unit and capturing its leader. Occasionally, however, eliminating a unit by charging will cause the leader to perish. I'm not even sure if the leader dies randomly, because it seems to be the same people who perish all the time, but this could be my imagination.

3. Flee - withdraws your unit from the battlefield. If this is your commanding unit you must also withdraw your entire army; you can't change your commander mid battle. The only exception is when you send your ruler as reinforcements after a month has already passed in combat. In this case your ruler will become the new commander of your forces. This is a useful trick for extending conflict while attacking a very powerful enemy province. Units that flee have a chance of being captured, especially if they are close to many other enemy units.

4. View - very useful, very cheap. Costs 10 gold and you will get info on one enemy unit - loyalty, skill, arm level, war ability, and intel. Make sure you bring some money along to do this.

5. Tactics

5a. Bribe - Attempt to bribe an enemy unit to join your side. You can bribe with up to 99 gold per attempt, and i'd advise you to use the max, because even then the chances of success are quite low. The officer you are attempting to bribe keeps the money if you fail, so if you intend on bribing a lot bring several thousand dollars. Try to bribe generals that are either low in loyalty or naturally jerks as you'll have the most success. If you are bribing someone you have a pact with, you can bribe with 0 gold and they will still switch sides. As with recruiting, compatibility plays a role, both in your chances of success, as well as in the loyalty the follower will have to you after he switches sides. Attempting to bribe someone with a loyalty higher than 90 is almost always a waste of time, with very few exceptions. Lu Bu and Wei Yan can (and will) be bribed even if their loyalty is 100. Other times you can get someone with a loyalty in the 90s to switch sides if they have very high compatibility with your ruler and very poor compatibility with your opponent (for example: Guan Yu is serving Dong Zhuo and Liu Bei attacks him, given enough effort Guan Yu might be successfully bribed).

5b. Reinforce - This is only available if you are defending. You can leave extra units inside the castle and bring them out later with this command. Generally, you don't have to leave any units inside unless you already have 10 that you want to deploy.

B. Progression of the Battle

Battles are fought for 30 days, at the end of which either side can send additional reinforcements. The first day of the battle both sides will have the option of sending an officer out for personal combat. Occasionally a powerful officer will volunteer and challenge the enemy without you doing anything. Regardless if the enemy accepts the challenge the two officers will fight until one falls or the match is called a draw. If you refuse personal combat a small amount of soldiers will desert from your forces (about 8% +/- 1%). The same thing will happen to the computer if they refuse your challenge. If neither side proposes personal combat the battle continues without it. The loser of personal combat (and his unit) are immediately captured and removed from the field of battle.

***A quick note about personal combat

If a general with a lower war ability defeats a general with a higher war ability, his ability will raise to the average of the two numbers, rounded down. This is a somewhat risky maneuver, but it can raise a general's ability if you decide it's worth it. The biggest upset I've ever seen is Jin Xuan (war 43) defeating Yang Huai (war 77).

So how exactly do you win a battle? The attackers win if they eliminate the enemy's commander, move a unit on the castle, or if the defenders run out of rice. The defenders win only if the defenders run out of rice or their commander is captured. Once a battle is decided the victor can either recruit, release, or behead any officers he has captured. Officers that were captured by the losing side automatically are released back to the victors. There is absolutely no point in releasing any officers, so never do it. If you don't want to recruit an officer for some reason (maybe he's ugly, maybe you just don't like him) you can behead him, and that will eliminate him from the game immediately. If you capture the enemy ruler your choices are a little more restricted. You can never recruit a ruler after besting him in battle. As long as there is a province he can flee to, you can release him; otherwise you're gonna have to give him the axe. If you are the attacker you will gain the province you were attempting to conquer, and you will have a chance of getting war spoils in the form of an item that will raise an officer's abilities and max out his loyalty. Province 10 will always give you some spoil of war.

V. Misc tricks and tips

1. All of the Spy commands, and all of the diplomacy commands besides 'gift' can only be used in your home province, so make sure to keep some officers there. Because of this limitation, even if your leader is lousy you're going to have to use him a lot. Of course you could always try to get him beheaded by attacking an enemy province with 0 troops until they have him killed, but you'll suffer from horrible loyalties when you replace him.

2. While I'm thinking about it, if your ruler dies the most important thing to do is pick a good successor. Charm is the single most important stat to watch out for, but often overlooked is compatibility. Suppose that you're playing as Sun Ce, and he dies. Let's also say that somehow you have Simi Yi in your service. Now Simi Yi would make a good successor, but his compatibility is probably quite poor with most of your good officers. When you replace a ruler with his successor, all of the loyalties throughout your empire get replaced with loyalties as if you had recruited all of your followers that turn. This means that all of your former generals, all strongly Wu, would have loyalties that reflect them being recruited by a ruler strongly Wei. They'd have very poor loyalty. Now, sometimes you won't have a choice as to who will succeed, because there will be only one clear choice, but if there is a decision to make, try to keep compatibility in mind. Either way, replacing your ruler makes your loyalties plummet and, depending on how large your empire is, it may take years to recover them.

3. Take advantage of the fact that you can cancel alliances and attack in the same turn.

4. A good way to get your trust up without actually getting the hereditary seal is to ally with a weak province and continually help it repel invasions. I played as Liu Bei once and defended Hain Fu from Cao Cao several times and got my trust up into the 70s. Having very high trust early in the game makes a huge difference, trust me.

5. If you are playing as a weak ruler with fairly neutral compatibility (like Li Jue, for example) you are going to have a hard time recruiting generals. A good method is to watch who nearby rulers recruit and then

try and get these officers before the computer has a chance to reward them. This works especially well if the ruler and the officer have a poor compatibility.

6. If possible try to eliminate Cao Cao and Liu Biao early, especially in scenarios one and two. Cao Cao becomes very powerful very quickly and Liu Biao almost never leaves province 20. If you leave Liu Biao alone all game by the time you get to attacking him he'll have more than 1000 soldiers, and it will be a pain to take the castle.

7. When giving an item to an officer, there are a few things that you should consider before selecting him. The first of these is whether or not giving him the item is going to actually make him better. Obviously do not waste your time trying to turn Cao Bao into the ultimate fighting machine, you'll just end up wasting all of your items (and he'll still stink). Also, keep in mind that most of the items raise a specific ability by a random number between 7 and 14. This means you probably shouldn't give someone an item if the ability in question is already in the high 90s (he's already good enough and no ability can raise past 100). Ideally, you want to use an item to make a good general great. Officers with their war ability in the high 80s, then, become excellent people to give swords to, as it can raise their war to 100, making them really valuable. If you raise an advisor's intel to 100 they *will* get Zhuge Liang's special ability of never giving incorrect advice. (thanks to Mark Liu for correcting me on this point).

8. For creating a new ruler:

8a. As far as abilities go, intel is more or less pointless for a ruler, so you should concentrate on war ability and charm. Usually I max out charm rather than war ability, but this is just a matter of personal preference. Definitely max out war ability if you are choosing a province that will be difficult to defend.

8b. Your follower will always be average. I generally just assign all the points to war ability, as if you are only going to have one follower, it makes more sense to have him good at war. Again, I wouldn't bother assigning the points to intel, as the highest you can get it will be 80, barely enough to become an advisor (and a really crummy one at that).

8c. If you are going to be a new ruler, it is obviously better to choose one of the earlier scenarios as they provide more of an even playing field for a less powerful ruler. If you choose scenario 1, pick province 17, even though it is right next to Dong Zhuo and Cao Cao's capitals; it is literally full of officers you can recruit easily by searching. Just make sure to build your army up quickly so you don't get smashed.

9. In scenario 1 Lu Bu starts with 50 troops assigned to him, and a low loyalty to Dong Zhuo. Recruit him the first turn of the game and you'll gain these soldiers (reassign them to someone else). Incidentally, Lu Bu's compatibility alignment is fairly strongly Shu, although this doesn't matter much as he will still betray anyone quite willingly.

10. Use the plague to your advantage. When a province is hit by the plague, many of their officers will become injured and unable to take the field in battle. This gives you a good opportunity to attack and fight about half of the province's army, capturing the other half. Definitely worth it.

11. I've said this before, but the most important thing to do is keep

your loyalties high. Don't trust delegated provinces to do this for you, because very often they will not (of course, if your trust is high enough it won't matter because your loyalties won't go down). Generally, always reward if you have followers in your province whose loyalty is not 100.

12. Province 29 really stinks. Locusts hit it almost every year in some scenarios. This makes it very hard to play as Zhang Lu.

13. You'll probably catch on to this fairly quickly, but surnames in this game precede the name. Thus Cao Cao and Cao Ang are related. Not all the officers in the game who have the same surname are related, however; Cao Cao and Cao Bao, for example, have no relation. Officers that are related to their ruler almost always have 100 loyalty, and it usually won't go down (unless their ruler has very low trust).

14. From TheCount:

"When making a custom leader and getting a follower, that follower will always have 100 loyalty while that leader is still ruling the clan. But, if you choose to have no follower, the first person you recruit will have those loyalty benefits. This becomes very useful when recruiting Lu Bu, as it can terminate the betrayal issues."

VI. Credits

Thanks to bgardn7, DragonAtma, and tcs5384@aol.com for the information on trust. I had never known that not reading a letter would raise trust.

Thanks to Mark Liu for correcting me about increasing intelligence.

Thanks to Nicole Xhilone (pronounced X-ill-on) for being the only person i know who will read this without making fun of me in some way. (she's cute too).

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Thanks to ProZe for the email about Liu Bei surrendering.

Thanks to TheCount for the information about not choosing to have a created follower.

And, finally, thanks to the people who have sent me emails and im's about this guide. I have been very pleasantly surprised with the amount of feedback I've been given for this guide, especially considering the age of the game.

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